

Synthesis report



# Family farming in Latin America

A new comparative analysis

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

CASEN	National Socioeconomic Survey
DANE	National Statistics Department
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECV	living condition survey
ENCOVI	National Household Survey on Living Conditions
ENH	National Household Survey
ENHRUM	National Rural Household Survey (Mexico)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IBGE	Brazilian Geography and Statistics Institute
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
RIMISP	Latin American Centre for Rural Development

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# Family farming in Latin America<sup>1</sup>

Sergio Schneider

## Summary

This chapter provides a general introduction to the state of the art in discussions on family farming in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico, as part of a larger project titled “Analysis of rural poverty and inequality in Latin America” produced by Latin American Centre for Rural Development (RIMISP) for IFAD in 2013. Our analysis of family farming focused on gaining an understanding of the broader processes affecting agriculture and rural development generally in the region. The main objective was to examine the characteristics of family farming in all six countries of Latin America and come up with a typology to better understand this sector’s contribution to the rural economy as a whole. The theoretical elements and methodology used in these studies were developed on the basis of the shared expertise of the authors responsible for each country study, establishing criteria and indicators to enable the comparative work to be done. The results of the studies highlighted the importance of agriculture as an economic activity to the reproduction of such units all over the continent, and showed that specialized family farmers are the largest group in relation to the total. Moreover, we verified the function of rural residency and the combination of activities and income sources as an important feature of all the countries studied. Non-agricultural income and non-agricultural activities by family farmers are low but not negligible. Finally, despite the well-known heterogeneity of family farming in each country, the analyses made it possible to identify significant differences and inequalities between regions and countries. The study also made recommendations on the need to improve the intersector and territorial dynamics of family farming, and to think beyond the entry point to rural property to construct policies and actions under a broader approach that includes rural development and food security. We determined that it is not sufficient to simply recognize the existence of heterogeneity but rather to change policy design, which calls for adjustments to programmes and actions during the implementation process. A final recommendation has to do with the need to improve databases and standardize methodologies and information sources on family farming in Latin America.

<sup>1</sup> Although this article only refers to six country studies, the forthcoming book includes the cases of El Salvador and Nicaragua. Translation by Juan Camilo de Los Ríos Cardona.

## Introduction

Since the beginning of the millennium, circumstances have changed in Latin America with respect to agriculture and rural development. Agricultural activity in particular has seen strong growth in demand for food, raw materials and fibres in the region, reflecting higher prices internationally and access to new markets in China and other emerging countries – India and elsewhere in the South, especially in Africa. Against this backdrop, assets such as land, water and mineral resources have increased in value, creating a favourable environment for investment and an overall expansion in agribusiness. In some cases, this process has led to foreign investors buying up cheap land in the region, a practice known as land grabbing.

Equally significant changes have occurred in relation to rural development in Latin America in recent years. Rural poverty, until recently associated almost exclusively with smallholders and their inability to generate marketable surpluses, has come under study based on multidimensional criteria, particularly social and environmental. Researchers and policy setters are beginning to see that beyond the lack of economic efficiency, rural poverty is a social condition that depends on and relates to the fragile and vulnerable livelihoods of smallholders. Environmental constraints such as those relating to natural ecosystems – semiarid conditions, land with poor fertility, and so on – and the effects of climate change, or even increasingly restrictive legislation, are currently identified as determining factors in the dynamics of production. This change in approach to the determinants of poverty also extends to broader analysis and interpretations of rural development. There is a shift in approach from a purely agricultural perspective to looking at it as a broader social and economic process

linked to the dynamics of territories, collective actors, institutional governance, gender issues and succession from one generation to the next.

Any discussion of family farming must be seen in the context of these changes in agriculture and rural development. Since the mid-2000s, there has been growing interest in family farming among politicians, academics and specialists in virtually all countries in Latin America. Although this more intense discussion on family farming is recent, there was earlier debate on campesinos, smallholder production and related issues, particularly in the wake of revolutionary processes and then the agrarian reform movements of the 1960s and 1970s. There are a number of reasons why family farming has moved up the agenda of institutions, policy setters, public managers, social organizations and, above all, scholars and researchers in Latin America.

Perhaps the primary reason for this growing interest in family farming has to do with the persistence of rural poverty in Latin America before, during and after the structural adjustments of the 1980s and 1990s. At that point it became clear that neither deregulating markets nor stimulating social capital were sufficient to reduce vulnerability and social exclusion. Only once governments resumed their role in developing and implementing policy on rural development and food security did poverty and inequality indicators begin to decline as of the 2000s all over Latin America. Brazil's *Bolsa familia* and Mexico's *Oportunidades* programme are eloquent examples of countries beginning to implement policies in support of family farming in combination with compensatory and redistributive social policies (Leão and Maluf, 2012; HLPE, 2012).

The second reason for renewed interest in family farming in the region has to do

with food – more specifically, the role of smallholder production in a context of climate change and demographic transition, perhaps the two most far-reaching structural processes affecting the planet at this point in time. It is no coincidence that a number of recent publications and events have been devoted to analysing who will feed the nine billion people who will be living on the planet in 2050 (HLPE, 2013; Beddington, et al., 2012; The Economist, 2011; Schutter, 2009). Several analysts and international organizations are in agreement that family farming – the smallholder agriculture sector – will need to make a significant contribution for a number of reasons, not least because economically it encompasses the vast majority of the world's small-scale productive units (FAO, 2011). There are an estimated 2.3 billion farms in the world, 38 per cent of them in China and 20 per cent in India. Of these farms, which cover about 14 per cent of the earth's area, 85 per cent occupy less than two hectares of land (CIRAD, 2013).<sup>2</sup>

The third reason for the resurgence of family farming has to do with the renewed discussion on rural development in Latin America, particularly in connection with the territorial approach that has become increasingly important since the 2000s. Several studies showed that family farming played a key role in diversifying local economies, on one hand by supplying manpower to non-agricultural sectors and on the other by pushing up demand for goods and services. In this sense, those territories posting the most dynamic and balanced economic and human development indicators are also those in which family farming has an important presence and contribution (Mora Alfaro, 2013; Berdegué and Modrego, 2012).

The fourth reason undoubtedly relates to the role of the actors and social movements involved in family farming. Although doubts

remain as to the political identity of the notion of family farming or campesino farming, it is clear that international organizations, such as COPROFAM, France's *Confédération Paysanne*, *Vía Campesina* International, the Landless Movement and family farming unions in Brazil, were decisive in moving the discussion on family work and production up to the top of the political agenda at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and elsewhere.

The four reasons described above provide a frame of reference for this study, which systematizes the results of research and analysis on family farming in six countries in Latin America: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico. This article summarizes the main findings and conclusions for each of these countries. A broader version developed for the project "An analysis of rural poverty and inequality in Latin America" conducted by the Latin American Centre for Rural Development (RIMISP) for IFAD in 2013 will be published in a book under the same title.

The focus of the preparatory work done for the studies published here consisted of analysing the role of agriculture – understood in a broad sense as the set of agricultural activities involving livestock, silviculture and fisheries – in the reproduction of the productive units recognized as family farms. There are several studies showing the heterogeneity and diversity of family farming, making this one of its genuine characteristics. Today we also know that farmers in general, and family farmers in particular, increasingly earn part of their incomes from non-agricultural activities or even government transfers and remittances. This poses the question: How important is family farming today as an economic activity that viabilizes the social reproduction of farming families?

<sup>2</sup> The World Bank's 2008 study on Agriculture for Development states: "Of the developing world's 5.5 billion people, 3 billion live in rural areas, nearly half of humanity. Of these rural inhabitants, an estimated 2.5 billion are in households involved in agriculture, and 1.5 billion are in smallholder households." (p. 3). An IFAD/UNEP report (2013, p. 11) states that smallholders "produce 70 per cent of Africa's food supply (IAASTD 2009a) and an estimated 80 per cent of the food consumed in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa together (IFAD 2011b). In Latin America, smallholder farms occupy close to 35 per cent of total cultivated area (Altieri y Koochafkan, 2008). There are major differences among smallholder farmers in terms of assets and livelihoods, for instance the share of subsistence crops and crops produced for local and export markets.

