

Striving for dignity

– Insights of young people in Rwanda on youth engagement in agriculture and urban migration of rural youth

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Supervisor: Johanna Bergman Lodin, PhD, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Urban and Rural Development

Examiner: Örjan Bartholdson, PhD, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Urban and Rural Development

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Cover picture: Picture showing topographic features of Rwandan agriculture where men and women are farming on bench terraces mostly found in Northern Rwanda where the picture was taken and one of the areas of enquiry in this study. The picture reflects typical conditions of farming activities in the country, which were most referred to in the major findings of this research. Source: Sam Thompson/DFID Rwanda

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Keywords: agriculture, farming, rural life, urban migration, youth, aspirations, habitus

Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Urban and Rural Development

Abstract

In the global development discourse, it is argued that concerns of youth unemployment and slow agricultural development in Africa can be solved through investing in youth engagement in agriculture. However, little attention is paid to whether young people aspire to engage in agriculture, or what it would take to otherwise change that. Research shows indeed that many young people prefer to migrate to urban areas than staying in rural areas where agriculture is the dominant livelihood activity. Particularly in Rwanda, urbanisation is dominated by youth and has more than doubled in the past two decades. It is in this regard that this study has been designed. Taking particular cases in Northern Rwanda and Kigali city, this thesis explored different habituses of young people in order to understand how they perceive agriculture and the factors that make them consider to engage in agriculture or migrate to cities to look for non-agricultural opportunities. The data emanate from field observations, 13 semi-structured interviews and 4 focus group discussions of a balanced number of young men and women from both rural areas of Northern Rwanda and urban areas of Kigali city. Using concepts of doxa, symbolic capital, social norms and aspirations has generated a theoretical framework that led to discussion arguments in this thesis. This study shows that a negative image borne by subsistence farming in society has negatively influenced young people's aspirations to engage in agriculture whereas agricultural activities beyond farming appeared attractive to Rwandan youth. This image of agriculture in rural society was identified as the most important factor pushing rural youth to migrate to cities, although the lure of modernity was a strong pull factor. This thesis suggests policymakers to influence change in perceptions of agriculture in order to persuade young people to engage in agricultural activities, farming in particular.

Keywords: agriculture, farming, rural life, urban migration, youth, aspirations, habitus

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AGRA	Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa
BDF	Business Development Fund
BRD	Developement Bank of Rwanda (<i>Acronym in French</i>)
DOT	Digital Opportunity Trust
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoR	Government of Rwanda
HH	Household
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
n/a	Not answered
NYP	National Youth Policy
RWF	Rwandan Franc
RYAF	Rwandan Youth in Agribusiness Forum
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
USD	United States Dollar
YEAN	Youth Engagement in Agriculture Network
YEIA	Youth engagement in agriculture
YPARD	Young Professionals for Agricultural Development

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem Statement

The proportion of young people in the population of African countries is the largest in the world. At the same time, the largest proportion of arable land in the world is located in Africa (Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), 2015). However, the continent faces increasing levels of unemployment and underemployment where young people are the majority of population suffering from that challenge. African agriculture is also heavily challenged by climate variability which has a negative impact on food production and availability (Sumberg et al., 2014). These relationships between young people and agriculture in Africa have given rise to discourses of youth engagement in agriculture (*referred to “YEIA” acronym throughout the study*) within the development arena. The main topic on the agenda is about the role of young people in agricultural development in Africa which is backed by in many academic and research institutions worldwide as well as strategies and policy making by governments in African countries and global development practitioners. African agriculture is often linked to traditional practices and featured by ageing population with relatively low (or no) education level, this being another potential reason why it is not enough productive (Ripoll et al., 2017). African young people are assumed to hold solutions to sustainable agricultural development in Africa given their ability to learn skills and technologies that are crucial to the development of the agricultural sector in Africa (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), 2014). This could also be a solution to the problem of youth unemployment and underemployment existing throughout the continent. As an extremely wide sector, agriculture is therefore assumed to be able to provide job opportunities to young people and thus close the gap of unemployment in Africa.

An intriguing issue, however, is that young people have shown reluctance to engage in agricultural activities in favour of non-agricultural job opportunities (Bezu and Holden, 2014; Leavy and Smith, 2010). Despite different attempts to persuade young people to develop agricultural professions, the extent to which young people engage in agricultural activities continues to decrease (AGRA, 2015). Available research that attempted to understand young people's insights on their engagement in agriculture generated controversial findings. On one hand, young people were found to not regard agriculture as a suitable profession for them and thus prefer to look for other jobs rather than engaging in agricultural activities claiming that they are less profitable, too labour intensive, time consuming, etc. (AGRA, 2015). Further, youth consider agriculture as a backward sector providing no prospects for farmers hence a last resort or even not an option at all when it comes to their possibilities to engage in the sector (Tadele and Gella, 2012; Leavy and Smith, 2010). On the other hand, the youth present themselves as willing to participate and engage in agriculture but face a number of challenges such as lack of skills, access to land, credit, influence to decision-making, sociocultural norms, and so forth, therefore aspiring to do something else outside agriculture (Giuliani et al., 2017; Sumberg et al., 2012). In this regard, many suggestions claim that further research is required in order to

understand youth's aspirations and perceptions vis-à-vis their relationship with agricultural activities (Giuliani et al., 2017). Therefore, there is need to study the phenomenon of youth engagement in agricultural activities particularly from each country's or region's context.

In Rwanda, research about youth engagement to agricultural activities is very little made available. Yet, the country population is by far dominated by young people and agriculture is still the main sector employing the population especially in rural areas. However, Rwandan agriculture is practiced by ageing farmers whose farming skills strongly rely on their indigenous knowledge. The sector is mainly rainfed and climate dependent with low levels of technologies (e.g. low input use, low irrigation and mechanisation levels, etc.). Farmers are associated with a background of poverty, with lack of access to resources. A decade ago, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) outlined a policy of agriculture transformation which aimed to shift the sector from subsistence-based to market-oriented (GoR, 2009). This implied the use of innovations and technologies in the sector which would be best implemented through – among others – persuasion of young people to engage in agricultural activities since the actual farmers are in large numbers uneducated and therefore lack basic skills required to develop new technologies in agriculture or embrace modern farming practices (ibid). But young people could still be trained to incorporate their basic skills in agriculture and develop agripreneurship ideas which would overturn the poor status of farmers that makes them risk averse (FAO, 2014). In contrast, the country experiences a high rate of urbanization, and its young people lead the mark by migrating to cities to look for better livelihood opportunities out of agriculture (Sommers, 2012).

In line with the above, I have carried out this research on youth engagement in agriculture from the perspective of Rwanda, in order to get insights of young people on agriculture and the desired commitment of the youth to agriculture as well as key factors influencing rural youth's decisions to migrate to urban areas to look for other livelihood opportunities. This thesis explores these themes by providing perceptions of young people in both rural areas of Northern Rwanda and urban areas of Kigali city on their engagement to agriculture and their decisions to move to urban areas to look for non-agricultural job opportunities. It analyses linkages between the young people's viewpoints by drawing from theories and concepts of doxa, symbolic capital, social norms and youth aspirations and provides empirical findings which might be useful to policy makers and relevant organisations in the country who work relentlessly to persuade the youth to contribute to sustainable agriculture development.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research was to understand perceptions of Rwandan young people on agriculture and the factors that influence their engagement into agricultural activities and their decisions to move from rural to urban areas to look for non-agricultural job opportunities.

1.3. Specific objectives

- **Objective 1** was to explore different understandings of young men and women in both rural areas of Northern Rwanda and urban areas of Kigali city about agriculture and the activities they consider as agricultural activities.
- **Objective 2** was to investigate the factors that influence young people in Rwanda to consider to engage or not engage in agricultural activities.
- **Objective 3** was to understand the factors that influence Rwandan young people's decision to leave agriculture and rural areas to migrate to cities to look for non-agricultural opportunities.

1.4. Research Questions

In line with the purpose of the study, the entire inquiry process was based on 2 main research questions. The first question was at the heart of the study and a part of it was expected to provide part of the answers to the second as the two questions were designed to complement each other for the achievement of the purpose of the study. The research questions are presented as follows:

1. **How do young people in Rwanda perceive agriculture and their engagement in agriculture?**
2. **Why do Rwandan youth opt to migrate to cities in search for non-agricultural employment?**

1.5. Thesis Outline

This thesis is structured as follows: The second chapter provides a detailed background about discourses around young people and agriculture and the emergence of youth engagement in agriculture ("YEIA" throughout this study) initiatives in Africa, with a particular focus to Rwanda. In the third chapter, theories and concepts that frame this thesis are outlined. The fourth chapter is the methodology whereby methods used for study sites selection, data collection and analysis are described. The fifth chapter details the empirical findings of the study which are presented based on the research objectives and research questions. The sixth chapter presents an analytical discussion which reveals the relationship between the major findings by using the conceptual framework presented in the third chapter and in analogy with previous research conducted in relation to YEIA. The last chapter summarises my major findings and concludes by providing contributions of this study to existing knowledge, reflecting on the methodology as well as giving suggestions for further research.

2. Thematic background

This chapter highlights important aspects about YEIA in Africa and particularly in Rwanda. The term “youth” is first and foremost scrutinised and eventually defined in the context of this research. Further, the status of young people in Africa, especially in Rwanda will be looked upon. Current discourses on agriculture in Africa, with a particular focus on Rwandan agriculture will be presented to introduce the emergence of YEIA initiatives throughout the entire continent and Rwanda in particular.

2.1. Dynamics around the term “youth”

The term “youth” generally refers to young persons, living a period of time often identified as intermediate between childhood and adulthood or maturity (Pyburn et al., 2015). Countries and cultures worldwide recognize youth very differently. But the most common factor from which individuals are identified as youth is their age. Other factors include specific changes in attitudes, responsibilities, needs and preferences (Giuliani et al., 2017). Although international organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank recognize every person aged between 15 and 24 years as youth (AGRA, 2015), some countries consider an extended age range. In many places in Sub-Saharan Africa, sociocultural factors influence youth identification more than the age range and youth can for instance be defined in rural areas differently from urban areas, marital status being one key factor (Grant and Furstenberg, 2007).

The revised National Youth Policy (NYP) of the government of Rwanda (GoR) defines youth as every individual belonging to the age group of 16 to 30 years old, replacing the older 14-35 age range given by the 2006 NYP (GoR, 2015). There was no other precedented purpose for this shift than policy programmes related regulations (ibid). However, this study incorporated occupational and marital status as additional factors defining the term youth but maintains age as the most important factor defining youth. In Rwanda, many young people in the age range of 14 to 20 pursue high school education in boarding schools and I assumed their ideas likely to be influenced by school rather than societal life. Thus, it appeared difficult to include them in the target group. Moreover, people in their thirties are usually married and have already framed their professions and responsibilities, a feature that renders them adults rather than youth.

In the context of this study, the term “youth” is therefore defined as people aged between 20 and 30 years. In some literature materials, youth is referred to the age group of young people. But in this thesis, the term applies while mentioning individuals as well. Hence, the terms of “young people” and “youth” will be used interchangeably throughout this study. However, it is also important to mention that youth have been repeatedly considered as a homogeneous group, neglecting the fact that young people have different values, norms, backgrounds, abilities, and other factors which make them constitute a very complex group of individuals (Giuliani et

al., 2017). This study relatively takes this feature into account and recognizes young people as unique individuals by taking into consideration different aspects such as capital, gender, geographic location, etc. held by every participant to this research.

2.2. African Youth Bulge¹ – A Challenge and an Opportunity

The continent of Africa is experiencing the highest pace of population increase in the world. Youth bulge is the most important feature of Africa's demographic dividend. In other words, among the population increasing in the continent, young people lead the mark. More than 70% of the continent's population is below 30 years old (AGRA, 2015). In Rwanda, the proportion is even higher as the number of people aged below 35 years old was culminating close to 80% of the total population in 2012. Young people aged between 16 and 30 neared one third of the country's entire population (AGRA, 2015). This demographic bonus presents both challenges and opportunities in terms of socioeconomic development across the continent.

On one hand, youth unemployment has shown to increase together with the youth bulge in Africa. Many countries in Africa have recently experienced a boost in economic development but the level of job creation has been slow to follow the development pace. Yet – despite the quality of education currently brought into question – African young people grow up more educated than previous generations (Filmer and Fox, 2014). With a limited availability of employment in sectors leading Africa's economic growth, many countries in Africa are challenged by issues of “jobless growth” and “double whammy” where there is increasing supply of job seekers while at the same time a job crisis is already being experienced (AGRA, 2015, p. 19). As a consequence, young people create different strategies to adapt to the struggle of lacking professional employment. Engagement in informal sector activities and migrating to cities are the most common options. (Mwaura, 2017a, 2017b) explains “side-hustling” as a common phenomenon in Kenya where educated young people engage in diverse income earning activities in order to sustain their livelihoods and/or finance “tarmacking” – the activity of seeking for formal sector employment – mostly through migrating to urban areas.

Urban migration of rural youth is a common feature in other Sub-Saharan African countries as well and it has been highlighted as both slowing down development rates of cities and a potential security threat within the discourse of youth bulge theory. The World Bank, (2007) identify increasing urbanization rate – led by rural youth seeking for informal sector employment – as migration of poverty from rural to urban areas because these rural young people usually live in slums of the cities while looking for jobs and working in the informal sector. Moreover, the marginal life of urban young people especially male youth appears as a potential threat to a country's security. Referring to rather controversial ideas of youth bulge thesis, Sommers in Bannon et al., (2006) argued that the presence of under- and unemployed male youth in one place might be a potential security threat as they can easily be influenced by their peers and surrounding. He used the case of Rwanda pregenocide

¹ The context of this term used in this thesis is more related to the demographic aspects of it as it was used by AGRA (2015). It is not of intention to enter the discourse of youth bulge theories.

time to explain how the situation of male youth unemployment and hopeless life arguably took the lead in violence that happened afterwards in the country. He highlighted that a similar phenomenon had started to occur in the country given currently rising urbanization rates led by unemployed male youth and suggests an imperative need to positively empower and engage the youth in financial support programmes. The youth bulge challenge increases pressure to governments as it leads to an imperative to create job opportunities to integrate young people who are growing up desperate to find ways of securing employment.

On the other hand, the youth bulge is presented as an asset for Africa. While population in the rest of the world is aging rapidly, Africa's population is instead rising. The World Bank report on Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa notes that the growth of Africa's population can be an asset in the global and regional marketplace as the continent can become the main supplier of labour in the world in the production and manufacture sectors (Filmer and Fox, 2014). To enable these potential opportunities, promotion of entrepreneurship and capacity building programmes should be targeted together with expanding sectors of production as well as manufacturing. Although young people in Africa are increasingly educated, the quality of education they acquire does not make them competent for all kinds of professional employment (ibid). They are however endowed with initial skills to be easily trained and develop abilities to create innovative solutions which will contribute to the economic growth of their countries (AGRA, 2015). This calls for intervention of policies and strategies that will enable young people to develop learning skills and acquire knowledge which would render them competitive on national, regional and global job markets.

Skills and knowledge, however, should be connected to the needs of the private sector. Filmer and Fox, (2014) pointed to the disappointment of programmes of technical vocational education and training (TVET) in Sub-Saharan Africa which have not provided a better foundation for the development of the private sector. These programmes have focused on providing "firm- or job-specific skills" rather than portable skills enabling creativity such as financial literacy, business and management, entrepreneurship, quality assurance, information, etc. (Filmer and Fox, 2014, p. 20) Moreover, enabling capacity building should address the question of access faced by the majority of African youth. This means that governments should focus on provision of public goods and services i.e. building supportive infrastructures, increasing access to financial capital, access to land and technology and establishing an open access to regional markets to enable African young people's learning environment that would see them become competitive on the job market and thus provide a potential sustainable economic growth of their countries and the continent in general (Filmer and Fox, 2014).

2.3. Youth in Agriculture – A silver bullet for youth employment and agricultural development concerns

Agriculture has always been the largest employer in the economy of almost all African countries. More than one third of the total labour force in Sub-Saharan Africa works within the agricultural sector (AGRA, 2015; World Bank, 2007). But most of

the poorest people on the globe are located in Sub-Saharan Africa and are reported to work in agriculture as well. The majority of them are smallholder farmers whose farms occupy the largest share of arable land on the entire globe (AGRA, 2015). The economic development that many African countries have experienced over the past decade has not been pro-poor since sectors – such as industry, tourism, trade, etc. – that contributed to the growth are not featured by poor people and this has consequently increased income inequality among populations in many African countries (AGRA, 2015; Filmer and Fox, 2014). It has been suggested that in order to target development of the poorest, agriculture should be the sector to receive focus. In fact, of all sectors on the path of economic growth, agriculture lags behind and slows down the development of African countries. A major reason for this statement might be because agricultural activities are still carried out based on traditional skills and from indigenous knowledge of farmers. The sector is also being challenged by climate variations and natural hazards of land degradation which have resulted in heavy losses and reduced productivity of agricultural soils (Sumberg et al., 2014, 2012). While food demand has been increasing together with a shift to extended food choices and preferences, food security in Africa is increasingly being threatened as long as agriculture fails to meet productivity demands (Sumberg et al., 2014).