In response to this question, the analysis of family farming focused on understanding the broadest processes affecting both agriculture and rural development in the region. The key objective was to look at the features of family farming in six countries of Latin America and come up with a typology to better understand the sector's contribution to the rural economy as a whole. Theoretical elements and methodologies were developed on the basis of shared expertise by the authors responsible for each country study, establishing standard criteria and indicators to enable comparative work.

## Defining family farming

The definition of family farming varies according to the criteria and perspective of those defining it. Essentially, there are three ways to define family farming.

The first is by making use of a theoretical frame of reference. This calls for a particular epistemological and analytical perspective as a starting point for building the concepts to represent heuristically what is to be included in or excluded from the definition adopted.

The second possibility is to use normative definitions developed on the basis of references that use some kind of

classification or empirical criterion, such as the availability of land, income level or degree of specialization. The creation of a standard or rule to be used as a definition leads to some degree of arbitrariness or discrimination since the selection criteria by definition reduce diversity and/or heterogeneity in order to achieve the greatest possible homogeneity for study.

The third way of defining family farming is political, as a result of accepting, importing and using a definition that comes from a social construction. This occurs when a definition created by people on a common-sense basis comes to be used by a specific group, movement or organization attributing a meaning to it to define political action. In this sense, the political definition of family farming is a category constructed by those who make up this group or collective and feel they are represented by its proposals and ideas, which give meaning and significance to their social identity. There are currently several groups and social movements, rural unions in particular, laying claim to the family farmer identity.

To some extent, the current discussion on family farming in Latin America has inherited the reflections on campesinos during the 1970s and on small-scale production during

**3** The debate on campesinos, small-scale production and other terms used synonymously is an old one and goes beyond the scope of this study. We would simply clarify that we are aware of the importance of discussions on the place and role of small-scale production in the development of capitalism during the 1960s with the implementation of agrarian reform in several Latin American countries, such as Chile, Ecuador,

Guatemala, Mexico and Peru, and Brazil itself in 1964 when the Land Statute was launched. In Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas offered 18 million hectares of land between 1934 and 1940, the most intense period of agrarian reform (the United Fruit Company owned 50 per cent of the country's land at the time). In Chile, new laws were adopted in 1966 that accelerated the agrarian reform process initiated by Eduardo Frei and subsequently promoted in

1970 by Allende. Agrarian reform was also important in Peru, especially as of 1969 with the government of Juan Velasco Alvarado. These social processes generated not only political debate but also a vast body of scientific, intellectual, theoretical and empirical work on campesinos in Latin America. Many of these studies were published in the Latin American Rural Studies Review, no longer being published. During the 1990s, the

debate lessened in intensity but continued in effect, even though the forums for discussion were reduced during the 1970s and 1980s by the military dictatorships that took power across the continent. The 1990s saw important work done on campesinos in countries such as Chile and Mexico, focusing on their status and role at a time of neoliberal adjustment and trade liberalization. This led to policies in support of campesino

farming being maintained even during the rise of neoliberalism. Chile, for instance, during the 1990s and continuing into the present day, invests approximately double the resources per capita than Brazil, and continues to operate a government agency fully dedicated to agriculture with a budget of about 60 per cent of total agricultural expenditure. (Thanks to Julio Berdegúe for content and drafting suggestions on this note).

the 1980s.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, there are new and different aspects with respect to debates in the past that are important to note. For example, the current discussion takes up political and ideological points less forcefully and with less intensity than the discussions around campesinos and their revolutionary potential that took place during the 1960s and 1970s throughout Latin America. Equally, the current analysis of family farming has taken a step forward from a discussion on efficiency and/or effectiveness of small-scale production, in other words on the persistence of smallholder farms within the capitalist dynamics of the agro-industrial chains that had such an impact during the 1980s and part of the 1990s.<sup>4</sup>

One shared aspect that has allowed a relative consensus to develop among scholars and policy setters now working on family farming is the perception that these units are not necessarily either poor or small, much less disconnected from markets, cities and the social dynamic generally, generating linkages with the national government through public policies and, more generally, with socio-cultural globalization.

The concept of family farming is in widespread use in several Latin American countries, as demonstrated herein. Studies and research done in the past few years have sought to set out a frame of reference for organizations, governments and other institutions on family farming in the region. Although a detailed review of all these documents would be beyond the scope of this study, it is worth mentioning the work done by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 1984),<sup>5</sup> the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2011) and the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) Specialized Network on Family Farming (REAF), which have sought to

compile the normative and legal definitions of family farming in each country.

On one hand, recognizing family farming refers to a cognitive, at times rhetorical, effort or movement to reconsider and rename the way in which campesinos and smallholders were defined and treated until recently. On the other hand, it is also a way of attributing new analytical and political meaning, as family farming is now understood by scholars and scientists as a diverse and heterogeneous social category, in addition to being recognized by managers and organizations for its strategic role in the social and economic development of the region's countries. In this way, family farming is fundamental politically for both international organizations and social movements, unions and cooperatives, as well as for political parties and public programmes and policies.

It is no accident that the United Nations is celebrating the International Year of Family Farming in 2014, as agreed between FAO and the Global Forum on Family Farming. Nor is it any surprise that this coincided with the arrival of a Brazilian academic of great international prestige at the helm of FAO, one of the most important agencies in the United Nations system.

In this context, the stated interest of national governments and international organizations in developing policies, programmes and actions in support of family farming in Latin America sets the stage for a discussion of this issue. We can take advantage of this favourable context to build on knowledge about family farming in the countries of Latin America, establish parameters for comparison to inform shared learning strategies, and create governance mechanisms and institutions to ensure medium- and long-term stability and thus overcome the vagaries of trends in thought.

4 In another text, we analyse the process of social construction of the concept of family farming in Latin America; see Schneider and Escher (2012).

5 The ECLAC document "Economía campesina y agricultura familiar" [*Campesino economy and family farming*] may be the first truly Latin American text analysing the campesino economy, based on empirical data and sound theoretical foundations, in addition to identifying the essential differences between it and commercial farming. This work also outlines a typology of campesino economy and classifies it into subgroups. It applies criteria that are very close to the ones used in this study, such as the origin of labour and a typology based on productive capacity and income generated.

In this chapter, we have adopted a definition of family farming that is intended to serve as a reference and inspiration for developing a typology or classification. Family farming refers to the practice of an economic activity, agriculture,<sup>6</sup> by a social group united by ties of kinship and blood, the family. This is a social group that works and generates products, goods and services. Thus, family farming includes a social mode of working and producing in which an activity – agriculture – is performed by a domestic group united by family ties (Chayanov, 1974; Shanin, 1973, 2009; ECLAC, 1984; Ellis, 1988).

There is no standard definition of family farming in the six countries analysed. Our intention here is not to go off on a tangent to discuss the theoretical and epistemological basis of different approaches to family farming. We have decided to adopt a working definition of family farming that enables us to segment this social universe based on a number of features of these units and, on that basis, develop a typology to classify and stratify them in groups or categories.

## Methodological considerations

As a starting point, we understand that the rural landscape is made up of agricultural establishments and other forms of property. However, we are interested exclusively in agricultural establishments in rural areas that employ chiefly family labour. Family farming is therefore one of the different kinds of family work and production, which may find material expression in agriculture or not, since outside the rural landscape there are also forms of family work and production such as small-scale tradespeople and self-employed workers who employ only themselves or a family member.

Thus, the reference unit for this study of family farming will be the agricultural household and production unit, encompassing

both a productive base with access to some resources – such as land and water – and a social group, the family, related by ties of kinship and blood.