A particular note from Rwandan agriculture comes in terms of land availability and farm size. The country is very small by size and its topography is featured by many hills and mountains to the extent that it has been given the nickname of “a land of a thousand hills”. Although agriculture is the most practiced activity in the country as many other sub-Saharan African countries, farming land is ought to be available just in small plots and subjected to natural hazards of erosion, landslides etc. Different strategies to address the challenges faced by hilly and mountainous agriculture have been put in action. They include establishment of terraces, soil conservation practices, and so forth. But natural hazards caused by heavy rainfall and extended period of sunshine all year round continue to accumulate. This additional challenge to agriculture generated by the feature of Rwanda’s topography literally makes it even harder to achieve increased agricultural productivity in the country (GoR, 2009). However, research has argued against this assumption of small farm size being less productive. Ali and Deininger, (2014) argued that low productivity is not directly proportional to small farm size. It is instead due to labor and other factor market imperfections. From their research in Rwanda, they state that smaller farms are more productive and profitable in the country, suggesting that increased productivity would be achieved by keeping farm size relatively small rather than aggregating farmlands into bigger size plots.

A potential implication of the above-mentioned situation of agriculture in Africa, and Rwanda in particular may be an imperative need of agricultural development through introducing modern farming practices and integration of technology and innovation in the sector. Many countries have already established strategies and policies for agricultural transformation which basically have the main target of shifting agriculture from a subsistence economy to a business-driven sector. This aim has been endorsed by global partners who hold an ultimate assumption that the development of agriculture in African countries is a potential solution for poverty reduction

and food security. Studies have indeed suggested that more jobs can be created, if agriculture in Africa is developed into a business-oriented sector (AGRA, 2015; Filmer and Fox, 2014). Given the situation of youth unemployment in Africa, agriculture has been identified as the sector with all the potentialities to absorb large numbers of young people who can learn and develop skills to contribute to sustainable development of agriculture (Mwaura, 2017a; Sumberg et al., 2014)

Moreover, innovations and technologies in farming practices needed for agricultural development are not likely to be implemented by the ageing population who are usually identified to be under- or uneducated and often reluctant to learn new skills as it appears very demanding and strenuous to them. Farmers seem to be, in addition to that, entangled in their poor context to be risk averse towards investing in the use of agriculture technologies. These are the substantial reasons why several initiatives to promote young people for agricultural development are being made through policymaking and implementations. It is indeed believed that young people can help out in resolving the problem of the lack of innovation in the sector since they are considered to be more apt to learn new skills required to generate innovative solutions for agricultural development. For instance, the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) has recently partnered with the African Development Bank (AfDB) to initiate the “ENABLE Youth Program” which aims to empower youth access to agribusiness opportunities. The program bases on the evidence from its pilot phase which deduced that young people “can become the driving force of agricultural transformation in Africa”². To contribute to policymaking for youth engagement in agriculture (YEIA), the IITA – under the support of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) – at the time of this research, was inviting young researchers to apply for a research fellowship on “Youth Engagement in Agribusiness and Rural Economic Activities in Africa”³. However, a big challenge to understand is the cause of a decrease of young people’s interest in agricultural activities (AGRA, 2015; Leavy and Smith, 2010)

In order to understand the decisions of young people in relation to their commitment in agricultural activities, researchers have made their first steps by trying to get youth perceptions and dreams in regard to the issue. In Morocco, Giuliani et al., (2017) have found out that the lack of access to resources such as land, infrastructures, and limited capacity in decision making make rural youth consider leaving agriculture and seek for other jobs in urban areas. But this does not come as a primary option. Instead, many young people consider staying in their villages if those challenges are addressed. This appears promising for agriculture as many efforts are being put in creating incentives to young people to engage in agricultural activities and devising rural transformation initiatives to the advantage of the youth.

In Rwanda, the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources in Rwanda (MINAGRI) have recently exhibited support to Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF) five-year (2017-2021) strategic plan which mainly consists of building capacity of young

² More information can be found on <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/afdb-and-iita-invite-africa-to-think-big-for-youth-and-agriculture-in-two-day-design-workshop-on-enable-youth-program-15587/> [accessed on January 27th, 2018]

³ Further information on the programme can be found on <http://www.opportunitydesk.org/2018/01/03/iita-research-fellowship-for-africans-2018/> [accessed on January 27th, 2018]

farmers to make agriculture more profitable⁴. Further initiatives such as AgriProFocus, Youth Engagement in Agriculture Network (YEAN), Young Professionals in Agricultural Development (YPARD-Rwanda), etc. have also shown their concern and commitment in motivating young people to embrace agriculture. The lack of information skills and adequate education or knowledge in agriculture have been identified as the key challenges for lack of Rwandan youth's commitment into agriculture (FAO, 2014). However, critics found in the literature on implementation of agricultural development initiatives in Rwanda allege policymakers to not consider thoughts, insights and perceptions of farmers and young people by overlooking their importance (Sommers, 2012) and often implement the policies through coercion of farmers (Ansoms, 2008; Ansoms et al., 2017). Moreover, the discourse on the extent to which young people view agriculture as a livelihood option, "cool profession" or a "dream job" that corresponds to their desired lifestyle, is not covered from the perspective of Rwanda and can only be explained by getting youth's insights about that very issue. The efforts to motivate young people to engage in agriculture would thus be in vain if the youth do not consider agriculture as a profession that matches youth-hood. Hence, I argue that perspectives of youth in relation to their engagement in agriculture are very much needed in Rwanda given that the country is experiencing high levels of urban migration of rural young people.

⁴ Detailed information on the partnership is available online on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal resources in Rwanda (MINAGRI) link: http://www.minagri.gov.rw/index.php?id=469&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=1429&cHash=9a4abe0e2f1d7efdcf65ef7e1cb61d4c [accessed on November 29, 2017]

3. Concepts and Theories

In this chapter, I outline concepts and theories that facilitate understanding perceptions presented by Rwandan young people on YEIA. I first present the concept of habitus that I use as an underlying approach to describe life experiences and perceptions of young people in relation to agriculture, rural life and migration to urban areas. Further, concepts of doxa and symbolic capital will be brought up to provide understanding of young people's perceptions on YEIA. I thereafter describe the relationship between these concepts and the theory of social norms and/or institutions which have a particular relevance to the findings of this research. I eventually use the concept of aspirations to discuss determinants of youth aspirations which might have influenced different insights provided by Rwandan young people on YEIA. At the end of the chapter, the concepts and theories will be put together to generate a theoretical framework in the context of this study, which will be used for data analysis and discussion throughout this thesis.

3.1. Habitus, a phenomenological perspective

Habitus is a central concept to Pierre Bourdieu's theories (Grenfell, 2012; Reay, 2004). It aims at questioning taken-for-granted actions and behaviours of individuals or groups of individuals in societies, by rejecting ideas of "realism of objective structures" in societies (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). The concept is built upon the idea that individuals' dispositions and/or behaviours are shaped by structures and rules in a particular society (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012). Habitus operates on practical consciousness level and hence individuals potentially become unaware of their habitus. It is this feature that makes the concept bear a phenomenological character.

Bourdieu builds on ideas of Edmond Husserl (considered as the father of phenomenology) to explain how habitus operates at the practical consciousness level (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, pp. 128–129; Bourdieu, 1977). Habitus is inextricably linked to phenomenology given that the latter aims to understand how individuals perceive the world in which they live through examining human consciousness. Husserl argued that consciousness is "a stream-like item moving constantly", which takes things in the world surrounding the individual and eventually shape it (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012, p. 89). Arguing about the exercising of phenomenology, Husserl brought up the concept of *lifeworld* by explaining two different truths about individuals' experiences. One being life experiences as they appear to everyone from everyday knowledge and another truth provided by scientific knowledge which is potentially provided by a researcher through analysis of life experiences of individuals in a particular society (Moran, 2012). In phenomenological research, habitus might therefore be used while exploring different lifeworlds of individuals within particular societal contexts.

This study was framed from phenomenological research notions and was thus carried out through exploring lifeworlds of different young people in relation to agriculture and rural life. In this thesis, the concept of habitus is used from a phenomenological

point of view, as an approach to explore these lifeworlds and how they have developed and/or transformed under the influence of different factors to generate particular perceptions and aspirations of Rwandan young people on agriculture. These factors are analysed while using concepts of doxa, symbolic capital and the theory of social norms. They are presented in the following sections.

3.2. Doxa, unfolding beliefs and traditions

The concept of doxa puts into question social structures and systems of classification in society which develop and become internalised into “mental structures”. The leading idea of doxa is that by virtue of social orders’ reproduction, a strong correspondence between social structures and classifications confers the social world a natural and self-evident state (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164). In other words, doxa refers to when social structures, beliefs and practices become widely accepted to the extent that they are taken for granted as natural self-evident states grounded in reality. Being accepted will render them no longer up for questioning or contestation.

The unfolding of social classification systems makes doxa scrutinise power relations by arguing that groups of people who hold no power (i.e. marginalised individuals) end up perceiving their marginal statuses as natural and thereby internalise that as a tradition. Agarwal (1997, p. 15) explains that traditions constitute a category of systems that doxa refers to. Traditions are a result of reproduction of social structures over a long period of time which become accepted as normal beliefs and therefore unquestionable by an individual’s practical consciousness. However, in phenomenology, these beliefs are questioned and therefore it might be important to use doxa as a concept while analysing empirical materials involving traditional beliefs in a particular society.

In relation to doxa are aligned concepts of orthodoxy and heterodoxy which refer to individuals “being aware and recognising antagonistic beliefs” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164). Both concepts form “the universe of discourse or argument” which put aside traditional, unquestioned beliefs in the universe of doxa (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 168). In other words, the concepts refer to when actions considered as normal or taken-for-granted become a topic of discussion or are brought up in the discourse to receive both positive (orthodoxy) and negative (heterodoxy) opinions. Orthodox beliefs often operate under the influence of individuals holding power in traditions and tend to bring the status quo of the discourse back to the universe of doxa while the heterodox reject them (Bourdieu, 1977). From this study’s point of view, there is a trend to move from doxa to heterodoxy given that the matter of traditional beliefs about agriculture, farming and rural life is brought into discussion and attempts to reject any form of power influencing the grip of usual marginalisation of farmers in societies.

3.3. Symbolic capital – Beyond the common economic form

Capital is another major concept of Bourdieu which analyses how important are positions of individuals in a society (Grenfell, 2012, p. 50). Bourdieu argues against

the fact that capital has been more considered from its economic form (hence mentioning the historical background of capitalism), implicitly converting other forms of the concept – social and cultural capital – into “disinterested” capitals (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013, p. 105). Yet, these forms of capital are very important to consider given that even the economic form of capital is in turn determined by cultural and social capital to a large extent. Therefore, rather than looking at the concept from its economic and monetary exchange form, Bourdieu aims to utilise it in a broad sense,

“in a wider system of exchanges whereby assets of different kinds are transformed and exchanged within complex networks or circuits within and across different fields” although he argues that “cultural and social capital can be seen as ‘transubstantiated’ forms of economic capital” (Grenfell, 2012, p. 99).

Inglis and Thorpe (2012) explain Bourdieu’s concept of capital as

“[involving] both *resources* – the ways in which actors can play a game – and *stakes* – what players are playing the game to get more of, i.e. the advantages that can be won or lost by playing that game” (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012, p. 218).

In the context of individuals in society, they would define capital as individuals’ assets or resources and the factors that facilitate success or failure to acquire them. The authors move forward to describe the three types of capital according to Bourdieu.

“The first is *economic capital*: the level of monetary resources a person has at their disposal. The second is *social capital*: the amount of resources a person has in terms of networks of relations with other people. [...] The third type is *cultural capital*: the cultural resources that a person possesses” which are determined by their level of knowledge (education) and “the amount of socially recognized prestige attached to a person’s various practices” (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012, p. 218).

Social and cultural capitals were identified by Grenfell, (2012) as “specific types of capital” which constitute the symbolic form of capital, the side of the concept that has been set aside in favour of the economic or financial form of capital. (Grenfell, 2012, p. 98). However, economic capital can also demonstrate a symbolic form of capital. Hence, symbolic capital is another form of capital that encompasses all the three types of capital in a symbolic form (Lawler, 2011).

Grenfell (2012) provided two ways to understand Bourdieu’s concept of *symbolic capital*:

- (1) “The values, tastes and lifestyles of some [individuals or groups of individuals who hold power positions in a particular society] are elevated in a way that confers social advantage [to them]”. (2) “[Some] forms of capital such as cultural capital are [acquired and determined by] qualitative differences in forms of consciousness within [individuals or groups of individuals] ... and a recognised mastery of some techniques” (Grenfell, 2012, p. 99).

To make it simpler, symbolic capital can be acquired not only by the amount of prestige and honour accumulated by individuals in a particular society (Reay, 2004) but also through different skills (acquired through education), the ability of

individuals to be aware of alternative opinions to their traditional beliefs and be willing to change or transform them to their advantage. Furthermore, the lure of modernity has a certain correspondence with holding symbolic capital since it bestows individuals with both cultural and economic capital. Shi (2001) explains this correspondence by providing examples of how modernity from the western world and Japan has given Chinese people who had graduated from western and Japanese schools increased cultural capital which was transformed into economic capital while they would be given “handsome remunerations” (p. 68). Modernity appears to hold an intrinsic symbolic capital which makes it attractive and therefore is the cause of the emergence of pull factors of migration from rural areas to their urban and modern counterparts. In this thesis, this scenario is scrutinised while understanding perceptions of urban young people who have migrated from rural areas, leaving agricultural activities to move to the city in order to seek non-agricultural activities. Here, youth migration would be understood as a strategy to search for symbolic capital by following the paths of modernity.

Back to Grenfell's (2012) ways of understanding symbolic capital, it is likely that the capital's acquisition happens in favour of interests of people who hold power positions. But what about individuals who have failed to secure enough capital? They are left behind and eventual social inequalities emerge as a result. Bourdieu argues that contemporary social hierarchies and social inequality are caused by symbolic capital acquisition and in their turn, cause the suffering of those who lack this form of capital. Further, hierarchies and inequalities “are produced and maintained less by physical force than by forms of symbolic domination”. Hence, Bourdieu defines the results of that domination as symbolic violence (Grenfell, 2012, p. 179). According to Bourdieu, this symbolic violence is reproduced and kept experienced by individuals who lack symbolic capital. He uses the notion of symbolic violence in his understanding of language, which he perceives as a form of domination, considering it – together with communication – as “an instrument of power and action” (see Eagleton, in Bourdieu and Eagleton 1992e: 111 cited by Grenfell, 2012, p. 179). To be more concrete, language can be used to maintain power relations and determine who should be empowered or not empowered in society. Important to mention is that there is this emerging correspondence between symbolic violence and doxa as the former is also a result of reproduction of social structures which end up being internalised as natural, embedded in tradition and thus operate from practical consciousness (Bourdieu, 1977).

3.4. Social norms and institutions

Society operates in a complex system of rules and regulations which determine behaviours of its individuals. North (1991) defines those rules and regulations as institutions, “rules of the game” that have been devised by humans in order to shape their behaviours as well as their social interactions. He adds that institutions can be both formal (such as constitutions, laws, property rights, etc.) and informal (i.e. traditions, taboos, customs, values, codes of conduct, constraints and so on). As the name suggests, the latter type appears much more complex and likely to differ for each society than the former. Informal institutions are difficult to be known unless they are

experienced. They crave scrutiny that should be specific to each particular society. A particular focus on these forms of institutions is made in this research.

Hodgson (2006) denotes that institutions both enable and constrain behaviour, stressing that rules are commonly known as constraints and that these can enable new actions and behaviours as individuals adapt to or abide by the rules. Although a part of rules are legal (formal institutions according to North, 1991), Hodgson (2006) explains that rules are generally perceived as socially transmitted customary norms which shape behaviours and actions in a particular society. An implication of this might be that social norms are mostly related to customs and traditions, led by language and society evolution, which have a strong effect on and shape thoughts, actions or behaviours of individuals who belong to that specific society. However, as pointed out by Hodgson (2006), rules are different from norms in that norms can be approved or disapproved while rules involve sanctions. This means, norms are subject to change depending on choices and preferences of individuals more than rules. But in case norms are approved or accepted in a society, they become very much resistant because they are value-based institutions, while rules can be altered through institutional changes implemented by new governmental policies, for instance (Portes, 2006). For change to be efficient, both norms and rules should be transformed at the same time.

In this research, youth's perceptions on agriculture and their engagement in the sector are studied. I find it critical to explore underlying dispositions of individuals on agriculture in Rwandan society because how agriculture and/or farming is considered a job option in the country has – due to social transmission of value-based (informal) institutions – an influence on young people's decisions to engage in agriculture or migrate from rural to urban areas to look for non-agricultural job opportunities. As many scholars stated, I argue that the attitude society confers to agriculture is likely to be the same transferred to young people and will therefore have an impact on how efficient the implementation of global and governmental initiatives to persuade youth to engage in agriculture will be. North (1991) and Portes (2006) explain that social norms can be embedded in formal institutions such as markets, education, etc. These structures are devised by individuals who are influenced by norms of their societies. Thus, social norms virtually shape and influence the functioning of formal institutions. However, how (well) formal institutions function will in turn influence social norms (Portes, 2006).

3.5. Aspirations of Youth – Embedded in societal structures

Leavy and Smith (2010) explain that aspirations occur in the early steps of a lifetime, during childhood and are highly dependent on the environments in which one is growing up. Aspirations can therefore be adapted or even changed as the person experiences

“new environments, choices and information, including individual awareness of one's own abilities and the opportunities open to them” (Leavy and Smith, 2010, p. 6).

Social class, socio-economic status and income are outlined as potential correlates of aspirations (Leavy and Smith, 2010). Duncan et al. (1968) discussed how actions and attainments are results of aspirations and environment as a facilitator of the functioning of aspirations. Facilitation is determined by the level of opportunities in the environment on one hand but also existing constraints and risks which are usually embedded in social structures of a particular society (Sherwood, 1989). Social structures indeed play an important role in influencing aspirations given their likelihood to be reproduced and transferred from a generation to another. Gutman et al. (2008) found out that aspirations of children are in many cases close to their parents'. Moreover, living in a society for a long time tend to limit the extent of aspirations as thoughts of individuals are framed to a large extent by norms, customs and traditions of that very society. Leavy and Smith (2010) discuss how intra-household relations create support dependence of children on their heads of households which affect young people's aspirations by limiting them to a certain level similar to their household or family members'. Those aspirations are to a large extent affected by societal customary norms.

However, aspirations affected by inter-generational interactions are related to both interdependency and autonomy. According to Leavy and Smith (2010), they are the most relevant correlates of aspirations in regard with migration studies. Many young people aspire to migrate in order to become autonomous and be relatively free from constraints generated by social norms from their particular societies. Being dependent to their family or kinship networks confers them a low status but whenever they become autonomous, their status can change as long as they acquire income. In fact, Leavy and Smith (2010) state also that many young people's aspirations are very much related to the willingness to acquire financial income. Arguing that migration is a strategy to acquire income and status in their home societies, Sumberg et al. (2014) explained migration as a "capital"; that people who migrate gain new knowledge of experiencing a new way of life as well as having a chance to scrutinize the life they were living before. Moreover, societal norms can also be another determinant of young people's aspirations to migrate. Sommers (2012) found that young people in Rwanda, especially young men, aspire and choose to migrate from their home areas due to the pressure society directs to them about their responsibilities to build a house in order to get married and be recognized as adults. They find it very expensive to afford building a house although society requests them to do so and therefore they choose to migrate.

3.6. Analytical framework – Incorporating doxa and symbolic capital in societal norms as influencers of youth aspirations.

A combination of concepts and theories outlined above leads to an analytical framework (Figure 1) that provides a broad understanding of young people's perceptions and decisions on YEIA and rural life. Agriculture in many African countries, including Rwanda, is linked to tradition. It has been practiced for survival or subsistence where people plant crops mainly to secure food for themselves and their household or family members. The idea of securing food from elsewhere has been uncommon.

Moreover, the link between agriculture and education, from a historical perspective, is not something people were familiar with. In other words, agriculture is much more known as an activity done without a need to go to school. In many societies, farming skills are acquired through experience of going to the field rather than to school or a university of agriculture. Implicitly, the aim of sending a child to school has been very different from expectations to become a farmer. Another important feature about traditional agriculture is related to business. Agriculture as a business is also not a familiar conceptualization from a historical perspective. In subsistence agriculture, people eat what they produce. When they need to eat something else than they have produced, they exchange their products or surplus if any, to that other type of food they want. This is basically how local market exchanges are made in many rural areas. Subsistence agriculture is eventually a way of life in rural areas where social relations are strengthened by sharing produces after harvesting time. Hence, subsistence agriculture as a way of life in rural areas of developing countries has become a part of *doxa*, developing beliefs that agriculture is not a professional job, not a business and not for educated people.

It is also important to highlight potential mutual causalities of the attitudes on agriculture and status of farmers in societies. Assuming that farming skills do not require going to school but experience on the field, for example, society does not recognize farmers as educated or holding any strong cultural capital. Many farmers in rural areas are indeed uneducated and therefore unable to explore opportunities generated by being educated. Even if farmers who are landowners might have acquired important economic capital, their status is still considered low if they are uneducated i.e. the amount of cultural capital they hold is relatively low. Thus, cultural capital is crucial because it generates knowledge to its holders, the kind of knowledge that is very critical in entering the universe of heterodoxy and orthodoxy i.e. the awareness of one's own beliefs and be able to question them in order to transform or reproduce them to their advantage. The low status of farmers in their societies lowers their ability to establish social networks as well. Because the trend will be that their social relations will only be with those they interact with in their rural areas i.e. people with similar beliefs as theirs. Hence, they lack symbolic capital and they are, according to Bourdieu, among the vulnerable individuals who are subjected to suffer symbolic violence to a larger extent (Grenfell, 2012).

However, with reproduction of the way ideal farmers in society conduct their lives, they will have created their own social world which will be difficult to understand unless experienced. They establish social structures that are adaptive to their way of living, which they transfer to the next generations. Moving forward with the example of the fact that farmers are illiterate, the *doxa* of being uneducated might create a social norm that educated people should not farm. Their children would grow up with that attitude which might grow even further to extend to the rest of society. This would have an impact on young people's aspirations to become farmers because the environment in which they grew up would not have facilitated the attainment of that aspiration. When it happens that the norm becomes challenged, and an educated person wants to farm, objecting reactions are likely to emerge. Consequently, it will appear reasonable if an educated person, school or university graduate does not

develop any aspiration to become a farmer given the status conferred to farmers in society, a status mostly influenced by education.

Another important scenario that is likely to happen is related to attainment of aspirations. In case there are educated persons aspiring to become farmers, they will – as mentioned above – face objecting reactions driven by the attitude that farming is not something an educated person should do. But in order to escape objections allocated together with the norm, strategies resulting from moving to heterodoxy from doxa will emerge. These are explained by the ability to create adaptive solutions to the objective structures. An educated person who wishes to become a farmer while society does not “allow” them to do so might – for example – come up with something new, related to agriculture or farming, but totally different from the ordinary or common ways of farming. This way, the person can avoid to be looked at in the same way as other (illiterate) farmers and where necessary bear another occupational title different from what people are usually familiar with and have already stigmatized. Otherwise, educated persons might abide by the social structures and try to find something else to do in order to escape any kind of objections connected to social norms.

Figure 1 provides a theoretical framework describing a habitus characterised by the above-described relationships between doxa, symbolic capital, social norms and youth aspirations in terms of youth engagement in Agriculture (YEIA). Both doxa and symbolic capital are identified as determinants of young people’s aspirations either directly or through their mutual influence with social norms. Indeed, these social institutions were already considered as direct factors influencing youth aspirations (Leavy and Smith, 2010). This suggests that any negative side of each of the three concepts might negatively affect youth aspirations in a particular phenomenon. Therefore, in order to produce positive youth aspirations on agriculture, there is need to transform every negative feature of these three concepts influencing young people’s aspiration in relation to agriculture. This framework is used throughout this thesis to discuss different habituses explored from Rwandan young people’s perceptions on YEIA.

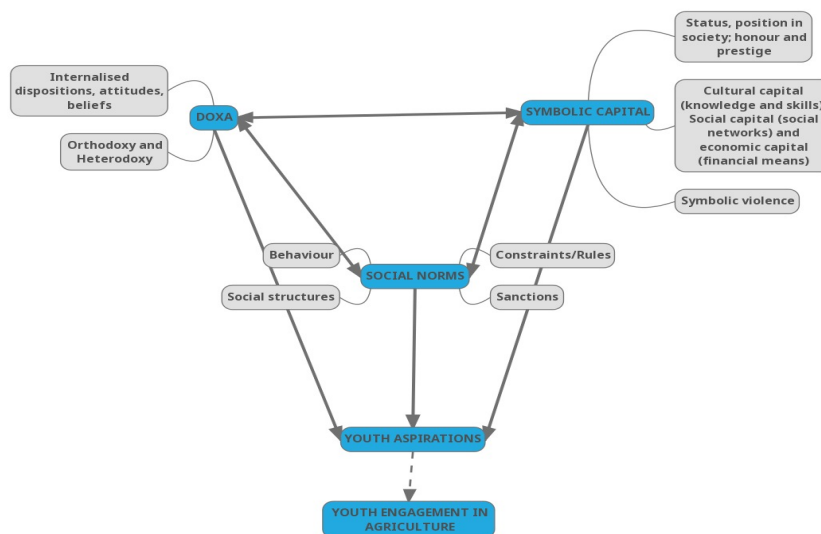


Figure 1: Analytical framework for understanding Rwandan young people’s habituses in relation to YEIA.

Source: Created by the author

4. Methodology

This chapter presents and critically discusses the research approach used in this study. I provide factors that led to the choice of study sites and participants. Also, I explain the choice of particular research methods and how they were conducted during data collection. Important issues of ethics and trustworthiness of the research are presented to emphasize that given its purpose, this study was dependent on participants conditions and natural settings of the field. I eventually describe the process of data analysis which generated the overall story told in further chapters of this thesis.

4.1. Philosophical worldviews and Research Design

This study is based on the constructivist worldview, which holds the assumption that individuals spend their everyday life trying to make sense of the world they live in (Creswell, 2014). Indeed, my thinking about the carrying out of this study was guided by the assumption that young people in Rwanda have their particular way of understanding agriculture and rural life and reasons for their choices in terms of engaging in agriculture or migrating to cities to look for non-farm employment. Moreover, this study bears to some extent a transformative worldview which is based on the general idea that research should help out to better marginalised people's situation by triggering "change" or "transformation" of existing social systems (Creswell, 2014). This study refers to existing literature on youth and agriculture, assuming the presence of some sociocultural factors that hinder young people's participation in agricultural activities as they were found to have very limited access to resources such as land, credit and education or skills (Giuliani et al., 2017; Ripoll et al., 2017).

The most suitable way to studying these epistemologies in the context of Rwanda was by conducting a qualitative phenomenological research which aims to understand how individuals make sense of their life experiences (Creswell, 2014). Giuliani et al. (2017) argue that perceptions and aspirations of the youth in relation to engagement in agriculture are not enough covered in the literature and they are context specific. Phenomenological research is the suitable method in capturing individuals' perceptions and fill that gap at least in the context of Rwanda. Indeed, phenomenology as a type of study examines human consciousness which is responsible for the making of taken for granted actions (see chapter 3). This study was designed in such a way that would allow understanding of perceptions of Rwandan young people on their life choices which are influenced by taken for granted actions in their life-worlds. Framing this research from a phenomenological perspective has also enabled taking young people's insights into account and making them present what they consider as normal or ordinary through exercising their practical consciousness in relation to agriculture and rural life. However, I had to make sure that it was young people's perceptions being presented rather than ideas influenced by my presence as a researcher. Below I discuss how I dealt with this appealing issue.

4.2. Reflexivity of the researcher

During data collection in qualitative research, it is important to take into consideration different views and values of the researcher's self and how they might influence crucial stages of the research, especially data interpretation, results presentation, discussion as well as conclusions (Creswell, 2014). This refers to the subjectivity and objectivity issues of an inquiry which are usually used to examine different positions a researcher takes in the research. I thereby would like to emphasize the importance of using a subjective "I" throughout this study given that I was the only one to carry on the entire study and for that I bear responsibility of every feature of the study whether negative or positive.

My role as a researcher was related to my values and personality which have been strongly affected by personal experiences I have been through during my academic and professional career so far. Being a Rwandese, young researcher who fits into the same age category as the research project's targeted participants gave me a position of an insider. However, being a man, highly educated in the context of my participants' setting, studying and living in Europe could put me in a position of an outsider as well, because in my opinion, the way I viewed the country's context at the time of fieldwork bore the influence of a Swedish or European perspective because it is where I have been living for two years. All these factors could arguably affect how freely participants (especially young women) expressed themselves in my presence. Nevertheless, I argue that I had an advantage of (partially) being an insider for this kind of research because I was able to understand participants' contexts, and as I had the language skills, I did not need an interpreter. Hence, I escaped among others the problem of having views filtered through another person since our discussions were more direct, without any intermediary. On the other hand, it could also possibly make me unable to provide more information in relation to common expressions for example because I could quickly understand what was implicitly meant by participants without having to scrutinise. In this case, an outside researcher would gather more information from participants than I could do.

I entered the field aware of all the assumptions of benefits and disadvantages that were associated to my characteristics as a person. I started fieldwork by conducting some field visits meeting with young people engaged in agriculture. I visited headquarters of a youth platform in agribusiness (Rwanda youth in agribusiness forum, RYAF) in Kigali with a purpose of getting acquainted with the environment of YEIA in Rwanda and asking for assistance in participants sampling. I went there with an open mind that leaves aside self-knowledge to welcome other ideas and I admit that this approach was very useful as I gathered much information that I could not have gotten had I engaged in discussions by showing my position on a particular issue. I also visited agricultural activities of young men and women in Northern Rwanda where I had some informal conversations around the issue of YEIA which would be useful in sampling and designing interview protocols. I had to ensure that my questions would be relevant to participants without having to add further comments that would otherwise influence their responses.

I had planned to start with semi-structured individual interviews in rural areas in order to get a first glance of young people's perceptions on agriculture where it is

mostly practiced. Moreover, starting with individual interviews would help me in further recruitment of participants, tailoring effective interview protocols and give me the ability to moderate effectively in subsequent focus groups interviews (Morgan, 1997). However, when the first interview was about to begin, the participant who was a young woman informed me that she would be more comfortable if she was asked questions together with her friend. I reflected back to the reflexivity issue and recalled a similar case experienced by Sommers (2012) about doing research in Rwanda. He stated that many young women prefer to be interviewed in presence of another person they feel more comfortable with. I thus decided to allow the individual interview become a group interview. I argue that this unpredictable change rather affected positively the outcomes of this study, as I realised that I had to make further adjustments to some questions in the protocol and those adjustments generated one of the major findings of this study (see Chapters 5 and 6). To ensure that the right information was captured, it was important to double check with a participant by repeating to him or her my interpretation of what s/he just said so that s/he could confirm or provide further explanations.

4.3. Study sites and participants choices

This research was carried out in both rural areas in Northern Rwanda and urban areas in Kigali city. The rural areas were in two different administrative districts of the Northern Province. The areas were very close and had similar features in terms of topography and agriculture despite belonging to different districts (Figure 2). Choosing these areas was strongly dependent on the presence of young men and women who were engaged in agriculture and had a clue about YEIA initiatives in the country. At the same time, I had selected Northern Rwanda because it is traditionally known to be the most productive agro-ecological zone of the country and therefore more agricultural activities are conducted there than in other regions of Rwanda. A rather subsidiary but important factor was that I come from Northern Rwanda. This has also affected the choice of Northern Rwanda as the location of study sites, for ethical and credibility issues of this study. Prior to our formal discussions, I would informally introduce myself as one of them, because I would have family ties in the study sites. This would implicitly increase the environment of trust during discussions. However, it was not easy to locate both young men and women in the same village or sector. A sector with young men engaged in agriculture lacked their female counterparts and vice versa. The most practical way that emerged was to select young men from Kirayi and young women from Kijumba which are very close areas as mentioned above although the former was more remote than the other. But both share the same big town (Musanze, one of the largest towns in the country after Kigali). All the individual interviews and focus groups discussions in Northern Rwanda took place in these two rural areas.

On the other hand, the situation of selecting urban areas in Kigali was more complex. Before fieldwork, I had planned to locate participants in the outskirts of the city where migrants from rural areas – according to the literature – are assumed to be found (see (World Bank, 2007). However, I did not find such a settled place with rural migrants. Instead, I targeted young people who have lived in rural areas and

performed agriculture before moving to Kigali. The selection of participants for individual interviews was mostly done using snowball methods where I asked young people I had been in contact with during discussion in rural areas to lead me to the people they know who fit in the criteria of this study. Another contribution came from officials in the capital city administration at headquarters after I had been to their office to ask for permission to conduct research in Kigali. We had a productive informal conversation whereby they recommended me some places where I could find the young people I targeted. These places were mostly different markets in the city including Gishyimbo where both focus group discussions were conducted.

In fact, the capital city was selected to be the urban setting of this research because it is a destination for most young people who migrate from rural areas. I could have chosen to talk to young people in Musanze, the closest city to the rural areas I had selected but the issue which arose was that the city does not have more rural migrants as residents, given that it is possible that people work in the city while living in rural areas. Therefore, for the purpose of this study to be achieved, I selected Kigali because it has more migrants who travel long distances from their rural homes to look for new life challenges in the capital city. As mentioned above, they were not located in a single place. Rather, they could be found anywhere in Kigali and that is how I consequently ended up holding discussions in all districts of the city.



Figure 2. Administrative map of Rwanda indicating the location of the sites of this study:

The rural areas where this research was conducted are located in two neighbouring districts of Musanze and Burera, respectively labelled (1) and (2) on the map. Kijumba is located on the northeast coast of Musanze (1) while Kirayi is located close to the northwest coast of Burera (2) district. The urban setting was in Kigali city, located in the centre of the country.

Source: Edited from original map of Revolv⁵

⁵ Map downloaded from <https://www.revolv.com/page/Districts-of-Rwanda> [Accessed on 26 August 2018]

4.4. Qualitative data collection methods

During fieldwork, ensuring to collect enough data for this study was the ultimate target. Data consisted of field observations, focus group discussions and individual face-to-face interviews. As mentioned above, I started with field visits and observations for the sake of sampling participants, designing effective interview protocols and getting to know the most important issues that would need special account in further discussions, FGDs among others. I preferred to conduct semi-structured rather than unstructured interviews because designing questions before hand allowed me to ensure that I covered important issues that were demanded by my research questions and objectives. Although an unstructured interview allows more room for important aspects that need to be discussed, it makes it hard for a researcher to stick to the purpose of the study and generate coherence between two or more interviews (Creswell, 2014). However, my semi-structured questions were designed in a way that would allow participants to bring in crucial topics in their view. In other words, asking open-ended questions enabled participants to feel free while answering the question, where s/he was allowed to raise a topic important in his/her eyes.