We understand that the origin and type of labour is a key factor in organizing the production process and managing the assets that generate value added by activity, which can be identified and quantified by the amount of gross or net income generated. In this sense, it is possible to distinguish and classify family units by means of an economic variable or criterion, which is the total cost of agricultural production or the level and amount of income generated.

There are three elements that justify the use of economic indicators – production or cost of production and income – to classify family farmers vis-a-vis non-family farmers. First, criteria based on available land size do not allow for determining indicators of economic performance. Small properties may have high productive performance as compared to large rural properties. Second, land and/or access to land, taken as an isolated indicator, has limited explanatory power. Third, information on production and economic performance more generally may indicate an interaction between agriculture and other sectors, such as services and commerce. In the contemporary context in which rural affairs are increasingly diversified and heterogeneous, we need to seek out variables that enable us to understand diversity in life strategies.

In view of the foregoing, the classification of family farming that we propose here rests on a combination of criteria based on whether family or non-family labour is employed and on the level of income generated by farm work or production within the agricultural or silvo-pastoral unit.

Non-agricultural and para-agricultural income, remittances, interest and other employment income vary in importance to

<sup>6</sup> The term “agriculture” is used in this document in a broad sense, to include the production of food and other plant and animal products (crops, livestock, fish and forest products).

the farm. They range from situations in which the family produces just enough for self-consumption on the property and lives on remittances or pensions, to those in which only a small proportion of family income comes from work done by one of the family members, such as a daughter or wife who works as a teacher.

These situations allow for a classification of units working and producing with family labour – from farms performing intensive economic activity using assets such as land, work and capital, to those whose social reproduction is ensured by their positioning in other sectors, such as services and trade where they sell their labour, or even farms that receive assistance from family members who have migrated and send remittances from abroad or from elsewhere in the country.

Figure 1 presents the typology of family farming used in the six country studies. The methodology used in each study consisted basically of developing a typology based on agriculture’s contribution to the rural economy as a whole.

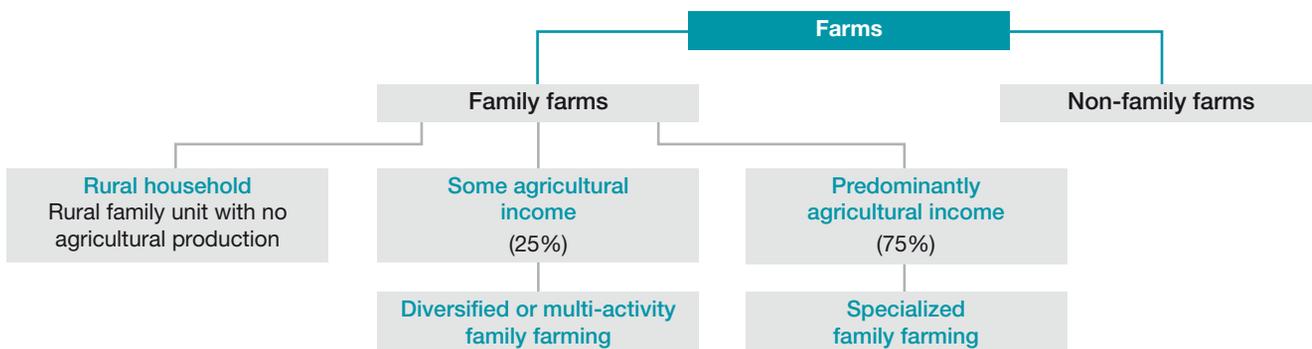
The development of such a typology met the objective of classifying family farming using variables to grasp its economic profile, as well as comparing several Latin American countries, specifically Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico.

Thus, the general methodology of the studies presented consisted of classifying family farms on the basis of one key criterion: the use of family labour in the productive unit. With the exception of Brazil, there are no census or household survey data available on family farming. In some cases, the studies used census data by farm, in other cases, household surveys that took rural households working independently as their reference unit.

In Chile, there is no source of empirical data allowing for a direct study of the current situation and trends in family farming. The information sources used are therefore the agricultural census and the National Socioeconomic Survey (CASEN). Both data sources used microdata on each farm, in the case of the census, or each household or family. The working definitions used to differentiate units – farms or households – within family farming were built on the basis of these information sources. The typology is based on CASEN variables: the proportion of total family income derived from work in agriculture, in relation to total family income self-reported by family farmers.

The source of information used for Ecuador was the Living Conditions Research Study (LCS) for 1999 to 2006. It was not possible to use the 2001 national agricultural census

**FIGURE 1 Typology of family farming**



as it did not allow for comparison with other research found for Ecuador. In particular, it did not provide all information needed to develop a typology of family farming. Therefore, family groups with predominantly agricultural income (75 per cent or more) were defined as falling under the heading of specialized family farming (SFF), while families for whom agricultural activities are not predominant were considered as part of the diversified family farming (DFF) category.

In Colombia, the definition of family farming comes from household surveys conducted by the National Statistics Department (DANE), which allows for the development of consistent and comparable statistics for the period 1996-2011. The lack of information means that studies on family farming are done through agricultural research and household surveys (the most recent agricultural census was done in 1970). A typology was developed using information from the household survey to classify family farmers whose main source of income is agriculture (specialized family farming) and families whose main source of income is non-agricultural (multi-activity households).

For Mexico, family farms, including both agriculture and forestry, are defined as units that employ more than 50 per cent family labour of total labour relating to productive activities. Specialized family farms were defined as deriving 50 per cent or more of gross income from agriculture or forestry, and multi-activity family farms as deriving less than 50 per cent of total gross income from agriculture or forestry. To the extent possible, the study used baseline data from 2008, which was also used in the FAO-SAGARPA study. However, in view of the limitations in official information, the study of family farming in Mexico employed the National Survey on Rural Households (ENHRUM) 2002-2007. The ENHRUM data were statistically

verified. The limitation of this survey is that it represents households located in areas with between 500 and 2,499 inhabitants.

Finally, in Guatemala, households were divided into rural and non-rural families. Rural households were classified as farming and non-farming families. On this basis, family farming and wage farming were differentiated. Subsequently, households engaged in specialized family farming were defined as those deriving 75 per cent or more of their total income from self-employment. Multi-activity or diversified family farming is defined as referring to households deriving between 10 per cent and 75 per cent of total income from agriculture. The threshold was set at 10 per cent, very close to the average for households engaged in some agricultural activity on a self-employment basis. The database used was the National Household Survey on Living Conditions (ENCOVI) produced by the National Statistics Institute.

In Brazil, as mentioned, the definition of family farming adopted is in accordance with Law 11.326/2006, which uses the legal definition of family farming. According to this law, a farm is considered a family farm when it meets all the following requirements:

- Has an area, under any kind of title, of not more than four tax modules.<sup>7</sup>
- Employs predominantly own family labour in economic activities of the establishment or enterprise.
- Derives family income predominantly from economic activities relating to the same establishment or enterprise.
- Operates the establishment or enterprise with the family.

The typology of family farming in Brazil was developed using microdata from the 2006 Agricultural Census, tabulated by technicians from the Brazilian Geography and Statistics

<sup>7</sup> The tax module is a unit of measure for area expressed in hectares, used in Brazil and established for each municipality based on the following criteria: (a) type of activity predominating in the municipality; (b) income obtained on predominant activity; (c) other activities in the municipality that, despite not being predominant, are significant given income generated or area used.

Institute (IBGE), based on the methodology indicated. It was not possible to compare data from the 2006 agricultural census, the most recent available, with those of the 1995/96 census, as the division between family and non-family farms did not yet exist in 1995/96.

Starting with the typology of family farming, a set of descriptive variables were selected – such as income, access to land, technology and educational level – in order to perform a comparison among the three main types of family farms identified: specialized family farms, diversified and/or multi-activity family farms, and rural households.