Following the purpose of understanding perspectives of young people on the research issue, this research had intentions to ask participants about their dreams and aspirations in relation to agricultural activities. I was interested to learn how different norms raised in the literature regarding how agriculture is perceived by the youth as an uncool profession and a sunset industry with no prospects (e.g. Leavy and Smith, 2010; Ripoll et al., 2017) were perceived in the context of Rwanda. According to Giuliani et al. (2017), aspirations are better obtained from participatory or collective action approaches. I thereby decided to carry out focus groups discussions (FGDs) as a suitable method to uncover young people's dreams, aspirations and ideas about different features conferred to YEIA. In addition, FGDs covered important issues raised in individual interviews which thereby would be triangulated to strengthen authenticity and credibility of findings in this study (Creswell, 2014). Data from field observations, individual interviews and focus groups discussions were all used to generate a thick description of research answers and provide strong themes that are presented in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

I developed a standard interview protocol which contained initial questions framed from research topics elaborated in the subsidiary research questions. The protocol was being used as a guide to all discussions but it was not imperative that all the questions had to be answered. The most important thing was to ensure that the discussion had covered all the research topics. 13 individual interviews were conducted, although one became a group interview with two young women in the rural setting, as earlier mentioned. It was planned from the start to have equal number of young men and women in both rural and urban settings, but due to field realities the numbers were slightly different as shown in Table 1. Every interview lasted around 45 minutes.

Focus group discussions included a number of participatory exercises where participants were encouraged to provide their aspirations and dreams in relation to agriculture, as well as reflecting on the earlier mentioned norms and values associated with agriculture and farmers. I had also prepared vignettes which are short stories

about hypothetical persons in relation to a research issue. They are very suitable methods to use especially during discussions on sensitive issues that would not be freely discussed using more direct methods (Barter and Renold, 2000). I used these stories to extract particular information about young people's dreams, attitudes and beliefs on agriculture. To consider limits and critiques of focus groups discussions about whose voice is raised and how free are participants in the flow of discussion, two gender-segregated groups were formed in both rural and urban areas, one for young women and another for young men. Each of the four FGDs lasted around 90 minutes which included a 15-minute break for refreshment. Overall, data was being recorded after permission from participants although some young people did not agree to be recorded. I had a field log with me, where I took notes of information being provided by participants regardless whether they were or not being recorded.

Table 1. Overall numbers of young people who participated to this research

	Young women		Young men	
	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>
Individual Interviews	4 (1) *	2	3	4
Focus Group Discussions	10	7	7	8

*: As described above, one intended individual interview became a group interview due to unpredicted ethical reasons.

Table 2: Details of participants to the research

Participants	Gender	Age	Position in Household	Marital status	Highest level of education	Primary occupation	Secondary occupation	Parents occupation	Place of interview ***	Date of interview
Rural youth in Northern Rwanda										
Participant 1	Female	25	Child	Single	Bachelor's degree	Farmer	Home chores	Farming	Kijumba	12/2/2018
Participant 2	Female	25	Child	Single	Bachelor's degree	NYC* – Sector level	Farmer	Farming	Kijumba	12/2/2018
Participant 3	Male	21	Child	Single	P ₂ **	Farmer	Livestock keeping	Farming	Kirayi	16/2/2018
Participant 4	Male	23	Child	Single	Secondary school	Job seeker	None	Farming	Kirayi	16/2/2018
Participant 5	Female	27	Child	Single	Bachelor's degree	Retail business	None	Farming	Kijumba	14/2/2018
Participant 6	Female	25	Child	Single	A ₁ **	Farmer	Livestock keeping	Farming	Kijumba	14/2/2018
Participant 7	Male	30	Child	Single	Bachelor's degree	Agripreneur	None	Farming	Kirayi	16/2/2018
Urban youth in Kigali city										
Participant 1	Male	26	Head – Own HH	Single	A ₁ **	Business and Trade	Tourism	Farming	Gitoki	5/3/2018
Participant 2	Female	25	Head – Own HH	Single	Bachelor's degree	Agri-processing	Business – Sale	Entrepreneurs	Kigori	12/3/2018
Participant 3	Male	30	Head – Own HH	Single	S ₃ **	Bar owner	None	Farming	Gitoki	9/3/2018
Participant 4	Female	21	Head – Own HH	Widow	P ₃ **	Warehouse hand	None	N/A	Gihaza	8/3/2018
Participant 5	Male	28	Head of HH	Married	Master's degree	Business and Trade	None	Teaching	Gisaka	7/3/2018
Participant 6	Male	23	Child	Single	University student	Student	Farming	Farming	Gishaza	22/3/2018

*: National Youth Council

**.: Abbreviated according to current education system in Rwanda. P₂, P₃: Second, third year of primary school (out of 6); S₃: Third year of secondary school (out of 6); A₁: Two years of university education (need one or two more year(s) to hold a bachelor's degree

***.: Due to ethical reasons of anonymity the real names of the places were modified. These are arbitrary names.

4.5. Ethical considerations

Ethical issues are very critical in qualitative researches which particularly involve people's thoughts and behaviours for the inquiry process (Creswell, 2014; Halse and Honey, 2005). Researchers are requested to outline how the research will ensure the security and safety of participants throughout the entire process of inquiry (Creswell, 2014). Above all, participants have to agree voluntarily to take part in the research. This study was therefore very sensitive to ethical issues. Anonymity had to be assured throughout the enquiry process and it was explicitly indicated in the consent form that the discussions had to be conducted in discretion so that at the end, nobody would associate anything to a specific participant (See appendix II). Hence, names of participants do not appear anywhere in this thesis. Participants are identified through their gender (man or woman) and age, as well as the place where discussions were held. The exact names of places of study have also been changed for anonymity purposes. Places have been arbitrarily named after local names of the most common staple crops in the country. This was done in order to comply with the consent that nobody could be able to identify the participants and where they come from. Security and safety of participants had to be assured from this thesis.

Moreover, as mentioned above, I have asked local authorities for permission to conduct research. This was made by writing a formal letter to government officials on regional level, as I was told that local authorities (village or sector level) do not hold rights to give such permissions. They are rather informed by the regional level (District or province) who actually are the ones to provide the permission. I wrote two formal letters asking for permission respectively in Northern Rwanda and Kigali city, and I would always carry with me the permissions to inform anyone who wanted to know about whether I had the right to do what I was doing. In addition, before the beginning of every discussion, I would ask for consent from participants so that they agreed to participate in this research of their own free will. In fact, some did not want to talk to me, especially in Kigali, after I had mentioned that they would not get any immediate profit (money) from responding to my questions! I respected any decision they took regarding what the consent form was requesting them to do and I promised to not do anything contrary to their conditions.

At the end of each discussion, I had prepared a note that thanked participants for their time and contribution to the research. The main reason of the note was to indicate legitimacy of participation in this research which would be used for the advantage of participants. Particularly, it would be more useful for young women who would show the paper to their parents, boyfriends or husbands to explain that the young women were having a discussion with me for the sake of research. The note included my contact information in case of further clarifications.

4.6. Credibility of the study

Shenton (2004) explains the importance of credibility in ensuring trustworthiness of a research project. He further elaborates fourteen ways which findings can be put in harmony to establish credibility of the research. This research considered the majority of these provisions through adopting the use of different qualitative research

methods and using previous research findings to assess the degree of my findings' congruence. As mentioned above, I also ensured credibility through data triangulation. I used all the major data collection methods in qualitative research to try to get as much as possible a complete picture of the phenomenon. In addition, the selection of participants was done from a very wide target group as the only major criteria were age and relationship with agriculture. This allowed me to have a very rich picture of young people's attitudes to agriculture and rural life which may to a bigger group of people. To reiterate, this research also showed respect of participants' ethics and it has been clearly pointed out that it was a voluntary participation where young people who did not want to contribute freely to this research were allowed to leave the discussion at any time. The research plan was designed in a way that would allow me some time to go back to available participants to check whether the major themes I had found out confined to what had been discussed during interviews. In this case, member checking was adopted where contact information was exchanged between the participants and myself in order to stay in touch for further clarifications during data analysis when I would no longer be in the country.

4.7. Data analysis

Creswell (2014) suggests that data should be analysed simultaneously as it is collected. During fieldwork, major themes emerged as the discussions were being conducted. After each interview, I would carefully re-read my notes to analyse the major points discussed and collect the main information provided by the participant. This was useful in a way that further discussions would take into consideration the main issues that emerged from previous interviews. A concrete example was when I realised that agriculture is not understood in similar ways by all young people. This information was given at the very first interviews and I had to adjust the questions accordingly (see chapter 5). Analysis of information directly after each discussion was very helpful in terms of elaborating the major themes of this study. In fact, the ultimate intention of data analysis in this research was to induct the data into a few themes that would be discussed and considered as findings of the research and then go back into the data to confirm the selected themes. This has enabled relevant theories to emerge and were intersected to generate a conceptual framework presented in chapter 3 of this thesis. Because of lack of time and access to different qualitative analysis software, the data were transcribed in Microsoft Office Word after having carefully checked their accuracy with a third person who had no idea of the study I was carrying out. After all interviews were transcribed, I printed them out and used a standard method of thematic analysis by pinpointing, examining and coding patterns which emerged as initial sub-themes in relation to my research questions. Thereafter, I went back to each interview to confirm the sub-themes into major themes which were repeatedly recurrent in most interview. It was these major themes which constitute the major findings that generated the conceptual framework which was used to produce the major story told in this thesis.

5. Empirical findings: Perceptions of young people about YEIA and rural-urban migration

In this chapter, insights of young people about agriculture in Rwanda are detailed. They extend from thoughts to views and perceptions based on participants' experiences on agriculture and rural life. The initial part of the chapter focuses on objective 1 of the research to describe how young people in both rural areas in Northern Rwanda and urban areas of Kigali city define agriculture and the activities they consider as agricultural activities. The perceptions provided by participants on this research objective address one part of the first research question (see [chapter 1](#)) primarily by reflecting on the image agriculture holds in Rwandan society and the extent to which it affects youth engagement in agricultural activities. Further, a focus is shifted to objective 2 of this study to unveil factors influencing young people's decisions to undertake agricultural careers or migrate out of the sector and rural areas. Here, the other part of the first research question is eventually taken up by providing potential concerns and attractions identified by participants in relation to YEIA. The last part of the chapter puts emphasis on objective 3 of the research to entirely address the second research question with young people's viewpoints about urban migration of rural youth in relation with agriculture. The relationship between the phenomenon presented in these findings is critically discussed in the next chapter based on the conceptual framework of this thesis (see chapter 3).

5.1. Different conceptions of Rwandan young people on the extent of the sector of agriculture

The decision of seeking to know how Rwandan youth explain "agriculture" and what activities they describe as "agricultural activities" was made during the process of data collection after a prompt analysis of feedbacks from the first individual interview which had suddenly become a group interview (see chapter 4). Indeed, participants in the discussion showed uncertainty on what kind of agriculture is referred to in this study. They were young university graduates in agricultural sciences engaged in agriculture and were therefore aware of how extremely wide the range of agricultural activities is. Using Kinyarwanda terms, they would ask whether they should talk about "*ubuhinzi busanzwe*" (*literally translated as normal or ordinary agriculture*) or "*ubuhinzi bw'umwuga bujyana n'ubucuruzi*" (*literally meaning professional or business agriculture*). I explained that this study does not target any specific agricultural activities but the entire sector of agriculture. I encouraged them to share their views on agriculture in Rwanda especially in their communities regardless what type of agriculture to emphasize on. Doing so, they explained that in their societies, agriculture is commonly known as farming. In other words, taking a hoe, go to the field and cultivate, plant seeds, apply inputs, weed and harvest to secure food for oneself and own household and in case there is any surplus, sell it to the market to get some income. "Simply farming", they said (Group interview, Kijumba, Northern Rwanda, 12/2/2018). They also pointed out that "professional or business agriculture" which

involves activities beyond farming is barely practiced “due to the lack of large plots of arable land and investment capital” (Group interview, Kijumba, 12/2/2018). I became interested to know the perspective of other young people on this issue and since then, the question “what do you understand by agriculture?” was included in interview protocols for subsequent discussions.

The question being asked as a starting point to the discussions, answers varied from every participant during both individual interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Many replied that agriculture simply implies farming (and livestock keeping) while few others expressed their understanding of agriculture as a business, beyond farming. The majority of young people from rural areas shared views – based on what they have experienced – that agriculture is farming and livestock keeping. Thus, according to them, agricultural activities are farming (and livestock keeping) activities. In other words, agricultural activities in their perspective are defined as all activities performed “from planting to harvesting” (FGD, Kirayi, Northern Rwanda, 1/3/2018).

An implication of this was provided that agricultural activities are related to food production. This is actually a common understanding of agriculture but the interesting part from participants to this research is that from their experience, people usually cultivate their land in order to be able to feed their children and other household members: “agriculture helps when you do not have to go to the market to purchase food because you eat what you have harvested from agricultural activities” (young woman, 25, individual interview, Kijumba, 12/2/2018). According to many young people interviewed, agriculture in their communities has not moved forward, it is still subsistence-based. Thus, they view it as a basic source of their own food security. However, they recognize that sometimes they get a surplus and sell it to local markets or occasionally to collection centres (for Irish potatoes) and thereby be able to acquire some livelihood income.

Other participants, especially young people engaged in agribusiness activities, expressed their views of agriculture as a business. They referred to successful entrepreneurs who made a living from agriculture and today are among the wealthiest persons in the country. Here contradictions would emerge especially during FGDs. The major reason for controversies was whether those successful entrepreneurs can be identified as performing agricultural activities or those who started from agriculture to become businesspersons. This reflected back again to the range of agricultural activities. Young people engaged in agriculture argued that agricultural activities extend even beyond farming – giving themselves as examples – given that many of them were engaged in agro-processing or value addition activities and small business trade in agriculture. The rest would disagree, insisting that neither agro-processing nor small retail business in agriculture does not appear as an agricultural activity for them. They argued that both are businesses linked to agriculture but not agricultural businesses at all. “Unless you process or sell your own agricultural products”, argued a young man, 24 years old, in an FGD (Kirayi, 1/3/2018) to emphasize that agricultural activities start from the field. For them an agricultural business was to sell surplus of one’s own harvests to the market and make profit from them which can be used for further purposes including re-investing in agriculture. In their

experience, many attempts have failed, being the reason why they do not see agriculture as a business but rather a source of food production for oneself and own household.

In that discussion, young people made an important point by implying the need to focus on production, a job done by farmers usually in hard conditions. Hence, they expressed that it is what they understand to be meant when they hear about attempts to persuade youth to engage in agriculture. They explained that many young people who are actually identified as engaged in agriculture perform agro-processing activities through purchasing agricultural products from either direct deal with farmers or the market, most of the cases to a cheaper price and then process them to make huge profits. “They do not know what really happens on the field and therefore have not experienced pain of farmers”, young men argued (FGD, Kirayi, 1/3/2018). A similar point was raised in another FGD with young men in Kigali who stated that many people identified as doing agricultural activities are actually businesspersons. Participants explained that “the so-called agripreneurs usually make profit from farmers”, in a statement which makes more sense in Kinyarwanda “*barira ku bahinzi*”, literally meaning “*they eat [their bread] on farmers [heads]*” and hence arguing, “if you do not start from the field, you do not do agricultural activities at all” (FGD, Gishyimbo, 15/3/2018).

On the side of young people in Kigali, agriculture implies rural life and is not a job. These views recurred in both interviews and FGDs held in the capital city of Rwanda. Participants referred to the low payment one can get from casual labour farming to explain that in their experience people do not identify farming as a job but rather a service needed in order to establish a strong network in rural society or just an occupation in case one does not want to sit home all the time doing nothing. Participants used their experience to explain that people in rural areas help each other and life is structured around social networks more than in other areas.

“... you cultivate land for someone and they will do the same for you when you will be in need of that service [...] because there is no money in rural areas [...] sometimes you get additional foodstuffs after working [...] you need to be really helpful to expect help in return when you need it in the future”, they argued to explain that in rural areas services are more exchanged than paid (FGD with young men, Gishyimbo, 15/3/2018). This was to explain agriculture as a way of life for rural people.

Participants expressed on the other hand a possibility of getting from agriculture start-up cash for a business activity. An example was given by a young man, 29 years old who engaged in farming activities of tomato plantation and “used profit made to purchase a motorbike and start a business in motorbike transport” (FGD, Gishyimbo, 15/3/2018). This was also talked about several times to highlight the view of agriculture among young people, as something that cannot be considered as a job because it is highly risky and thus one cannot consistently benefit from it. “If you are unsure that you might make money from an activity, you cannot consider it as a job” (Young man, 28 years old, Kigori, 7/8/2018). In this case, agriculture was rather explained it as a way of getting money to start a non-farm business.

5.2. Farmers identity, a basic concern of young people on agriculture

Young people showed concern on an issue of identity that farmers hold in their societies. They explained how strong it is in relation to YEIA. The question of farmers identity would emerge at the very beginning of most individual interviews when participants would be requested to fill their identification in a roster (see Appendix I) in order to know particular types of questions to be asked because they had different features. Spots of primary and secondary occupation were critical given that each discussion would be dependent on whether or not a participant was engaged in agriculture.