The following section describes and summarizes the main findings of this work in the six countries. More detailed information on each country can be found in the specific reports prepared by the authors, Sergio Schneider of Brazil, Julio Berdegué of Chile, Absalón Machado of Colombia, Luciano Martínez of Ecuador, Wilson Romero of Guatemala, Antonio Yúnez Naude of Mexico, Oscar Cabrera Melgar of El Salvador and

Tomás Rodríguez, Ligia Gómez, Rosa Torres and María Karla Bayres of Nicaragua.

Case studies of El Salvador and Nicaragua were not part of the original study on family farming in Latin America supported by IFAD. However, they share the same methodological references and, therefore, their conclusions are comparable. The study on El Salvador was based on two sources of information: the 2007-2008 Agricultural Censuses and the Multi-Purpose Household Surveys (MPHS) from 2000 and 2009. The chapter on Nicaragua used three sources of official data: the most recent National Agricultural Census (IV CENAGRO 2011) and two National Household Living Standards Measurement Surveys (LSMS 2005 and 2009), which are carried out by the National Institute of Development Information (INIDE). Furthermore, as part of the study on Nicaragua, public servants were interviewed from the Ministry of Community, Cooperative and Associative Economy (MEFCCA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAGFOR).

**TABLE 1 Brazil – Number and percentage of farms by type of family and non-family farm, 2006**

Typology	Family farms		Non-family farms		Total	
	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
Rural resident families	237 926	5.45	45 735	5.65	283 661	5.48
Multi-income family farms	276 582	6.34	91 816	11.34	368 398	7.12
Specialized family farms	2 543 819	58.26	509 368	62.93	3 053 187	58.99
Unclassified (no income)	1 307 940	29.95	162 450	20.07	1 470 390	28.41
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 366 267</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>809 369</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>5 175 636</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: IBGE agricultural census, special tabulations.

## Characteristics of family farming in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico

The social and economic characteristics of family farming in Latin America vary according to the history of each region or country, as well as the relationship with the physical and geographical environment. The result is a configuration of specific systems of land use and organization of productive activity and labour relations. The diversity of family farming may be described in terms of the heterogeneity of farming systems across history. However, our focus of interest is simpler. We will present a description based on the typology obtained using the selected criteria under the project, in response to a specific request by IFAD.

### Family farming in Brazil

The main findings using the typology proposed for Brazil were obtained from the 2006 agricultural census database. A typology of family farming was developed comprising three groups: **specialized family farms**, deriving their income predominantly from agriculture (i.e. more than 51 per cent of total income); **family farms with multiple income sources**, deriving between 21 per cent and 50 per cent of total income from agriculture; and **family farms with rural residents**, deriving less than 20 per cent of total income from agriculture.

The data from the most recent Brazilian Geography and Statistics Institute (IBGE) agricultural census indicated that Brazil had a total of 5,175,636 farms in 2006, of which 4,366,267 meet the requirements for classification as family farms and 809,369 are classified as non-family farms (table 1). These data show that family farming accounts for 84 per cent of all Brazilian farms and occupies an area of just over 80.3 million ha, representing 24.3 per cent of the country's

total farmland. The 4,366,267 family farms are distributed throughout the country's five major regions. The largest number – over 50 per cent – are located in the Northeast (2,187,131), followed by the South (849,693) and Southeast (699,755) regions.

These farms may be divided into four major groups. The largest of these comprises 2,543,819 farms (58.26 per cent of family farms) deriving most of their income from agriculture, representing an average of 90.96 per cent of total income. The second group is made up of 1,307,940 farms (29.95 per cent of all family farms) that reported no income deriving from agricultural activity in 2006. This second group is divided in turn into five subgroups as described below. The third group consists of 276,582 family farms (6.34 per cent of the total) with multiple income sources. The smallest group, made up of 237,926 farms (5.45 per cent of the total), corresponds to farms meeting the criteria for rural residence, given that a very small proportion of their income is derived from agriculture or production per se.

In short, Brazilian family farms deriving their income from agricultural activity can be classified into three groups or types:

- a) The largest group, **specialized family farms**, is heavily dependent upon income from agricultural activity, mainly crop production. These are farms that are open to other non-farm activities but whose vocation and main social reproduction strategy continue to be agricultural.
- b) A small group of **farms with multiple income sources**, for which agriculture is not the only or even the most important source of income, derives significant monetary income from non-agricultural activities and pensions. The reproduction strategies of these farms are not confined to agricultural production, as they have very limited access to extension services

and relatively small areas of land for agricultural expansion.

- c) A third group comprises **rural resident families** who live in rural areas but for whom agriculture, and agricultural production generally, holds only a residual value. Their properties may be only a place of residence. However, production is somewhat important, particularly for self-consumption.

In addition to these three groups of family farms with agricultural income, the typology includes 1,307,940 farms (29.95 per cent of the total) that reported no income from agricultural activity in 2006, which were classified into five subgroups (table 2):

- 1. Family farms with production costs and area of up to 20 ha:** These are farms with no income from agricultural activity but with

production costs and having an area of up to 20 ha. This first subgroup is the largest of the five, comprising 637,911 farms or 48.77 per cent of the total for this subgroup. These are very small farms with an average area of 4.14 ha, occupying just 0.79 per cent of farmland in Brazil. They engage mainly in crop production (86.35 per cent) for self-consumption (95.52 per cent). Pension income is very significant for these farms, and just 7.09 per cent have access to technical assistance. Approximately 13.25 per cent of them are located in agrarian reform settlement areas.

- 2. Family farms with production costs and areas greater than 20 ha:** These farms are those with no income from agricultural activities but with production costs for such activities and an area

**TABLE 2 Brazil – Summary of family farms with no agricultural income, 2006**

Variables	Groups – No income				
	With production costs (area up to 20 ha)	With production costs (area > 20 ha)	No production costs	No area	Other situations
Number of farms	637,911	138,864	355,965	87,480	87,720
% of farms	48.77	10.62	27.22	6.69	6.71
% of total area	0.79	2.37	2.57	0.00	0.36
Average area (ha)	4.14	56.89	24.10	0.00	13.69
% production costs, plant	86.35	83.26	0.00	71.27	0.00
% production costs, animal	12.83	16.33	0.00	27.41	0.00
% production costs, self-consumption	95.52	92.67	0.00	88.88	0.00
% on agrarian reform settlements	13.25	4.01	6.48	16.91	7.38
% pension income	70.05	66.56	42.11	53.81	50.34
% access to technical assistance	7.09	14.69	12.19	4.58	9.83

Source: IBGE, agricultural census 2006, special tabulations.

greater than 20 ha. This subgroup, which is smaller than the previous one, consists of 138,864 family farms (10.62 per cent of the total). These farms average 56.89 ha and occupy 2.37 per cent of total farmland in Brazil. As with the previous subgroup, most production costs are for crops (83.26 per cent), and the share of production costs for self-consumption is 92.67 per cent of total costs. These farms also have significant income deriving from pensions and similar sources (66.56 per cent), and 14.69 per cent of them receive technical assistance. Finally, 4.01 per cent are located in agrarian reform settlement areas.

### 3. Family farms without production

**costs:** These farms derive no income from agricultural activities and have no production costs for such activities, independently of property size. This group consists of 355,965 farms, representing 27.22 per cent of the total number of farms without income. They average 24.1 ha and occupy 2.57 per cent of the nation's farmland. Their pension incomes are significant (42.11 per cent), although less than for the previous groups. Also, 6.48 per cent of these farms are located in agrarian reform settlement areas and just 12.19 per cent have access to technical assistance.

**4. Family farms with no area:** These are farms with no specific area of land, such as beekeepers, producers along riverbanks at times of low water levels, producers in protection areas or along highway shoulders, charcoal producers using third-party fuelwood, and those engaged in extraction, collection or harvesting of natural forest products (IBGE, 2009, pp. 32 and 33). This is the smallest group among those without income, and comprises 87,480 farms representing 6.69 per cent

of the total. Their production is mainly plant-based (71.27 per cent), consisting of crops destined for self-consumption (88.88 per cent). Their pension income accounts for just over half of total family income (53.81 per cent). Within the category of farms with no income, this is the group with the highest proportion of farms located in agrarian reform settlement areas (16.91 per cent), and just 4.68 per cent of the total number of these farms had access to technical assistance.

### 5. Family farms with other situations:

Finally, the fifth subgroup under farms with no agricultural income comprises farms with different situations than the four previous ones. There are 87,720 of these farms representing 6.71 per cent of farms with no income. They average 13.69 ha and occupy 0.36 per cent of the country's farmland. Just over one half of producer and family incomes come from pensions (50.34 per cent), and 7.38 per cent are located on agrarian reform settlements. As with the other four groups, very few of these farms had access to technical assistance (9.83 per cent).

## Family farming in Colombia

In applying the typology in Colombia, the household survey database was used. Among the various fields of study covered by the surveys, this specific analysis used the fields "capital or municipal seat" (urban) and "remaining areas" (rural). This information is important because the survey applies to the place of residence, so if these fields are not taken into account, urban dwellers working in rural areas (or vice versa) would be excluded from the analysis.

Based on these definitions, two types of family farms were defined and compared: (a) *specialized family farms*, defined as households with at least one self-employed

**TABLE 3 Colombia – Number of households: SFF, multi-activity, other, 1996-2011**

Year/ Field	1996						2011					
	Capital/ seat	%	Remaining areas	%	Total	%	Capital/ seat	%	Remaining areas	%	Total	%
SFF	139 449	2.2	751 654	32.6	891 103	10.4	304 579	3.1	1 087 989	38.3	1 392 568	11.1
Multi- activity	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1 976	0.0	5 071	0.2	7 047	0.1
Other	6 097 940	97.8	1 553 116	67.4	7 651 056	89.6	9 388 088	96.8	1 747 654	61.5	11 149 835	88.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 237 389</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2 304 770</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8 542 159</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9 694 643</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2 840 714</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>12 535 356</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Developed by the author based on information provided by DANE (ENH and GEIH).

**TABLE 4 Colombia – Number of people employed in specialized family farming by gender: 1996, 2005 and 2011**

Year	Area	Men	Women	Total
1996	Capital/seat	148 534	7 540	156 074
	Remaining areas	823 152	103 924	927 075
	<b>Total</b>	<b>971 685</b>	<b>111 464</b>	<b>1 083 149</b>
2005	Capital/seat	305 606	20 017	325 623
	Remaining areas	1 063 770	144 236	1 208 006
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 369 376</b>	<b>164 253</b>	<b>1 533 629</b>
2011	Capital/seat	312 182	30 475	342 657
	Remaining areas	1 179 117	191 642	1 370 759
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 491 299</b>	<b>222 117</b>	<b>1 713 416</b>

Source: Developed by the author based on information provided by DANE (ENH, ECH and GEIH).

person working in the agriculture sector whose income is derived primarily from farmwork; and (b) *multi-activity family farms*, defined as households in which at least one member reported that agricultural activity was not the primary but a secondary source of income (day labourers and farm workers).

In the case of Colombia, it was determined that there were 2,304,770 rural households in 1996, of which 32.6 per cent were specialized family farms (SFF), whereas in 2011 there were 2,804,714 rural households, of which 38.3 per cent were SFF and 0.1 per cent multi-activity households (table 3).

The SFF category – defined as the number of independent or self-employed workers – has an important weight within total labour employed in agriculture. Labour participation in this group increased from 33 per cent in 1996 to 47 per cent in 2011. Multi-activity households, on the other hand, account for just 0.05 per cent of total labour employed in Colombian agriculture.

With respect to the gender of the employed person, women's participation in the labour force rose among specialized farmers. In 1996, employed women accounted for 10.3 per cent of the total, while in 2011 the percentage had risen to 12.9 per cent. Among multi-activity

**TABLE 5 Colombia – Poverty by department, 2002-2011 (percentage)**

Department	2002	2003	2004	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011
Chocó	67.6	69.2	72.7	74.7	73.1	68.3	64.9	64.0
Cauca	57.8	62.0	60.0	56.1	66.4	66.1	64.7	62.0
Córdoba	65.6	64.0	67.6	63.7	62	61.8	63.6	61.5
Magdalena	65.5	59.5	54.8	57.5	64.5	58.3	58.0	57.5
La Guajira	67.2	58.3	57.7	57.8	69.9	66.7	64.6	57.4
Sucre	69.2	58.2	64.0	63.8	66.6	66.2	63.7	53.0
Nariño	65.7	70.0	65.2	58.7	56.1	55.1	56.4	50.6
Huila	69.6	66.8	64.6	56.1	58.5	57.5	53.3	48.2
Cesar	61.9	60.1	59.2	56.2	63.2	58.6	53.6	47.2
Bolívar	64.9	53.9	54.8	51.9	58.3	57.1	49.4	43.7
Tolima	54.3	51.9	55.8	50.7	46.4	48.4	45.1	43.1
Caquetá	53.0	53.6	55.7	53.7	47.7	51.6	44.3	40.8
Norte de Santander	56.6	58.9	61.0	59.4	50.7	47.5	43.1	40.6
Quindío	47.1	38.8	46.8	45.6	43.3	49.9	43.4	40.2
Boyacá	67.1	64.6	63.6	58.3	58.0	48.0	47.1	39.9
Atlántico	50.1	52.4	49.9	48.8	48.0	47.9	43.9	37.8
Caldas	46.1	47.3	47.9	43.8	42.8	41.7	39.6	36.6
Meta	39.8	41.1	36.7	38.3	32.2	36.0	32.4	30.0
Valle del Cauca	38.9	41.0	38.0	36.6	33.4	33.3	30.7	30.0
Antioquia	47.9	46.2	44.4	41.8	38.3	35.1	31.3	29.3
Risaralda	37.6	34.6	36.0	35.5	35.1	32.3	33.3	27.0
Santander	45.0	44.4	42.3	41.4	30.6	27.2	21.6	21.8
Cundinamarca	51.4	50.7	50.2	44.6	30.8	26.2	25.4	21.3
Bogotá D.C.	31.8	32.1	28.8	26.6	19.7	18.3	15.4	13.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>34.1</b>

Source: Developed by the author based on information provided by DANE (ENH and GEIH).

households, the number is slightly higher: In 2008, 15.1 per cent of those employed in agriculture were women, rising in 2011 to 16.9 per cent (table 4). Generally speaking, the average age of those employed in agriculture in Colombia is similar in both categories, although it does reflect the overall trend of an aging farming population in Latin America. The average age of specialized and multi-activity farmers in Colombia in 2011 was 44.

The percentage of young people employed in agriculture is very low, below 10 per cent among those aged under 24 years of age.

In terms of the territorial location of these rural households, the regions (departments) with the largest number of self-employed workers in farming (SFF) in 2011 were: Nariño (15.1 per cent), Cauca (8.7 per cent), Bolivar (6.6 per cent), Boyacá (6.1 per cent), Antioquia (5.9 per cent), Huila (5.8 per cent), Santander

(5.6 per cent) and Cundinamarca (5.5 per cent). These eight departments account for 59.3 per cent of all workers. Multi-activity households, on the other hand, are located in regions where urbanization is more intense and economic activity is more diversified. Of these, 70.6 per cent are located in the departments of Cundinamarca (capital Bogotá), Antioquia (capital Medellín), Valle del Cauca (capital Cali), Tolima and the Capital District (Bogotá).

These data show that family farming in Colombia is concentrated in the so-called Andean area or in regions of the interior on the agricultural frontier where historical settlement processes ended decades ago.

Finally, table 5 shows that poverty levels have been falling over the years in all regions, although the data also show higher poverty

levels in regions with a large number of people employed in specialized family farming, such as Cauca (62 per cent), Nariño (50.6 per cent), Huila (48.2 per cent) and Boyacá (39.9 per cent).