Prior to one individual interview with a young man, 26 years old, who was engaged in agriculture, performing his activities from rural areas of Northern Rwanda despite living in Kigali city, I asked him to write down his primary occupation. He filled in that he was “*umucuruzi*” (literally translated as “a seller”) of agricultural products and not a farmer. I became interested and further asked him why he identified himself as such while he is engaged to agriculture and goes to the field quite often to keep a close eye to his crops’ growth. He replied that he is more than just a farmer because in (his) society, a farmer is known as somebody who cultivates their land and/or keeps livestock mainly for their own food security and if there is any surplus, sell it to the market to gain some additional income. For his case, he expressed that he does more than just farming given that he is engaged in processing activities where he adds value to his products before selling them. He explained that his primary task is to negotiate market supply deals for his agricultural products, that being the reason why he lives in Kigali. He mentioned that he identifies himself as a farmer to avoid any sort of misunderstanding on his activities and most importantly his identity in rural society.

The point made by the young man on farmers identity correlated with concerns of many young people engaged in agriculture – farming in particular – related to attitude towards farming in their societies. In most discussions, young people expressed that a critical issue on their engagement in agriculture is particularly related to a negative image portrayed to farmers in Rwandan society. During an individual interview in Kijumba with a young woman, 25 years old, who performs agricultural activities and identifies herself as a farmer, I asked an initial question to our discussion: “*Tell me about being a farmer. What are the good and bad things about farming?*” (see Appendix II). I was expecting that the question would be first answered by mentioning positive traits about farming but the young woman promptly replied that disrespect in society was the biggest burden borne by a farmer. Her immediate reaction expressed the magnitude of her concerns on the question of farmers identity. She explained that in her experience a farmer is traditionally referred to someone who is “always soiled and dirty, wearing scruffy and shabby clothes, uneducated and poor” (Individual interview, Kijumba, 14/2/2018). Eventually, the young woman made a point explaining a reason behind young people avoiding to bear the identity of farmers. She added: “...that is why many young people who are engaged to agriculture, can do everything in their ability to avoid being called farmers” (Individual interview, Kijumba, 14/2/2018).

Further cases where farmers identity emerged as a critical issue in most discussions were particularly found in rural areas. Educated young people were mentioned to be the most concerned youth when it comes to struggles related to decisions to make farming a livelihood option. Participants explained how challenging it might be from the start when an educated youth decides to join farmers to the field.

“... at the beginning, they [older farmers] laugh at you, saying that there are no jobs available in the country any longer, [or] that education is no longer important since even university graduates are coming back to farming, to do the same activity they used to do even before going to school”, explained a young woman, 25 years old, Kijumba, 12/2/2018).

In some cases, participants explained that some older people would argue farther, expressing that “the efforts made by parents striving to pay education for their children did not lead anywhere, since their children are coming back to farm after graduation” (Young man, 21 years old, Kirayi, 16/2/2018).

Young people repeatedly expressed that a farmer is conferred a low status in Rwandan society. They pointed to low wages of casual labour farming to explain that agriculture in the country is a sector where farmers live in conditions that do not allow them to have big life plans despite spending a lot of energy working on fields. An interesting argument made by young people in relation with what it actually implies to become a farmer in Rwandan society was that the low status of farming and being a farmer has incorporated in the country’s culture especially in everyday language. Here, participants referred to a common expression in Kinyarwanda language “*gusubira ku isuka*” (which literally means “*to go back to pick up the hoe*”) to explain that the language considers farming as the lowest job option available for anyone who cannot find anything else to do.

“I think the problem about agriculture in Rwanda comes from tradition. A farmer is portrayed as that person who cannot develop, with the lowest intellectual capacity and a very negative image in society. We even say in Kinyarwanda that a person who suffers loss *yasubiye ku isuka* (literally translated as ‘*has gone back to the hoe*’)", explained a young woman, 24 years old (Individual interview, Kigori, 13/3/2018).

The expression is usually addressed to a person who has lost a great deal of his/her assets through business failure, theft, and so on. It refers to a common implication that a hoe is portrayed as the least profitable tool that one can use to make a living, thereby reflecting the low status of farming.

The majority of participants considered the issue of a farmer’s image in society as critical for YEIA. Young people explained that the way society consider a farmer is a potential reason for decisions of rural youth over migrating to cities or aspiring to find something else to do which will make them avoid farming and thus escape the stigma associated with being a farmer. A young woman farmer, 25 years old, used this concern to explain attitudes of her fellow rural young women in relation to the image generated to agriculture, particularly farming. She stated:

“... many girls here prefer to look for other jobs, especially working as bricklayers’ assistants in cities to escape being labelled farmers and bear all the stigma that

society conferred to farming and farmers while they can look for other opportunities” (Individual interview, Kijumba, 14/2/2018).

Moreover, participants explained during FGDs that mentalities of stigmatising agriculture and farmers are reproduced and spread among young people themselves especially when they are in secondary boarding school. This argument came as an opinion of young women in Kijumba about a vignette which told a story of a young girl who lived in rural areas, doing agriculture on their family’s land and used to like and enjoy it. But after some time when she grew up, she ended up not liking it anymore. They said that the shift definitely happened in boarding school, when the girl met up with her fellow students who influenced her to experience how farming and agricultural activities in general are interpreted in Rwandan society, that a farmer is poor, always dirty, uneducated and so on (FGD, young women, Kijumba, 22/2/2018). Another interesting point on reproduction of attitudes towards farmers and farming status in society was given by young men in Kirayi. They argued that there was nobody in their knowledge who would wish their friends or children to commit in agriculture. Especially when parents are educating their children. One young man, 21 years old, explaining his relationship with agriculture, stated that he has never gone to the field although he grew up in a rural area where agriculture is the most dominant activity. He explained that his father could do anything to make him study even in holidays, by hiring a teacher to come and assist him in his studies from home. The father was doing all that because he wanted his son to become anything but a farmer due to among other factors the identity and status of farmers and farming in Rwandan society, the young man explained (FGD, Kirayi, 1/3/2018).

5.2.1. *Accept the stigma to engage in Agriculture*

As mentioned above, the attitude conferred to agriculture in Rwandan society emerged as an important issue that affects negatively young people who might be willing to engage in agricultural activities especially farming. After learning concerns of young people on what it means to live a life in agriculture, I was interested to know how young farmers who participated to this study managed to withstand the difficulties explained by young people about YEIA. A young woman, 27 years old, explained that the hardest challenge youth face when they decide to engage in farming is to “accept to put on scruffy clothes and look dirty for all the time they are working on field” (Individual interview, young woman, 27 years old, Kijumba, 14/2/2018). This point came out several times and participants would reiterate that it requires strong commitment which ultimately involves being able to accept social disgrace associated with farming. During a FGD with young men in Kirayi, participants held a discussion on whether a farmer can be fashioned and smart looking while s/he spends most of the time on field. They appeared to disagree at the beginning but the discussion ended with young men agreeing that according to how agriculture is practiced under tradition in Rwanda, it is not possible. “Looking smart and being a farmer are two incompatible things”, they argued while referring to a Rwandan proverb that says “*ushaka inka aryama nka zo*” (which literally means “*the one who wants [to own] cattle lies down like them*”). The young men made the argument

to stress the need to give up smart ways of living and clothing if one wants to perform farming activities (FGD, Kirayi, 1/3/2018).

In addition, young people engaged in agriculture explained that it starts with self-awareness of common negative perceptions in terms of making agriculture a profession. They identified a change of negative attitudes towards agriculture as a starting point for their engagement in agricultural activities. “I decided to engage in agriculture after I had shifted my ways of thinking that farming is for poor people who cannot afford to buy food and thereby decide to cultivate what they will eat. I had started to question how they survived if they were poor and understood that farming could also give them enough money that enable them to pay school fees for their children”, explained a young woman from Kijumba, 25 years old, adding to the fact that she “had to accept to always be and look dirty all day until the evening when I am back from the field and shower” (individual interview in Kijumba, 14/2/2018).

Participants emphasised a need of enough moral strength to resist humiliation generated to young people especially educated youth who decide to pursue a career as farmers. They explained that the humiliation does not only come from older people nor farmers in their societies but also their fellow youth who usually make fun of them once they find them soiled and dirty, therefore reproducing the stigma. Fortunately, the humiliation does not last for long if remarkable profits are made. “When you have profit in your hands, the stigma diminishes and nobody can dare look at you the same way” (Individual interview, young man, 30 years old, Kirayi, 16/2/2018). This point revealed a positive trait that young people are actually able to contribute to agricultural development. Young people who have been able to withstand societal pressure of stigmatisation over farming and farmers have started to prove that it is worth to let them engage and support their engagement in agriculture. At the beginning of fieldwork, I visited fields of both young men in Kirayi and young women in Kijumba. The crops were in their latest stage of growth before harvesting. Especially in Kijumba, I witnessed that their crops were in better conditions than many other farmers’. I asked if it was always the case and one young woman, 25 years old, replied: “we always produce more than [many] ordinary farmers because we follow all the instructions provided by agronomists. Older farmers tend to stick to their traditional way of farming and cannot for example plant in lines or practice crop rotation. But when they see our production, they usually come to us and we show them how to do that. Doing so for the following season and they get better production” (Field observation notes). On the other hand, pressure increases in case of loss at the first time of engagement. Many young people become discouraged and leave the sector after the first step of their engagement. An experience was shared by a young woman, 27 years old, who decided to engage in farming of irish potato but due to unpredictable climatic conditions together with volatile prices on the market, suffered a huge loss. It was her very first attempt to engage in agriculture. When I interviewed her, she was very upset at the high risks existing in agriculture and also reflected on the way it affected her life in society. She eventually decided to quit and never think about engaging in agriculture nor encourage anybody to do so (Individual interview, Kijumba, 14/2/2018).

5.3. Potential attractions of agriculture in relation to YEIA

5.3.1. *Diversified crop choices opening up new ways of practicing agriculture*

The majority of young people I interviewed exhibited awareness of how agriculture in Rwanda has evolved in terms of crop production. Participants who have performed agriculture before and those who are still engaged in the sector admitted a positive development of Rwandan agriculture especially when it comes to crop choices. Staple crops have been most common in agriculture for years in Rwanda, but now many other crops have emerged and have according to participants proven to be more profitable. During a FGD with young men in Kigali, it was emphasised that many people practice traditional farming but only plant crops commonly referred to basic food in Rwanda, such as potatoes (irish and sweet), banana, beans, maize (corn), other cereals and vegetables while they are not enough profitable unless planted on a large-scale to be harvested in considerable amounts.

“Many people who engage in agriculture want to plant ordinary crops such as irish potatoes in Musanze, banana in Rwamagana, etc. while there are crops like pumpkins and tomatoes which are very highly profitable these days. I am soon returning to my rural area and that is the kind of crops I will plant” (Young man, 27 years old, Gishyimbo, 15/3/2018).

This point was raised in further discussions where crop choices are identified by participants as an important opportunity that exist in Rwandan agriculture. A young man who lives in Kigali highlighted the profitability of agriculture nowadays in Rwanda through planting crops that can be processed to produce more than one sort of food.

“There are crops which are making people rich these days, namely pumpkins, spinach, chili, and fruits because they are in high demand on the market especially in processing industries. It is therefore easy to find a market to supply them”, he explained, while arguing that information about which crops to plant is a key to making huge profits in agriculture. (Individual interview, Gitoki, 8/3/2018).

The profitability of pumpkins was explained in detail during an interview session in Kigori, with a young woman, 25 years old, who performs activities of production and processing of pumpkins. She makes different foodstuffs namely pastries, cookies, roasted seeds and seeds flour out of that crop. Her products are then made available to the market in different places in the country. She invited me to visit her small stand close to a taxi park. She owns a processing enterprise and employs other young people while working with more farmers who supply raw pumpkins for processing. She explained how processing is very much needed for agricultural transformation in Rwanda:

“processing is not that common in our country, we are used to a few crops and otherwise, we import a lot of foodstuffs that are usually obtained from processing of crops that can be grown even here in our country. That is how I thought of a business of processing particularly pumpkins because they can produce multiple foodstuffs that

are even more nutritious than similar products we import” (Individual interview, Kigori, 9/3/2018).

Another example of how crop choices appear profitable to young people in agriculture was given by young men in rural areas of northern Rwanda who are engaged in production and processing of pumpkins, tomatoes and chili. These young men have founded a company that aims for agro-processing activities where they locally produce among others cooking oil from pumpkins and ketchups from tomatoes. During fieldwork, I visited the fields where they plant crops (Figure 3) and a small place in the village where they conduct eventual processing activities. The company employs fellow young people for cultivation activities and explain to them their unique agricultural activities in the village. The uniqueness is identified as going beyond production to add value to crops by processing them into other foodstuffs.



Figure 3: Plantation of diversified crops by the company of young men in Kirayi. The picture was taken on January 30th, 2018 at noon, at the time of tomatoes plantation. Other crops on the picture are tamarillo trees, chili plantation and pumpkins (though invisible). Photo taken by the author.

Crop diversification for the purposes of processing activities was identified as an important opportunity and potential attraction for young people’s engagement in agricultural activities. Many young people I talked to showed interest in the plantation of crops that have multiple uses when they are processed. They considered it as a good way to make money from agriculture. It is also related to the fact that the majority of participants who were engaged in agriculture, extend their activities to value addition of their produces.

5.3.2. Agricultural processing, a major attraction to Rwandan youth

Participants showed interest and optimism to processing of agricultural products, which they described as a potential opportunity for agricultural development in

Rwanda. Even young people who were not engaged in agriculture at the time of discussions admitted that a possible engagement of young people in agriculture can be within processing activities though there were some controversies during discussions about the extent to which agro-processing was perceived as an agricultural activity (see section 5.1). During a FGD with young men in Kirayi, working in or owning an agricultural industry or processing factory appeared in the list of dream jobs which was made during the discussion. A young man, 21 years old, shared his aspirations in relation to engagement in agriculture

“I can agree to do all activities that do not involve going to the field, like processing activities which some of my colleagues here are engaged in.” (FGD, Kirayi, 1/3/2018).

Similarly, a young woman, 25 years old, who is already engaged in agriculture had expressed “owning an agro-processing industry” as her dream in the future (Individual interview, Kijumba, 14/2/2018).

Furthermore, I visited the headquarters of Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF) in Kigali during fieldwork. I had a productive one-hour chat with a few members of the board of directors (whose faces were much familiar to me from the university of Rwanda). During the discussion, I was being presented a wide range of varieties of products processed by members of the forum. The products included wine, cooking oil, body lotions, ketchup, hot sauces, etc. and I learned that production of other crops than ordinary staple crops was much more preferred by young people because they open up further activities of value addition and thus increasing profitability. Besides, I was also informed about other activities of the forum namely a launch of internships of agronomists in all districts of the country. In spite of other activities in the forum, I noticed from the discussion that processing activities are the most common agricultural activities for young people in Rwanda. In fact, prior to the sampling of participants I had informal conversations with two young people engaged in agriculture and they described RYAF as more directed to processing activities although it is just one of five clusters that constitute the forum. This cluster appears to have attracted more youth than any other and members of the forum are to a large extent engaged in agricultural processing activities.

5.3.3. *Supportive central government for youth engagement in agriculture*

Another important aspect I learned from the visit to RYAF headquarters in Kigali was that the forum operates under the Ministry of agriculture where all projects in agriculture are “from now on requested to include young people if they are to receive full endorsement from the Ministry”, argued one RYAF official (Field notes). This emerges as an opportunity that implies support of the government for young people’s engagement in agriculture. Moreover, government support to youth engagement in agriculture does not only come from the Ministry of agriculture in the country. Some participants I interviewed pointed out how different governmental organisations have helped them to move forward and develop their skills through organising workshops, trainings, exhibitions in different parts of the country. A young woman, 25 years old from Kigali city explained the role of central government in motivating

young people to engage in agricultural activities, a result of which she won different prizes that helped her move forward in her engagement. She stated

“... the government supports youth initiatives to engage in agriculture to a large extent. Now we have RYAF which has become part of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Youth that organises competitions through the project of Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) Rwanda, one of which I won last year, and the National Youth Council which assists young people to attend different workshops and trainings” (Individual interview, Kigori, 9/3/2018).

Clarifying the role of the government in her engagement in agriculture, she added:

“... that is how I moved up with my business in agriculture. I started by attending those competitions and eventually won them to attract investors for financial support” (Individual interview, Kigori, 9/3/2018).

5.4. Major concerns of young people in relation to YEIA

5.4.1. *Access to land, the ultimate challenge*

Participants expressed their concerns about access to land through the fact that they cannot afford to own land to cultivate unless they inherit it.

“Land is the biggest issue for young people to engage in agriculture. If you do not have land, I do not see how you are going to engage in agriculture [...] we cannot even afford to rent it because it is very expensive and as agriculture is very unpredictable, you do not know whether your products will make enough profit to be able to pay the rent. So, you cannot take that risk.” (Individual interview, young man, 22 years old, Kirayi, 15/2/2018).

As a consequence, young people find themselves in a situation where they become dependent on their parents all the time before bequeathing the land. “The main problem I had was land. I could not get access to land unless I had to wait to inherit it from my grandmother. It means that I had to stay with her and depend on her for everything I would need”, expressed a young man, 30 years old, explaining that the only possibility he had to own land was to wait for inheritance and “accept to abide by the rules of living set by her grandmother in order to be guaranteed inheritance” (Individual interview, Gitoki, 8/3/2018).