### Family farming in Ecuador

Family farming in Ecuador was studied using data available in living condition surveys (ECV) for the years 1999 to 2006. In order to locate rural households on a territorial basis, data were divided by three regions: Sierra, Coast and Amazon (no data available for the latter for 1999).

Table 6 indicates that family farming in Ecuador is concentrated in the Sierra region, by both number of households and number of people employed.

**TABLE 6 Ecuador – Family farming households by region (percentage of total rural households), 1999-2006**

Region	1999				2006			
	Farming households	%	People	%	Farming households	%	People	%
Sierra	375 271	76.3	1 331 497	58.3	406 099	69.3	1 173 934	47.2
Coast	178 350	46.2	709 455	37.1	210 276	48.4	530 409	28.1
Amazon					64 813	70.2	197 236	41.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>553 621</b>	<b>63.1</b>	<b>2 040 953</b>	<b>48.6</b>	<b>681 188</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>1 901 579</b>	<b>39.3</b>

Source: ECV, 1999, 2006.

**TABLE 7 Ecuador – Typology of households by region, 1999-2006 (percentage)**

Region	1999			2006		
	DFF households	SFF households	Total	DFF households	SFF households	Total
Sierra	48.3	51.7	100.0	46.5	53.5	100.0
Coast	45.3	54.7	100.0	33.3	66.7	100.0
Amazon				33.2	66.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.3</b>	<b>52.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>58.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: ECV, 1999 and 2006.

At the national level, the number of farming households increased slightly but the number of people decreased from 48.6 per cent in 1999 to 39.3 per cent in 2006, a clear indication of the declining rural population.

An analysis of the typology data shows that specialized family farming (SFF) predominates in the country. In 2006, for instance, 58.8 per cent of households fell into this category, while 41.2 per cent were classified as diversified family farms (DFF). Regional differences are important: the Amazon region is home to the rural households with the greatest dependence on agricultural income (66.8 per cent), followed by the Coast region (66.7 per cent), whereas the Sierra region has a proportion of diversified income households of 46.5 per cent (table 7).

With respect to the average age of heads of households, diversified family farms post the lowest values at 47 years of age, whereas the average age for specialized family farms is 51. This confirms the thesis that traditional farming is generally carried on by older people.

One interesting issue in Ecuador is the ethnic origin of family heads. According to available data, 23.2 per cent of heads of

household employed in specialized family farming self-report as indigenous, whereas for diversified family farms the value is 20.7 per cent. The vast majority self-report as mestizo, both for diversified family farms (70.5 per cent) and for specialized family farms (68.8 per cent).

The educational level of people living in rural areas is quite low: 70 per cent report having completed primary school and 16 per cent have no education whatsoever. For the groups within the typology, 17 per cent of SFF heads of household have no education, while the value for DFF heads of household is 14.8 per cent.

One finding that should be underscored relates to the analysis of data on the origin of family farm income. Overall, it was found that non-agricultural income accounted for an average of 62.3 per cent of total income for the family units under review, and that agricultural income accounted for 37.6 per cent. In other words, in order to survive in current circumstances, family producers need to turn to non-agricultural income or depend on family farm work. An analysis of the data according to the family farm typology leads us to the same conclusions (table 8).

**TABLE 8 Ecuador – Income distribution in DFF and SFF family farms by region (in US dollars), 1999-2006 (percentage)**

Region	1999			2006		
	Specialized family farms			Diversified family farms		
	Non-agricultural income	Agricultural income	Total income	Non-agricultural income	Agricultural income	Total income
Sierra	36.5	63.5	100.0	91.4	8.6	100.0
Coast	39.4	60.6	100.0	89.7	10.3	100.0
Amazon	28.6	71.4	100.0	89.8	10.2	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>63.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>90.9</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: ECV, 2006.

As expected, the incomes of DFF households derive primarily from non-agricultural sources. These are likely to be families with very limited access to land and most family members engaged in off-farm activities.

In analysing the origin of SFF household income we see, on one hand, that the highest proportion of income is agricultural, and on the other that a high proportion of income also corresponds to non-agricultural activities. Between 1999 and 2006 the proportion of non-agricultural income doubled among specialized farmers, from 15.1 per cent to 36.8 per cent, showing the rising importance of this type of income in maintaining family farms.

### Family farming in Guatemala

The data used to construct the Guatemalan typology were collected from two different sources: the national agricultural census of 2003 and the Living Conditions Survey (ENCOVI) of 2000 and 2011.

The data included in table 9 show that the number of family farm households

dropped during the period 2000 to 2011, from 24.1 per cent of all rural households with agricultural activity to 10.8 per cent. This total cumulative loss of 13 per cent corresponds to an absolute decline in family farms from 293,976 households in 2000 to 149,677 in 2011. The dynamic of decline was also seen in both types of family farming analysed, specialized and multi-activity. Although it is not possible to reach any conclusions about the reason for the decline, it is likely that it relates to the increase in the rural wage workers group (from 33.7 per cent to 39.5 per cent) and the increase in the proportion of non-agricultural income during the period (from 22.3 per cent to 25.7 per cent).

These data show a trend in Guatemalan agriculture towards concentration, which has its primary expression in the reconcentration of land for agro-exports. The data also show that the weight of agricultural activity, although it has declined somewhat, continues to be important, as one of every two households is directly linked to agricultural activity, regardless of income source.

**TABLE 9 Guatemala – Distribution of households by agricultural activity, 2000-2011**

Typology	Households		Percentage of households	
	2000	2011	2000	2011
<b>Total rural households</b>	1 219 595	1 402 957	100.0	100.0
<b>Total agricultural</b>	728 179	704 912	59.7	50.8
Family farms	293 976	149 677	24.1	10.8
<i>Specialized family farms</i>	118 498	44 977	9.7	3.2
<i>Multi-activity family farms</i>	175 478	104 700	14.4	7.5
Agricultural wage workers	411 538	549 103	33.7	39.5
Farm employees	22 665	6 132	1.9	0.4
<b>Non-agricultural employment income</b>	271 891	356 554	22.3	25.7
<b>Non-employment income</b>	219 525	327 262	18.0	23.6

Source: Developed by the author using data from ENCOVI 2000 and ENCOVI 2011.

Geographically, there are certain territorial trends relating to the proposed typology. SFF households, for instance, are distributed in the eastern part of the country (El Progreso and Zacapa) and on the opposite side towards the southwest (San Marcos and Suchitepéquez). In both cases, SFF households account for between 4 and 7 per cent of total households by department. For multi-activity or DFF households, there is a larger share towards the country's northwest, which includes the departments of Alta Verapaz, Petén, San Marcos, Quiché and Baja Verapaz, where between 9.3 per cent and 19.4 per cent of multi-activity households are located. Agricultural wage workers are distributed throughout the country but are present in higher numbers in territories with a high concentration of land and crops for export:

Alta Verapaz with coffee and cardamom; and Santa Rosa, Suchitepéquez and Escuintla with sugar cane, coffee and flowers. As expected, households with predominantly non-agricultural income are concentrated in the territories of Guatemala, Sacatepéquez and, to a lesser extent, Totonicapán.

In terms of the ethnic origin of family heads, the majority of specialized family farmers self-report as mestizos (58.9 per cent), while the rest (41.4 per cent) are of indigenous origin. Among multi-activity family farmers the opposite is true, with 61 per cent indigenous and 39 per cent mestizos. There is more of a mestizo presence in the non-agricultural rural sector as well (table 10).

Finally, the poorest farmers are multi-activity farmers and agricultural wage workers, who respectively account for 16 per cent

**TABLE 10 Guatemala – Indigenous population according to the typology, 2011 (percentage)**

Typology	Indigenous	Mestizo	Total
SFF	41.4	58.6	100.0
AFP	61.0	39.0	100.0
Agricultural employer	20.8	79.2	100.0
Agricultural wage worker	55.1	44.9	100.0
Non-agricultural	38.8	61.2	100.0

Source: Prepared by the author using data from ENCOVI 2011.

**TABLE 11 Guatemala – Typology of rural households and poverty, 2011 (percentage)**

Typology	Extreme poverty	Overall poverty	Non-poor	Total
SFF	8.9	48.4	51.6	100.0
AFP	15.9	69.9	30.1	100.0
Agricultural employer	3.3	14.3	85.7	100.0
Agricultural wage worker	24.0	78.5	21.5	100.0
Non-agricultural	9.8	46.1	53.9	100.0

Source: Developed by the author using data from ENCOVI 2011.

and 24 per cent of extreme poverty and 70 per cent and 79 per cent of poverty overall. Meanwhile, among rural residents, family farmers are the least poor (surpassed only by agricultural employees), as the proportion of extreme poverty is 8.9 per cent and 48.4 per cent for poverty overall, much lower values than for the previous groups.

### Family farming in Mexico

The source of information used for research on Mexico was the National Rural Households Survey (ENHRUM) for 2002 and 2007. The survey's limitation is that it represents only households located in rural territories with 500 to 2,499 inhabitants. Family farms were defined as agricultural and forestry production

**TABLE 12 Mexico – Share of family farming (AF) in total rural households and components of AF: 2002 and 2007 (percentage)**

Typology	2002	2007
Family farm households engaged in agriculture and forestry employing 50% or more family labour	56.64	57.94
Share of specialized family farms in all family farms	42.11	46.98
Share of multi-activity family farms in all family farms	57.89	53.02

Source: Estimates by the author based on ENHRUM.

**TABLE 13 Mexico – Distribution of DFF and SFF gross income: 1991 and 2007 (percentage)**

Income sources	Multi-activity family farms (DFF)		Specialized family farms (SFF)	
	2002	2007	2002	2007
Agriculture	5.21	6.77	46.57	37.60
Agriculture (maize)	9.13	6.91	39.72	41.73
Agriculture (other crops)	2.14	6.66	57.47	31.01
Livestock	5.98	6.47	22.46	26.77
Natural resources	1.19	2.78	3.32	4.13
Goods and services	19.06	27.58	4.50	2.92
Total transfers	6.47	4.92	7.73	5.81
<i>Procampo</i>	1.76	1.11	3.93	2.28
<i>Oportunidades</i>	3.45	3.19	2.28	3.10
<i>Governmental</i> <sup>1</sup>	0.23	0.19	0.35	0.31
<i>Other transfers</i> <sup>2</sup>	1.02	0.43	1.18	0.12
Remittances from USA	3.82	3.17	7.49	11.41
Remittances from elsewhere in Mexico	2.00	2.73	1.50	4.79
Rural wages	20.71	17.19	3.34	2.96
Non-rural wages	35.56	28.39	3.08	3.61
<b>Total income</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Developed by the author using data from ENHRUM 2002 and 2007.

<sup>1</sup> Including *Alianza Contigo*, *Atención a Adultos Mayores*, *DIF*, *Seguro Popular*, *PROSA.FTJER* among others.

<sup>2</sup> Including transfers from private organizations as well as from households belonging to the same locality but living elsewhere.

units employing more than 50 per cent family labour as part of total work involved in production. In addition, it was determined that specialized family farms (SFF) derive 50 per cent or more of their gross income from agriculture and forestry, whereas the value for multi-activity family farms (DFF) is less than 50 per cent of the total.

According to these data, in 2007 Mexico had 5,548,845 farms, of which 57.94 per cent were engaged in family farming. Of this total number of family units, 46.98 per cent belonged to the specialized family farming group, and 53.02 per cent to the multi-activity family farming group (table 12).

In analysing the data for this period, it is observed that DFF is more important than SFF in Mexico, that is, in both 2002 and 2007 there were more rural households engaged in family farming whose gross income deriving from agriculture and forestry was less than their total gross income. In addition, the data appear to indicate a trend towards specialization among family farms during this period.

With respect to income composition, it was determined that the distribution of total income from various sources is less unequal among DFF than among SFF. We also verified that the first group resorts more often to providing

services and producing non-agricultural goods (27.8 per cent), as well as wage employment in non-rural (28.39 per cent) and rural areas (17.19 per cent) (table 13).

In analysing the period as a whole, we observe that income deriving from agriculture grew in a representative manner only for the DFF group (5.21 per cent to 6.77 per cent). This can be explained in part by the increase in production income from other crops (2.14 per cent to 6.66 per cent).

With respect to transfers received by family units, we observed a considerable increase between 2002 and 2007 for all types of agriculture. However, income from international remittances rose only among specialized farmers, whereas for multi-activity farmers only wage employment income increased.

An analysis of the territorial location of these units (table 14) shows that a high proportion of them are located in the south-southeast and centre of the country – regions with the greatest number of family farms. For both kinds of family farming, a decrease was seen during the period 2002-2007 for DFF in the south-southeast regions (R1), centre (R2) and centre-west (R3) and an increase in the northwest (R4) and northeast (R5). For SFF, a substantial increase was seen in the south-southeast region (R1).

**TABLE 14 Mexico – Distribution of DFF and SFF gross income: 2002 and 2007**

Number of AFP and SFF households	Multi-activity family farms		Specialized family farms	
	2002	2007	2002	2007
Region 1: South-southeast	142	127	124	132
Region 2: Centre	171	126	92	123
Region 3: Centre-west	111	105	63	69
Region 4: Northwest	45	51	28	33
Region 5: Northeast	37	65	61	63

Source: Developed by the author using data from ENHRUM 2002 and 2007.

**TABLE 15 Chile – Number of family and non-family farms according to the typology and by major region, 2007**

Region	Family farming			Total	Non-family farms	Total for the region
	Rural households	Diversified family farms	Specialized family farms			
Arica and Parinacota	642	232	774	1 648	779	2 427
Tarapacá	718	224	561	1 503	340	1 843
Antofagasta	1 305	86	158	1 549	372	1 921
Atacama	1 511	139	234	1 884	806	2 690
Coquimbo	7 236	1 553	2 171	10 960	4 161	15 121
Valparaíso	6 536	968	1 949	9 453	6 278	15 731
Metropolitana	3 767	753	1 327	5 847	5 708	11 555
Del Libertador	12 250	1 740	2 650	16 640	6 477	23 117
Maule	17 994	3 775	5 959	27 728	10 637	38 365
Bío Bío	32 457	6 593	9 623	48 673	8 686	57 359
Araucanía	21 202	10 490	19 052	50 744	3 895	54 639
Los Ríos	6 071	2 614	4 766	13 451	2 264	15 715
Los Lagos	12 639	5 433	8 785	26 857	6 779	33 636
Aysén	778	277	1 247	2 302	920	3 222
Magallanes	503	63	182	748	571	1 319
<b>Total</b>	<b>125 609</b>	<b>34 940</b>	<b>59 438</b>	<b>219 987</b>	<b>58 673</b>	<b>278 660</b>

Source: Prepared by the author based on the Agricultural Census.

### Family farming in Chile

The definition of family farming in Chile was arrived at in two ways, given that two different sources of data were used. The first, relating to data gathered by the agricultural census, defined a family farm as meeting two conditions: (a) all non-family workers employed either on a part-time or seasonal basis or on a full-time basis are equal to or less than one worker equivalent; and (b) no administrator is employed to manage the property. The second follows the National Socioeconomic Survey (CASEN) in defining family farms as those in which at least one member self-reports his or her major occupation as self-employment in agriculture.

According to this working definition of the agricultural census, family farms number

219,987 of the country's total of 278,660, or 79 per cent. In the vast area comprising the regions of Biobío, La Araucanía, Los Ríos and Los Lagos, family farms account for close to 90 per cent of the total. Only in the regions of Valparaíso, Magallanes, Metropolitan Santiago, Arica and Parinacota do family farms account for less than 80 per cent of the total (table 15).