More concerns that emerged about land inheritance were the size of inherited land which was claimed not to be enough to start an engagement in agriculture.

“You will have to share it with your siblings and only get a small piece of land which will not lead you anywhere”, argued one young man, 28 years old, during a focus group discussion. (FGD, Gishyimbo, 15/3/2018).

Ultimately, participants pointed to the common ideas spread throughout the country that Rwanda is a very small country and thus, there is literally not enough land for everyone who wishes to engage in agriculture. In this regard, I learned from a young man, 21 years old, that rural young men from his village move outside the country to practice agriculture where land is more available and affordable. He said:

“[...] that is why many young men here move to [southern] Uganda to look for renting land opportunities because it is cheaper” (Individual interview, Kirayi, 16/2/2018).

5.4.2. *Lack of capital investment growing worse for the youth*

The question of access to land was being linked to access to financial capital on the idea that unpredictability in agriculture has made banks in Rwanda decide not to give loans to people with projects in agriculture.

“Look at the banks now. Banks are no longer giving loans to projects in agriculture because of it is increasingly being unpredictable. BRD (*Banque Rwandaise pour le Développement*) was the only one doing that until last year when they noticed that projects in agriculture are actually not profitable as predicted, thus unable to pay back the loan money. Now they have stopped providing such loans” (Young man, 28 years old, Individual interview, Gisaka, 7/3/2018).

In many discussions, participants pointed out that young people cannot get credit because they do not have collateral.

“Young people have no property. Nobody gives loan to someone who owns nothing to be referred to as collateral.” (Individual interview, Young man, 30 years old, Gitoki, 8/3/2018).

This statement was made several times during discussions. I would then probe to ask about measures taken by the state on this issue because it was not something new. One young woman, 25 years old, in Kijumba, admitted that there are funding entities aimed for youth namely BDF (Business Development Fund) but she expressed that – in her opinion – they do not practically support youth in agriculture, rather they challenge their projects to the extent that young people end up giving up on their applications for funds. She argued:

“To be honest, BDF does not give fund. You can say that it is only me who experience that but I do know many other who apply in vain. They rather scramble us in the process sending us to find further papers until we relinquish.” (Individual interview, Kijumba, 14/2/2018).

5.4.3. *Lack of local authorities' support to young people*

Discrepancies were noted – from discussions with participants – on perceptions of how central government in Kigali work and how local authorities operate in terms of supporting the youth. The majority of young people I interviewed explained that the central government appears to be willing to support the youth to move forward but local authorities do not facilitate their efforts.

“Most of the support that comes at sector level to help farmers are directed to older farmers. I have not seen any support involving young people engaged in agriculture. Instead, local authorities generate troubles with youth who need documents, for instance, where it looks like they do not trust us. I think local authorities do not respect the youth. Yet the central government in Kigali does” (Individual interview, young woman, 25 years old, Kijumba, 12/2/2018).

A similar insight was provided by a young woman, 21 years old, when she shared her personal experience with local authorities where she lives in slums of Kigali city.

“Local authorities at the village level do not receive my case, [...] me and other fellow young women, they disrespect us because we do not have money. They only receive cases of older people because they give them money. But when I went higher at the youth council, they accepted to help me as soon as they can, although I am still waiting for their assistance.” (Individual interview, Gihaza, 8/3/2018).

5.4.4. *The market challenge*

Participants identified market systems of volatile prices issues existing in Rwandan agriculture as other major concerns for YEIA. Fluctuation of prices on the market emerged as one of the biggest challenges for today’s farmers in Rwanda, according to many participants. Young people engaged in agriculture pointed out to increasing prices of seeds while produces drop. In their opinion, price-setters do not do consider all activities conducted by farmers and the money they spend on purchasing soil inputs before harvesting. A young woman, 27 years old, shared experience that the market challenge might make an entire project of agriculture end up in a loss despite efforts made by farmers.

“I purchased a kilo of (irish) potato seeds for RWF 600 (approx. USD 0.8) and after harvesting, one kilo was only RWF 80 (approx. USD 0.1). With an average productivity ratio of 1:8, it became clear that I couldn’t get back the money I invested because I had also to purchase inputs, pay for casual farming labour and survive all the time I was waiting for production [...] the whole project ended up in a huge loss” (Individual interview, Kijumba, 14/2/2018).

During the discussion, the young woman was looking totally upset due to by the loss she suffered from her efforts to engage in Agriculture. This issue of price volatility was being referred to as a challenge several times in further discussions as well.

Moreover, participants highlighted another intriguing issue about farmers being pressured even when they have found a market for their produces. A concrete example was given by two young women, 25 years old each, who appeared bewildered about what was happening for harvesting irish potatoes at the time of this fieldwork.

“[...] take a look at what is happening now for (irish) potatoes. The authorities have restricted farmers from harvesting the crops [...] they said they have to be kept in fields [...] and if you are caught trying to harvest them, you might be in jeopardy” (Group interview, Kijumba, 12/2/2018).

5.4.5. *Climate dependency of Rwandan agriculture and low levels of technology in the sector*

Another challenge raised by young people was the climate dependency of agriculture in Rwanda and it was described in many cases as a lack of knowledge and low level of technology in Rwandan agriculture. Perceptions of high risks and unpredictability in Rwandan agriculture in Rwanda were being to a large extent associated with its dependence on sunlight and rainfall availability.

“Climate is a very important factor for making profit in agriculture. If you have planted in a season where rain and sunlight are available in right amounts for the crops, you will definitely make money from your farming activities. The problem is that it almost never happens. Most of the times there is no rain or it comes in large

amounts to damage crops through erosion hazards. The same thing applies for sunlight. Many farmers suffer loss because of climate dependency of agriculture”, explained a young woman, 25 years old. (Individual interview, Kijumba, 14/2/2018).

This challenge was identified by young people as a failure of agricultural development in the country. For them, there should be technological solutions namely irrigation systems and weather prediction measures available to all farmers, so that they can plan in consequence. Raising that point revealed how young people look concerned and eager to contribute to closing knowledge gap in irrigation systems. In a FGD in Kigali, young men highlighted an unprofessional character of Rwandan agriculture with reference to failures of agribusiness projects.

“The level of agriculture in Rwanda is still very low, where we think of simply planting crops to feed ourselves. And I think this is why we did not move forward in technologies and controlling climate dependency of our agriculture [...] agriculture as a business has not developed in people’s mind and [thus]... many people who try to make business from agriculture fail”, claimed one young man, 27 years old, with apathy towards Rwandan farming (FGD, Gishyimbo, 15/3/2018).

5.4.6. *Discouraging environment of agricultural systems in Rwanda*

The low level of skills and technology in agriculture was not pointed out just in relation to climate dependency. It was also brought up in terms of challenges that farmers face when struggling mostly with seeds and crop diseases. Participants speculated that this might be potentially a result of how discouraging agricultural systems operate in the country. Young women raised a point of seed imports as a challenge for farmers as many of them do not know or have little information about the type of seeds they purchase or plant. A young man in Kigali explained that entrepreneurs are the ones who purchase seeds from neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Uganda, etc. to give them to farmers.

“Sometimes entrepreneurs do not find the exact seeds farmers want or find on their way another seed variety which is cheap. They will take that variety because they want to make money. Recently, farmers were complaining about the seeds they received which were very much vulnerable to diseases and take longer time in the soil, thus not meeting their plans, it is a big challenge that farmers cannot produce seed varieties by themselves”, he argued, claiming that “it is appalling to experience that entrepreneurs who import seeds are not agronomists nor have skills in agriculture”. (Individual interview, Gisaka, 7/3/2018).

In similar way, young men expressed during a FGD that it is hard to engage in agriculture when it is a sector increasingly full of complaints.

“It is discouraging to see everyone complaining about agriculture. On the radios, we always hear complaints of farmers for either low production, crops heavily damaged by diseases or that they have purchased bad seeds which cannot grow. The same thing happens even in the parliament, where we hear the minister of agriculture repeatedly being summoned to provide explanations about all those complaints. So, there is actually no incentive in engaging in a sector where everyone who belongs there complains all the time”, they argued (FGD, Gishyimbo, 15/3/2018).

5.4.7. *Lack of infrastructures, another common challenge*

The lack of infrastructures to facilitate transport of products and accessible fields was also raised as an important challenge to farmers. Participants explained that farmers with accessible fields get more assistance than those whose fields are remote. A young woman, 27 years old, pointed out that agronomists of sectors usually visit fields of farmers to supervise cultivation activities and thereafter watch over crops as they grow. But those visits are made to same farmers all the time just because other farmers have inaccessible fields. In a similar view, a young man, 21 years old, informed:

“... also when harvesting time comes, products from accessible fields get to the market first because it is close to roads where trucks can drive easily” (Individual interview, Kirayi, 16/2/2018).

Other young people mentioned it in relation to how it strongly affects the profitability of agriculture.

“It is very expensive to transport products near the road and that is why many farmers whose fields are remote do not really profit from their farming activities. There is really need of infrastructures in the sector”, argued a young woman, 25 years old (Group interview, Kijumba, 12/2/2018).

5.5. Rural-Urban youth migration, a livelihood strategy for young people

In this section, I present factors identified by Rwandan young people on increasing outmigration of rural youth to urban areas. Because agriculture is the most dominant livelihood activity in rural areas, participants were being requested to relate their insights to agriculture for the purpose of this study. Most of insights were provided by urban young people as they would be comparing life experiences in Kigali with life in rural areas where they used to live before moving to the city. The presence of more facilities and diversified activities in urban than rural areas were mentioned as important pull factors of the mobility while push factors would be similar to concerns provided by rural young people on agricultural life in rural societies.

5.5.1. *Farming, the drudgery with low returns*

The most recurrent aspects raised by participants about young people’s decisions to leave agriculture and/or migrate to cities were related to hard work that features agricultural labour with low returns which do not equal the amount of energy and time spent. Here, participants would refer to both wages of casual labour farming per day and profit made by farmers who cultivate their own land. Claims were that it is less than efforts furnished.

“I decided to leave my rural home because of the hard work done by farmers without fair reward. Cultivating land for someone pays between RWF 500 and RWF 1000 (approx. USD 0.58 and USD 1.16) while here (in Kigali) one can get the same payment in just a morning by carrying heavy stuffs from the market. And it is not that burdensome as cultivating land and it pays better”, explained a young man, 27 years old in a plenary FGD (Gishyimbo, Kigali, 15/3/2018).

An additional aspect associated with agricultural labour was raised by young women in Kigali who reflected on not only hard work but also the way agricultural labour is performed does not favour young women's willingness of good looking. A young woman, 25 years old, explained:

“[...] in rural areas, they farm, carry manure on heads, etc. so when a girl has grown up, she does not want to allow the manure to be spoiled on her hair and thus she decides to come to the city to look for money. That is how many come to the city” (FGD, Gishyimbo, 16/3/2018).

It was also explained that even a farmer who owns land does not get much profit from farming because much money is spent during the preliminary cultivation activities including seeds and inputs purchase as well as payment for casual labour farmers. Another young woman, 29 years old explained:

“[...] even when you have your own land, it is not straightforward that you will make profit from agriculture. Because you have to buy seeds and inputs such as pesticides, fertilizers, etc. which are usually expensive and pay farmers to wait for production which is very dependent to the climate and usually comes when prices have dropped. It is therefore very unlikely that high profits will be made... for my case, on my little land, I made a profit of RWF 50000 [approx. USD 58] in four months (one season) while working as a housemaid for rich people in Kigali makes RWF 20000 (approx. USD 25) a month. You see the difference. I therefore chose to come to work in city and send part of my wages back home in rural areas to cultivate my land. That is the only way agriculture is profitable to me” (FGD, Gishyimbo, 16/3/2018).

5.5.2. *Little prospects in agriculture and rural life lead to interests in non-farm sector in more diversified areas*

These views reflected traditional farming or subsistence agriculture, another important feature of Rwandan agriculture that was raised as a major issue making young people see just little prospects in the sector. Participants reflected on the lack of successful businesses in agriculture saying that even entrepreneurs known to be successful in the sector have something else to do, with agriculture not being their main occupation. This was pointed out repeatedly, not just by young people who migrated to Kigali but also rural youth. These explained that in order to be successful in agriculture, one should do it as a secondary occupation.

“If someone has been lucky enough to get profit from agriculture, I would not advise them to invest the entire profit back in agriculture. Because risks of suffering loss on a next season are high due to unpredictability in agriculture. I would rather tell them to invest in an informal retail business because risks of suffering loss and unpredictability are very much lower”, explained a young woman, 27 years old. (Individual interview, Kijumba, 14/2/2018).

Thus, diversifying activities emerged as a potential pull factor for youth migration to urban areas. In fact, urban and peri-urban areas have more diversified activities than their rural counterparts. Agriculture is the dominant activity in rural areas while in other areas there is a presence of informal non-farm sector business activities.

“You look at what you have studied and realise it is not compatible with living in rural areas. For instance, I have studied mechanical automobile in high school. It is more applicable in cities especially here in Kigali than in rural areas. So, I could not live in a rural area for the sake of my job”, stated a young man, 27 years old (FGD, Gishyimbo, 15/3/2018).

In addition to the lack of diversified jobs in rural areas as a factor for youth migration to cities, participants raised an interesting aspect about how life in rural areas is carried on depending on social relations while in cities one gets paid for any service they provide. This was given as an explanation for dominating ideas that money “dwells” in cities so anyone looking for money has to migrate to the city because there are more opportunities.

“In rural areas, most activities performed are not paid. They think of the job you are doing as a service than a way of making a living. It is rare that you get paid for the job you do and the payment is usually made in kind not in cash”, expressed a young man, 29 years old. (FGD, Gishyimbo, 15/3/2018).

Therefore, young people expressed that many of them get influenced by friends and relatives to fuel their decisions to migrate to cities. On the other hand, participants pointed out that there is no influence from older people, friends and relatives on staying in rural areas and engage in agriculture, explaining that as a reason for young people to not be attracted by the sector because they have grown up when everyone could influence them to do anything else but agriculture.

“[...] many (young) people do not really grow up thinking about agriculture. It is hard to think about agriculture when there is no land to cultivate and even if there was any, nobody can motivate you to consider agriculture as an option for the future. That has been my case and I grew up without any dream of doing agriculture”, stated a young man, 30 years old (FGD, Gishyimbo, 15/3/2018).

Another important factor of migration decision of rural young people in relation to agriculture and rural life is related to the fact that in rural areas, many young people are dependent to their parents or guardians even when they have grown up. As everyone strongly relies on family resources such as land, livestock, etc. the degree of decision making for young people in a household is significantly low. A young man, 30 years old, raised this as another factor that pushed him to decide to move to the city, in order to start living an independent life as an adult. He explained:

“I was living on farm with my grandmother, doing whatever she wanted me to do while I could not easily decide to do anything by myself because I was living under her responsibilities. Even if we were making profit from our farming practices together, I had to ask her money whenever I wanted to buy something for myself. I looked at how the life I was living was leading me nowhere and I therefore decided to move to the city with help of my uncle, so that after some time I could be able to start living by my own without need of somebody’s help, which I am living now” (Individual Interview, Gitoki, 8/3/2018).

A similar interpretation can be noted from differences of participants in terms of position in household (Table 2). Young people in rural areas were still living with their parents or while their urban counterparts were heads of their own households.

6. Discussion – The relationship between agriculture, rural society and urban migration of rural youth

In this chapter, an overall interpretation of major findings in this study is presented. The discussion builds upon empirical materials that are mostly connected to the conceptual framework presented earlier in the thesis (Figure 1) to provide potential relationships existing among perceptions presented by participants on agriculture, rural life and urban migration of rural youth. Reference is also made to existing literature related to young people and agriculture in sub-Saharan African countries. Two main scenarios are noted from the outcomes of this study. The first constitutes of the entanglement of agriculture in social structures in rural areas which has conferred a negative image to agriculture, farming in particular and has therefore resulted in young people not aspiring to engage in agriculture, especially farming activities (Figure 4). The second shows adaptive strategies of young people in response to negative outcomes generated by the first scenario and this is where young people appear to be more likely to engage in agriculture. Urban migration of rural youth is however considered as another strategy in this second scenario shown in Figure 5. Further aspects related to rural-urban linkages are nevertheless considered as additional factors influencing youth perceptions on agriculture in Rwanda.

6.1. Implications of understanding agriculture as a subsistence economy

The majority of young people described agriculture as a way of securing food for one's own. Their perceptions on agriculture and how they explained the sector as a livelihood option can be interpreted in terms of doxa (see Chapter 3). Participants showed that agriculture is considered an important component of tradition and rural life in their societies. Being embedded in tradition, subsistence agriculture is a more common type of agriculture than professional or business agriculture. Participants explained that in their rural societies, food is rarely purchased. It is rather produced from subsistence farming and according to their experience, it is the most important role of agriculture. In Bourdieu's words this is their doxa, what they are actually used to. Furthermore, the failure to establish a business in agriculture appears to have fuelled young people's understanding of agriculture as a way to secure food rather than a business activity. It was only young people who have lived outside their rural societies and thereby experienced other ways of securing food through getting more income who perceived the sector as a potential business activity. Hence, despite efforts of transforming agriculture into a business-oriented or market-driven economy in the country, the sector does not appear to have shifted accordingly in people's minds.

Putting this issue in relation to Bourdieu's theory suggests that the structure of subsistence agriculture has not been transformed when agricultural transformation was implemented in the country. In other words, the way agricultural transformation was

enacted did not convince people to perceive agriculture otherwise. In fact, Bourdieu (1977) argues that transforming a habitus would require change of an entire structure. In this case, this would imply that in order to change people's perceptions about agriculture as a subsistence activity there is need to change the entire structure in the sector i.e. start from scratch where people consider the sector as a means of survival. As Figure 4 suggests, a transformation of agriculture operating on the underlying basis of traditional or subsistence agriculture is unlikely to influence people to perceive agriculture as a business sector. It rather operates in a doxa where the negative attitudes of stigmatising farming and farmers in society are overlooked or perceived as normal. Alternatively, it might be the case of developing orthodox beliefs which maintain ideas that farming and farmers are really associated with a poor image in society and nothing could change that. As a result, people still perceive agriculture as they have always understood it: a subsistence economy with little prospects of becoming a potential business. In this regard, young people will not be willing to engage in farming, since it does not offer prospects for them to enhance their lives, given that – as matter of fact – those who decide to engage in farming are not well received by their fellow farmers and others in society. In this scenario, young people will be less willing/likely to engage in agriculture or farming in particular. As shown in this study it requires special strength for a young person to engage in farming in this kind of situation (see chapter 5.2.1).

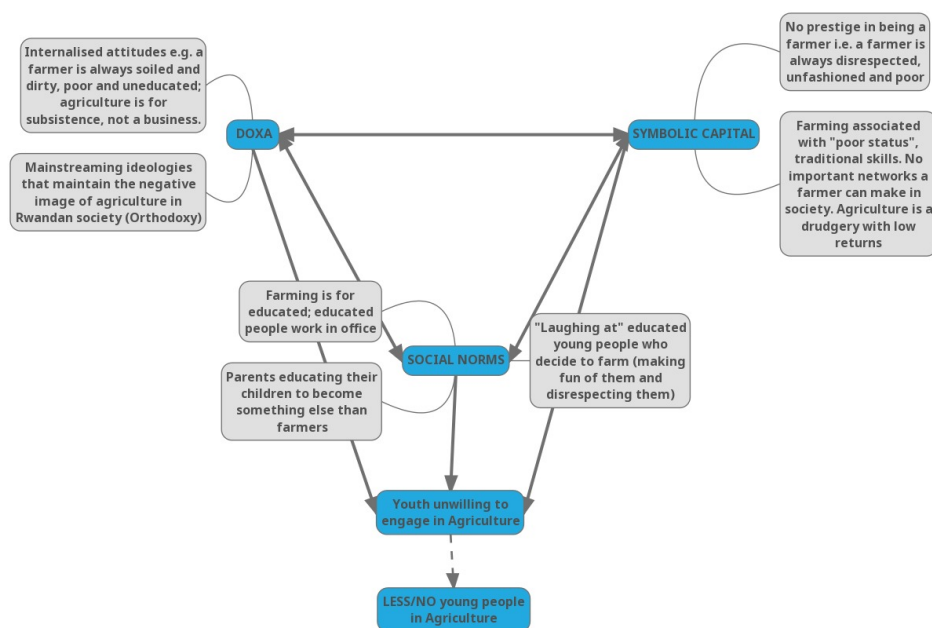


Figure 4: Implications of perceiving agriculture as a subsistence economy. An outcome on YEIA

Source: Created by the author.

Moreover, participants pointed out that farm size matters when it comes to engagement in agribusiness. According to them, professional or business agriculture is rather practiced on large plots and unfortunately the total area and topography features of Rwanda do not allow many people to own big lands. The country is in fact among the most densely populated countries in Africa. Young people pointing to the unlikelihood of successfully establishing farming businesses in Rwanda contrasts what Ali and Deininger (2014) have argued, i.e. that small farm size by no means is a reason

for the failure of agricultural productivity growth in Rwanda. These researchers argue that labour market imperfections and other unpredictable factors rather are the potential causes for the slow productivity growth of the sector. They suggest that a lack of skills and organization within the sector have generated a failure to address the challenge of low productivity in Rwandan agriculture. With farmers and other people who understand that agriculture can potentially be a business activity only if practiced on large plots of land and otherwise perceive the sector as a subsistence livelihood activity, it might appear reasonable that the sector's productivity will be hard to improve significantly.

6.2. Importance of production stage of the agrifood value chain

Findings to this research reveal controversies about what is meant of agricultural activities among young people. Some identified agricultural activities as extending up to harvesting while others reckoned additional activities beyond harvesting. But an interesting point raised was the emphasis on the importance of the production stage of the agrifood value chain. Young people's insights highlighted a lack of connection among different stages of the value chain when they explained how youth identified as young agripreneurs and ordinary entrepreneurs in agriculture in the country actually do their activities as 'businesses' by exploiting farmers and making money out of farmers' unrecognised efforts. Actual entrepreneurs were alleged by young people to neglect farmers' hard work by either purchasing their products at very low prices or taking advantage of their stigmatised status in society to pay them low wages thinking that their status does not allow them to have higher needs and preferences in life. This suggests a potential symbolic violence suffered by farmers. Due to their low status, their needs and preferences are assumed to be low and thus their work receives low remuneration. The low amounts of symbolic capital held by farmers confers them inability to move their activities further beyond harvesting their produces, to the extent that they need traders to make their products access the market. It might either be a result of doxa discussed above or simply the lack of skills to develop businesses. But as Figure 4 explains, young people are unlikely to aspire to become farmers at the production stage as long as it confers them such a low status and recognition. Further, the engagement of agripreneurs only in activities after harvesting affects their level of skills and consideration on activities involved in the stage of agricultural production. It might also be related to the low status of farming that these agripreneurs did not engage in farming activities themselves. In other words, the engagement of agripreneurs in farming activities might confer them a low status although it might increase their knowledge on agricultural production activities. Given the importance of status in society, they might be likely to avoid to become farmers. By doing so, they end up in the universe of doxa where the symbolic violence of farmers is perceived as a subjective reality. Hence, farmers will continue to be unhappy with remuneration from their work and weak connections between production and other stages of the agrifood value chain might persist.

According to participants, agripreneurs should show interest in the production stage of the value chain so that they experience and understand working conditions in which farmers operate. This would enable them to be able to generate decent recognition from the hard work of farmers either by giving them wages that are not below

any other job in the country or recognising the skills they have rather than associating them with being unskilled, poor and illiterate. Participants' understanding of YEIA as starting from engagement in the stage of production in the agrifood value chain corresponds with stories of successful educated youth in Kenya who decided to go back to their rural homes to become farmers with an ultimate idea to change mindsets of how farming is perceived as a subsistence activity into developing new images of agriculture as a business sector (Mwaura, 2017a, 2017b). Considering agriculture as an entire sector where activities start from production and end at consumption would enable both farmers and agripreneurs to develop the capacity to address different concerns of agriculture usually known as a high-risk sector to invest in. The sector holds potential to become business-oriented where huge profits can be made but one major constraint is the attitudes and skills of people involved in agricultural activities. As results suggest, Rwandan young people appear to be influenced by actual conditions of agriculture in the country to perceive agriculture as a sector where it is difficult to consider engagement.

6.3. Escaping the farmer status in society

As mentioned above, the perceptions of participants on agriculture suggest a lack of symbolic capital among farmers. Farming was particularly explained as an activity performed by poor and illiterate people who hold the least capital in society. As a consequence, young people find it hard to aspire to become farmers, since their status in their society ranks the lowest. This suggests a strong correlation between symbolic capital and youth aspirations. A similar perspective is provided by Leavy and Smith (2010) who argue that young people do not aspire to engage in agriculture because it does not give them status in society. However, a slight difference is that these researchers expressed a lack of status throughout the entire agricultural sector. This study has found that it is rather farming (the production stage of the value chain) which young people identify to lack symbolic capital. As presented later in this chapter, there is another stage in the sector which appears to hold symbolic capital and therefore attract young people. About the stage of farming, participants expressed concern of what it actually means to become a farmer. As participants identified farming as associated with negative attitudes, the level of symbolic capital held by farmers was also backed to be too low for a young person to aspire to become a farmer. This concern is related to another aspect of the extent to which agriculture is attractive enough to persuade young people to engage in it. Participants explained that in Rwanda, agriculture, and farming in particular, does not appear to be prestigious. Instead, they pointed to the opposite, that farmers hold no symbolic capital at all. They were portrayed as poor, illiterate, soiled, dirty, unfashioned and other features that potentially do not attract a young person (Figure 4).

Instead of holding any amount of symbolic capital, farmers were identified to suffer symbolic violence where being identified as a farmer was like degrading any level of symbolic capital one may hold. Young people explained that being called a farmer in their societies would cause – for instance – educated youth to lose any prestige they might have acquired through education because a farmer is associated with illiteracy and farming is considered a sector for uneducated people. This was due to the way farming is understood in society and the life conditions farmers have

been experiencing from tradition. Historically, farmers have always belonged to the working class, holding the weakest power when identified as peasants and have always lived in poor conditions of suffering despite their efforts that would even strain their bodies while working in the fields. In Rwanda, it has become a custom that farmers hold the lowest status in society where their common tool (a hoe) is a symbol of the least profitable activity in the country, as participants revealed. These negative attitudes towards farming have been reproduced and even included in everyday language expressions. Consequently, young people appear to be likely to avoid engagement in farming activities when they fail to withstand symbolic violence suffered by farmers in their societies. Participants explained that indeed it requires special strength to resist the social disgrace associated with being labelled “a farmer”, and that this capacity is not possessed by all young people willing to engage in agriculture, especially in farming. Figure 4 summarises this scenario. On the other hand, young people appeared to develop strategies to engage in agriculture while escaping the stigmatisation of farming in society. They do this by identifying themselves differently even though their activities and the way they carry them on are similar to ordinary farmers. In fact, some participants preferred to be identified as “agripreneurs” or “agribusiness persons” from this study, explaining that the appellation is more comfortable to them and eases the suffering of symbolic violence associated with being identified as a “farmer”. This strategy is shown in the second scenario presented in Figure 5 under section 6.5. of this chapter.

Moreover, despite agriculture being reported to be the largest employer of all sectors in the economy of sub-Saharan African countries including Rwanda (AGRA, 2015), Rwandan young people explained that farming is not considered a job in their society. Farming was explained as a last resort occupation available for anyone who cannot find something else to do. A similar point was made by Sommers (2012) who highlighted “the use of a verb in response to a question about a person’s occupation (‘I dig’ or ‘I am digging’ [being] the most common forms of [the] response)” to argue that farming was not perceived as a job by Rwandan youth but rather “a basic activity” (Sommers, 2012, p. 76). Although the researcher did not provide further insights on this issue, his findings suggest a question mark on possibilities of young people to consider engaging in farming. He explained that other occupations were being mentioned from their names such as hair cutters, traders, teachers, students, and so on given that the economic life of those engaged in off-farm jobs were much better than those who identified themselves as farmers. Sommers (2012) findings correspond with insights of participants in this research in that agriculture, and especially farming, does not appear as a job to young people in Rwanda.

Further research revealed similar findings on agriculture in other Sub-Saharan African countries. It is argued that the sector, especially farming, is perceived as backward, with no prospect, a last resort or even not an option at all for young people despite the struggles of youth unemployment throughout the continent. Tadele and Gella (2012) revealed from their research in rural Ethiopia that the majority of young people and their parents do not consider farming as a possible option for a future livelihood while others perceive it as a last resort. These researchers’ findings are very similar to this study’s empirical material in terms of young people’s attitudes on farming as a livelihood option. In their study, farming was also considered as a last option for those who fail to move forward either in school or by finding another

employment. Ethiopian young people would present their aspirations to move away from farming by referring to the lives of their parents and argue that they would do anything possible to avoid to live the same life as their parents. Further, attitudes of perceiving a farmer “as having no goals in life, no plans, living off what they get from the land – starving or feasting as the produce comes” were presented in addition to a common feature of farmers being “ignorant, out of touch with the modern world and stuck in tradition” (Tadele and Gella, 2012, p. 37). Another interesting point raised by the researchers which corresponds to what Rwandan young people argued was the lack of motivation from parents and older people towards YEIA. Tadele and Gella (2012) found that parents appeared to be unwilling to encourage their children to consider a career in agriculture. They would instead invest in education of their children and encourage them to strive for a life out of agriculture through increasing the level of their education. However, a different point from the research by Tadele and Gella (2012) was the feature of agricultural development in Ethiopia where ploughs and oxen are increasingly used instead of the traditional hoe, which is still being used in Rwanda as the dominant farming tool. This might suggest that the extent to which farming is perceived as backward might be stronger from Rwanda’s perspective.

6.4. Social norms as impediments of YEIA

The uniqueness of Rwanda’s context has led this research to a finding that was not mentioned in previous studies about YEIA elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa. Young people presented illiteracy as a feature of farmers and explained the issue as if there exists a certain norm in their society constraining educated people from farming. This was explained by rural young farmers when they shared their experiences from the field at the beginning of their engagement in farming. Ordinary farmers were said to react negatively by ‘laughing at’ the young people and by further arguing that education does not matter any longer since young graduates are coming back to farm. Further, fellow youth with similar attitudes would behave the same way by making fun of young farmers when they see them in the field. It can also be explained based on the implication of an expression in the Kinyarwanda language “*gusubira ku isuka*” (literally meaning *going back to pick up the hoe*) which was mentioned by participants as what many young people understand to be meant by YEIA initiatives. This kind of societal pressure on young people who have just engaged in farming activities suggest that there might exist negative social norms towards educated young people who decide to farm and this negatively affects youths’ aspirations to engage in agriculture. However, these norms were explained as temporal since they tend to disappear in case integration of these young people in farming becomes successful. On the other hand, the stigma persists in case the young farmer does not become successful. Participants appeared to argue that the latter case is the most likely to happen due to increasing high risks existing in agricultural production.

6.5. Youth engagement in agriculture by doing something different

The majority of participants – particularly young people who were engaged in agriculture – appeared to be willing to engage in agricultural activities which are

different from those ordinary farmers perform. In terms of crop choices, young people preferred crops with multiple uses i.e. crops such as pumpkins, chili, tomatoes, etc. which can be transformed into different food products rather than common staple food crops or even cash crops that are usually cultivated in their respective agro-ecological regions. Having heard about profitability of some crops with multiple uses, young people appeared to be attracted and willing to engage in production of these crops. Also, an interest of young people in agro-processing activities was greater from the perspective of this study. Many participants were engaged in value-addition activities, more than any other stage of the agricultural value chain. A lot can be implied from this phenomenon. In relation to this study, one can deduct that the production of crops for the purpose of agro-processing appears as a potential attraction for young people in agriculture. In other words, young people aspire to engage in agricultural processing activities. However, there are many ways to provide understanding on why this is the case. It might be because activities are more profitable than just harvesting crops and taking them to the market or that many successful entrepreneurs in agriculture have been doing agricultural processing activities, etc.

Figure 5 provides another important way to interpret the phenomenon. It emerges from the analytical framework provided earlier in Chapter 3 of this thesis and exhibits another habitus of how young people adapt to the negative image of agriculture in society caused by the sector's embeddedness in social structure. Young people appeared to be willing to challenge current negative (orthodox) beliefs that agriculture is a traditional sector with no prospects, hence entering the discourse of heterodoxy. Here, young people showed their willingness to bring innovation and technologies in the sector by planting crops for agroprocessing (value addition) purposes. This might be perceived from different angles but in relation to this research, I perceive it as bringing in symbolic capital in farming since it requires knowledge and skills, hence farmers doing these activities will no longer be perceived as "ordinary" farmers bearing low status generated by being uneducated, among others. By engaging in processing activities, these youth will therefore avoid most of the disgrace directed to farming in society. In fact, young people have shown that they are challenged by implications of being identified as a farmer in society.

One more challenge consists of symbolic violence suffered by farmers of food and cash crops who are usually known to be exploited by regular traders and big companies, respectively. Hence, the production of crops different from those ordinary farmers usually grow can also be interpreted as leading to a new habitus in society that might avoid objective structures related to the ordinary habitus. In other words, farmers planting crops for processing purposes will not be identified as ordinary farmers and might thus free themselves from the stigma associated with farming. In fact, during this study participants who were engaged in agro-processing activities were the ones who identified themselves as agripreneurs, different from ordinary farmers. As a result, young people will find little or no constraints in aspiring to engage in agro-processing activities as they will view themselves as different from what society consider as farmers. It is in this scenario that more young people are likely to be willing to engage in agriculture as empirical material of this study confirm. Agroprocessing activities and multiple uses crops production appeared to be attractive to young people.

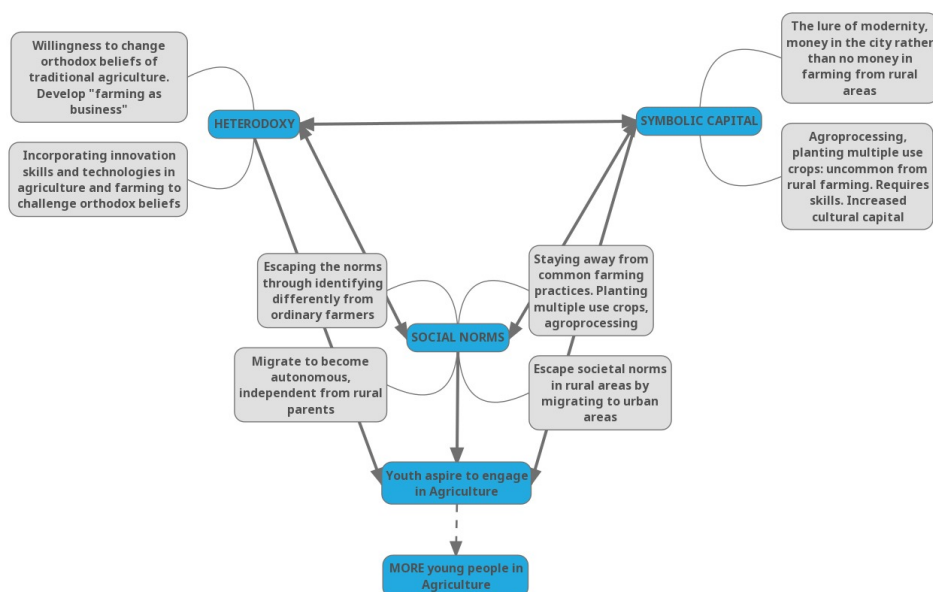


Figure 5: Adaptation strategies leading to more young people being willing to engage in agriculture despite the negative image of agriculture in society.

Source: Created by the author.

6.6. Migration as a strategy, not a first option

Participants who have migrated to Kigali from rural areas expressed that it was not the first option to move. It can be understood from the context of this study that social structures led by the negative image of agriculture (farming) in society from tradition is a strong push factor for young people to not aspire to engage in agriculture (Figure 4) and eventually opt to migrate to cities because urban areas consist of pull factors lead by the lure of modernity and diversity of activities (Figure 5). In fact, participants shared similar perspectives with their rural counterparts about different concerns related to agriculture as a way of life in rural areas and the presence of more diversified activities in urban than rural areas. Low returns of casual labour farming associated with drudgery were highlighted as a strong push factor of rural young people's greater mobility to urban areas. The low status of agriculture – especially farming – in rural society appeared to be another key factor pushing the youth to move to cities. In addition, participants revealed that belonging to the youth group is also degrading in terms of status or symbolic capital in a broad sense because young people are always dependent on their parents until they become adults. Dependence was explained in terms of access to resources such as land, financial income, etc. which are usually controlled by parents and therefore young people hold very little power over using the resources. Hence, migration was explained as a strategy to free oneself from negative attitudes generated to farmers and youth in terms of symbolic capital but also a pursuit of economic opportunities due to the diversity of urban areas. Sumberg et al. (2012) argue in a similar way by using the concept of 'mobility as capital' to state that those who migrate acquire a certain status and economic access through being independent and enhancing their possibility to access employment and market opportunities that are outside a person's local geography.

However, a different perspective is found in the literature on rural youth migration to cities where the main arguments stipulate that rural young people are much more attracted by the urban lifestyle and are therefore aspiring and/or willing to move to cities and work in informal sectors. Insights of young people in this study suggest that the situation is much more complex and appear to contrast those arguments by explaining that it might rather be the complex structures in rural areas which make it hard for young people to project a decent future in rural areas. The embeddedness of agriculture in rural societies presented in this study has revealed the strength of push factors on rural youth migration to urban areas.

6.7. Gender differences

Although looking at gender dynamics in terms of YEIA was not included in the purpose of this study, the fact that sampling methods were sensitive to gender generated further observations on gender differences in occupations of young people which provides important information to this research. In terms of sample size for this project, young women were easier to allocate in rural areas than urban areas. For young men, it was the other way around. Similarly, more young women were engaged in farming than young men. But when it comes to activities beyond farming such as processing, young men dominated. In the urban areas of Kigali city, young men dominated with more diversified informal sector jobs than their female counterparts. Occupations of young men in the city included motorcar garage technicians, hairdressers, motorbike drivers, bartenders, and so on while the majority of young women were single mothers whose primary activities were either housemaids or street traders. There is a certain correspondence between gender differences and findings about status of farmers in Rwandan society. Rural young women were more engaged in agricultural production activities which were in the study associated with social stigmatisation. Moreover, rural young women consisted the majority of young people who had been able to withstand pressure that society exerts on educated young farmers by accepting to bear the stigma. In contrast, young men did not accept to be identified as farmers but rather wanted to show that they were different from ordinary farmers. These gender differences in occupations of rural young people in Rwanda were similarly noticed by Sommers (2012) who saw more than four-fifths of rural young women identifying their occupations as just digging (or farming) while their male counterparts had more diversified jobs with farming engaging only half of the young men. On the other hand, this might also be related to what is found in literature about rural women and mobility. Much research shows that women are less mobile than men. Instead, they are more likely to stay in their rural homes rather than migrate due to pressures from family (e.g. parents who usually care about the safety of their daughters by avoiding to let them move to “dangerous cities”) and from society (e.g. girls marry earlier than boys, reputation of an urban girl in rural societies). These pressures make more rural women unlikely to move to cities and stay in rural areas to be the most affected by objective structures of society (see Uteng and Cresswell, 2016; Tanzarn, 2008; Porter, 2011, 2002). These features suggest interesting phenomena that would be very useful in getting a more complete picture of this study’s subject matter. Further research should focus on a gender perspective more explicitly in relation to YEIA.

7. Conclusions

In this chapter, I start by summarising the major findings of this research based on its objectives whereby I provide contribution of this study to existing knowledge in the literature about YEIA. Further, I outline limitations that emerged from the design of this research and methodology. I thereby provide suggestions for further studies on this important subject. The last section provides implications for policy and practice in relation to YEIA.

7.1. Summary of major findings – Contribution to existing knowledge on YEIA

Young people provided important insights to understand the situation of agriculture in Rwanda, particularly its embeddedness in the country's tradition. It is clearly highlighted in this study that agriculture is still perceived as a subsistence economy despite efforts of transforming it into a business-oriented sector. Participants critiqued the way agriculture is practiced by under-recognising efforts of farmers and exploiting them. This point was strongly related to the negative status of farmers and farming in society. Young farmers appeared to be very concerned about the features of poverty, dirt, disrespect, unfashion, etc that society especially their fellow youths have conferred to them just because they bear the identity of farmers. Here, young people were sought to adapt to this stigmatisation of farmers by either identifying themselves with different occupational names or leave the sector to look for non-farm opportunities in more diversified areas. Hence, farming was considered as the lowest paid job in the country or even not a job at all as it would only be an option in case of oneself survival.

On the other hand, young people appeared to be attracted by agriculture when it comes to the plantation of diversified multiple uses crops for agri-processing purposes. This is the area where most youths are found to engage in agriculture throughout the country. This finding challenges existing literature on young people and agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa where the majority of research have argued that young people are not attracted by agriculture. As this study reveals, it was farming and more concretely subsistence farming that appears to not attract young people and that is mainly due to the negative attitudes generated by the sector's embeddedness in society and rural life. Many researches appear to regard agriculture as similar to farming, which is not the case. This study revealed that agricultural activities 'beyond farming' were rather persuasive to young people in Rwanda, agro-processing among others.

Young people were concerned by their lack of access to land and capital investment that would otherwise boost them to consider engaging in agriculture. They highlighted lack of support from local authorities who do not seemingly trust youth capacities. Moreover, agricultural systems in the country were backed on for inefficiency led by low levels of skills and technologies in agriculture across the country. This incompetence has according to participants, generated strong market

imperfections and inability to deal with challenges of climate change, low quality of seeds and inputs which makes farmers throughout the country complain all the time to eventually not give young people any sort of inspiration to engage in agriculture.

In addition, urban migration of rural youth was explained as a livelihood strategy, rather than an aspiration. As rural life is strongly dominated by agriculture and farming in particular, young people in Kigali city pointed to the drudgery with low returns associated with agriculture as a key factor that influenced them to move to urban areas to work in informal sector where jobs are less burdensome and paying higher. This has been an additional factor to the low status and stigmatisation of farming in rural areas. In relation with the concerns of young people regarding incompetence in the operating of agricultural systems in Rwanda, participants pointed out that the prospects of young people to engage in agricultural activities are very little due to the incapability to mitigate the high risks existing in the sector.

7.2. Limitations of the study

This study was designed to target young people in Rwanda and ask them to reflect about themselves. It was late when I realised that this was holding an intrinsic limitation on the outcomes of the study. In fact, young people were reluctant to reflect on themselves. Participants would be talking more about other young people than themselves. This was noticed by the use of pronoun “they” especially when mentioning negative attitudes of young people about agriculture. The majority would only use pronoun “I” or “we” when trying to show positive consideration about the image of agriculture. This was more the case in urban areas of Kigali city, where most answers involving self-attitudes about agriculture and farming were being converted in talking about other young people. I argue that an early consideration of this issue in research design could have bettered the outcomes of this research.

Moreover, young people mentioned for several times their relationship between other people in the prime-age group. This indicates that the issue of YEIA and urban migration of rural youth involve further dynamics and stakeholders. Yet this research was aimed at young people and nobody else. Although the findings of this study were very much critical in terms of YEIA, I argue that it would have been even better to include more stakeholders who do not necessarily belong to the youth age group. In addition to that, conducting research alone on the field has been very tough to me when it comes to taking notes, facilitating interviews and discussions, asking questions, arranging for interviews and discussions venues and so forth. Although close assistance of my supervisor was much productive in terms of the outcomes of the study, company of research assistant would have surely helped me out and ease the burden that I was bearing from conducting this fieldwork alone. In short, this research would have been better with more diversified individuals.

7.3. Suggestions for further studies

In relation with the above-mentioned limitations, further studies should:

- Complement this study by investigating in more details about the status of FARMING in Rwandan society and the extent to which it affect young

people's aspirations to engage in FARMING activities. This would involve external key stakeholders such as ordinary farmers, local authorities, etc.

- Explore the factors influencing Rwandan young people to be attracted by agro-processing activities rather than farming or agricultural production activities.
- Explore insights of urban young people on the possibilities to engage in urban farming activities.

7.4. Implications for policy and practice

This thesis showed that young people's decisions to engage in agriculture or migrate from rural to urban areas are in major part determined the situation of farming and embeddedness of agriculture in Rwandan society and rural life as well as how agricultural systems in the country operate. In order to persuade young people to engage in agriculture, especially farming, there is need to challenge the above-mentioned perceptions of agriculture and eventually transform the sector into an attraction of youth aspirations. Following Bourdieu's idea about transformation of habitus, this would take long time to happen. It is therefore a long-term output to change such perceptions which have become natural in people's minds. There are many options to adopt in order to achieve this but I argue that practical measures can be more efficient and promising. One pragmatic way to do this might be to establish short-term initiatives in relation to habitus transformation. Based on the findings of this research, I provide 3 examples of short-term activities towards the transformation of perceptions of agriculture as a subsistence economy. First, it is important to promote role models who can inspire people especially the youth and challenge their attitudes about farming. These can be agripreneurs or other skilled farmers committed to extend their activities beyond the production stage of the value chain. An additional advantage could be that those role models have backgrounds that would otherwise give them a low status in society i.e. being farmers. The success of role models would challenge attitudes on agriculture in society. A good example of this short-term alternative might be the activities being done by the IITA and stories presented by Mwaura (2017a, 2017b) where young agripreneurs are engaged in agricultural production to challenge negative perceptions of people about the sector.

Further, on the land shortage issue in Rwanda, introduction of vertical farming can be a good way to convince people especially the youth that farm size does not matter just as Ali and Deininger (2014) argued. The perception that land is not enough for business agriculture is an additional impediment to aspirations of YEIA. If it was proven wrong, a number of youths might consider vertical farming as a good option given that it would even be a new habitus introduced in terms in relation to farming, as it is not a common practice in Rwandan society, therefore likely to relieve the usual stigma on farming. Lastly, mechanisation might also be helpful in a sense that people associate agriculture with drudgery and therefore unattractive. Although it is not practical to perform agricultural mechanisation in Rwanda due to the topography of mountains and hills, establishing ways of for example, transporting manure which

was identified by participants as one of the reasons why many young people leave on-farm activities can ease the negativity of perceptions directed to farming and agriculture in general. However, the research in rural Ethiopia showed that mechanisation was not enough to change the habitus of perceiving agriculture as backward although it helps relieving pressure of negative attitudes towards farming.

There is an imperative to provide practical ways of convincing people to consider agriculture as a business activity that can provide decent livelihood to farmers and earn them well-recognised status in society. Otherwise, young people might end up engaging only in agricultural activities ‘beyond farming’ and thus, the question of “who will produce the food in the future?” will remain unsolved and intriguing. Besides, the main argument of this research is that any achievement of transformation in relation to perceptions towards agricultural production activities will make agriculture attractive to young people in Rwanda.

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Appendix I – Roster

Identification of the interviewer and interview participants	
Name of the area:	_____
Sector/District/Province:	_____
Interviewer:	_____
Date:	_____
Names of Participant:	_____
Sex:	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male
Age:	_____
Household position	_____
Marital Status	_____
Number of children	_____
Highest level of education	_____
Primary occupation	_____
Secondary occupation	_____
Parents/Guardians occupation	_____
Partner's occupation	_____

Appendix II – Standard Interview protocol

1. Introduction

Thank you for your acceptance to participate in this interview session today. By agreeing, you are contributing to a study I am conducting on Rwandan youth engagement in agriculture. The study is a master thesis research project which is part of a Master Programme I study at the Swedish University of Agricultural sciences in Sweden, located in Northern Europe. My overall aim is to learn from Rwandan youth in both rural and urban areas of the country, about the factors that influence their decisions to engage or not engage in agriculture or migrate from rural to urban areas to look for non-agricultural employment. Today, I am looking forward to listen to your ideas about how you in particular, perceive agriculture and what makes you consider to engage or not engage in agricultural activities as your occupation. We will talk about your relationship with agriculture, from your early ages all the way to what made you decide to commit to agricultural occupations or move to the city to work in non-farm sector and eventually on what you think can be done to motivate the youth to willingly engage in agricultural activities.

I would like to remind you that this interview is voluntary and will remain confidential. There is nothing identifying you such as your name, picture, contact info, signature, etc. or the name of your community that will be published together with the information that you share today. I hope that you will feel free to talk about your own experiences and views on young people's engagement in agriculture. However, keep in mind that you are totally allowed not to provide any answer to any of my questions and you can end the interview whenever you like. Nonetheless, I am looking forward to take this interview up to the end, because your views and experiences on youth engagement in agriculture are very important to this study. However, you will not benefit directly from this study, but the information I am gathering, including your insights, will hopefully contribute to agricultural research and development activities in our country and elsewhere in Africa. I would like this interview to be recorded for a better analysis of what we will have discussed. As I mentioned above, there is nothing identifying you that will be made public. However, I cannot do such a thing without your permission. So, please do state whether you mind if I record this interview, and I will not.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

2. Questions:

- ***Section 1: Agriculture and your lifetime***

1. Tell me about being a farmer. What is it like? How do you enjoy it? What is the best thing about farming? What is the worst? Are there any other good/bad things?
2. What do you think of people who choose to pursue a career as farmers?
3. What do you understand by agriculture? How do you define it? What activities belong to agriculture and which ones do not?
4. Can you tell me which of your activities are most important for income generation? Which ones are most important for food?
5. Can you describe the land on which you farm? E.g. What size? How did you acquire it?

6. Tell me about your products. How do you compare them to other farmers' products? How do you sell/make profit from them?
- **Section 2: Attractiveness and profitability of Rwandan agriculture**
 7. Imagine a 5-step ladder, where on the bottom step stand the least profitable activities and on the fifth (5th), the highest; where do you position agriculture?
 - a. What reasons have made you place agriculture on this step?
 - b. How do you relate this step to your engagement in agriculture?
 8. Are there any organisations or initiatives that support agriculture in your community? Do you and/or the youth engaged in agriculture benefit from them? Please describe why/how.
 9. What characterises the people who are most likely to benefit from doing agriculture in your community?
 10. Let us assume a young person who has just become very successful in his or her farming. What could throw him or her off the track? What does it take to stay successful over a long period time?
 11. What do other/older people think of young people pursuing an agricultural career or becoming farmer? Why do you think they are viewed that way?
 12. If you look at agriculture today in our country/your community, what are those challenges that you sometimes come to think of, and they may discourage you and/or the youth from pursuing an agricultural career?
 13. Please tell me what you think can be done to make agriculture attractive for young people like you.
- **Section 3: Agriculture and Youth-hood**
 14. Do you sometimes consider to leave the village and move to live in cities? If YES, what pushes you to think that way? If NO, why do you prefer to stay? *For urban youth*: Please tell me how and why you ended up living in Kigali.
 15. How do you consider the role of farming in providing you the income you need for everyday survival compared to non-agricultural sources of income?
 16. How do you see that agriculture can contribute to the attainment of your needs and preferences?
 - a. What are your main needs and preferences?
 - b. How are/can they (be) attained by doing agricultural activities?
- **End questions**
 17. Imagine a 5-step dream job ladder (on the bottom (1st) step stands jobs that you do not regard as good professions to you while on the top (5th) step are found those jobs you dream about and desire to make your profession in the future). On which step of the ladder would you place agriculture? Please fill in the other steps with your other dream jobs.
 - a. What are the reasons for your choice?
 - b. In your view, what would it take for agriculture to climb the ladder of your dream jobs?

3. Closing note:

Thank you for your time and acceptance to participate in this interview. You have contributed a lot to this study in particular and to agricultural research and development activities in general. It has been an honor to listen to your ideas and learn from you.
Be blessed!