The most numerous group in the country as a whole and in each of the regions is that of rural residents, consisting of family farm households deriving at least 75 per cent of their income from non-agricultural sources. The 125,609 units in this group account for 45 per cent of all family farms, and over two thirds of them are in the regions of Antofagasta, Atacama, Valparaíso, Biobío

**TABLE 16 Chile – Composition of monthly family income per capita, by type of income, in rural households, 2000-2011 (in November 2011 constant Chilean pesos)**

Household sources of monetary income	2000						2011					
	Rural households		Diversified family farms		Specialized family farms		Rural households		Diversified family farms		Specialized family farms	
	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.
Self-employed agricultural income	59 845	2 953	220 987	7 590	351 467	8 414	93 037	4 539	339 439	20 510	616 332	33 455
Agricultural wage income	33 631	4 328	40 185	2 467	5 433	536	46 251	6 643	40 708	3 078	9 130	1 024
Agricultural employer income	121 847	52 186	6 787	2 602	10	8	14 908	952	4 540	2 485		
Other employment income	186 412	8 261	179 650	10 966	23 975	1 863	385 866	15 110	359 404	24 221	57 153	5 825
Social security benefits	81 851	7 983	58 287	3 896	12 452	978	15 919	1 223	18 910	1 930	7 954	779
Monetary subsidies	24 510	1 412	22 592	1 000	11 145	409	46 157	1 838	37 846	1 951	26 700	1 509
<b>Total monetary income</b>	<b>607 676</b>	<b>64 350</b>	<b>591 186</b>	<b>22 146</b>	<b>428 970</b>	<b>9 893</b>	<b>699 618</b>	<b>28 852</b>	<b>880 380</b>	<b>47 509</b>	<b>771 459</b>	<b>42 152</b>

Source: Developed by the author based on CASEN 2000 and 2011 surveys. Data have been deflated using Central Bank of Chile indexes.

and Magallanes. Nevertheless, rural residents represent just 41 per cent of all family farms in La Araucanía, contradicting statements that campesino farms in this region – with a strong indigenous presence – are engaged in non-agricultural pursuits.

The second most numerous group is specialized family farms (i.e. those in which family income derives primarily from farming). In 2007, there were 58,439 such farms nationwide, representing 27 per cent of all family farms. The least numerous of the three groups is that of diversified or multi-activity family farms, at 16 per cent of the total, with 34,940 units.

Another interesting finding is the fact that in regions where family farming is quantitatively more important, the number of farms with rural residents is relatively less important than the sum of the other two groups: 41 per cent in La Araucanía, 45 per cent in Los Ríos

and 47 per cent in Los Lagos, compared to the nationwide average of 59 per cent. An exceptional case is Biobío, where rural households account for 67 per cent of family farms in the region.

With respect to income composition for the different types of family farming, table 16 shows that in 2011, rural households derived just 13 per cent of total income from self-employed farming. This proportion has remained stagnant since 2000, indicating that the increase in income for these households comes from more dynamic components such as non-agricultural employment income, which rose from 31 per cent of total income for these households in 2000 to 51 per cent in 2011. In diversified family farms, income derived from self-employed farming posted a strong increase of 55 per cent during the period 2000-2011, so that this income source has maintained its

share in total household income (37 per cent at the beginning and 39 per cent at the end of the period under review). The increase in self-employed farming income explains 41 per cent of the increase in total household income. Nevertheless, the income source that showed the greatest increase was non-agricultural employment income, which doubled during the period to 4 per cent of household income. In addition, it explains the 62 per cent increase in total household income.

Among specialized family farms, self-employed farming income predominated in 2000 and continued to do so in 2011, accounting for 82 per cent and 80 per cent of total household income, respectively. The substantial increase (75 per cent in real terms) in this income source explains 77 per cent of the increase in total household income during the period.

The total of 219,987 family farms in the country occupy an area of 18.9 million ha. Of this total area, those belonging to the rural households/residents group occupy 14,276,110 ha. In other words, each farm averages 102 ha. There are actually two main groups of these rural residents. The first, numbering approximately 50,000, are smallholders with non-agricultural livelihoods as they have very little land. The second, about 31,000 in number, are small landowners with more than five hectares of land who have other more important sources of family income.

The diversified farms group average about 33 ha and cover a total area of 1,217,361 ha. Unlike the previous group, these farms are better distributed among the different property sizes, with considerably fewer units measuring 50 ha or more.

Finally, the specialized farms group, living primarily on self-employed agriculture, average 54 ha in size and occupy a total area of 3,392,668 ha. One third of this group (19,654 units) have less than 5 ha, with the rest

gradually declining in number up to 100 ha.

Only 19,425 specialized family farms cover an area greater than 20 ha, representing less than 10 per cent of all family farms in Chile.

The average age of those engaged in each type of agriculture is 47 and does not vary significantly by group. One important piece of information is that of all women and men responsible for supporting their families, 36 per cent report an off-farm residence. The proportion rises among rural residents (44 per cent), followed by diversified farmers (28 per cent) and then specialized farmers (22 per cent).

An analysis of the labour force engaged in agricultural activity showed that just 29 per cent of rural resident producers reported working full-time in agriculture, compared to 28 per cent for diversified farmers and 40 per cent for specialized farmers.

Finally, participation by family farmers in agricultural organizations is extremely low in Chile, with 80 per cent reporting that they do not participate in any kind of agriculture-related association or organization.

## Considerations on similarities and differences in family farming in Latin America

The main similarity in family farming in all six countries of Latin America studied is the importance of agriculture as an economic activity for reproduction. Based on indicators of the size and weight of production and income from agricultural activities within total farm income, it was found that agriculture continues to be a very important source of income for rural families in Latin America.

The studies also pointed up the relevance of the methodology adopted. Definitions of family farming based solely on the size of the property and/or technology are insufficient to fully grasp this phenomenon, since despite

being small in economic terms, many farms continue to subsist and reproduce socially. In this sense, the typology of family farms used in this study, based on the kind of labour used, appears to be the most appropriate to gain an understanding of the dynamics and trends in productive and economic workings of these units for other alternatives such as residence and service provision. In fact, we verified that the function of rural residence and the combination of activities and income sources is an important feature in all the countries investigated.

The analysis of family farming in six countries of Latin America – Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico – also showed that specialized family farms are the most numerous among all production units. In Brazil, there are 2,543,819 family farms that fall into the category of specialized farms, representing 58.26 per cent of the total number of family farms in the country. The second group comprises 1,307,267 farms that did not derive or did not report any kind of income from agricultural activity in 2006 (29.95 per cent). The third group, numbering 276,582 or 6.34 per cent of the total, consists of farms with multiple income sources. The smallest group, comprising 237,926 farms (5.45 per cent) is made up of farms classified as rural residents.

In Colombia, the share of specialized family farming group increased from 33 per cent in 1996 to 47 per cent in 2011. In Mexico, on the other hand, there were 5,548,845 farms in 2007, of which 57.94 per cent were family farms. Among these, 46.98 per cent were specialized family farms and 53.02 per cent multi-activity family farms. In Ecuador, the study also found that specialized family farming predominated in 2006, representing 58 per cent of rural households, while 41.2 per cent were diversified family farms. Nevertheless, non-agricultural income

(62.3 per cent) is more important than agricultural income (37.6 per cent). In Chile, however, the most numerous group (59 per cent) is made up of farms classified as rural residents, followed by specialized farms at 26 per cent of the total.

Another quite important feature shared by the countries studied is that non-agricultural income and non-agricultural activities by family farmers, though minor, are not negligible. Lower representation among multi-activity family farms can be attributed to some extent to the methodology used.<sup>8</sup> It should be recalled that the criterion for defining the typology is the percentage (%) of agricultural production (or the monetary value thereof) and income of total farm income. This means that even among farms classified as specialized family farms, there may be family members carrying out non-agricultural activities or earning non-agricultural income. In these farms, however, the proportion and significance of such activities and income is less than that of agriculture or the set of agricultural activities. Still, a second feature to highlight, which calls for additional study and research, is the hypothesis that since family farms are highly dependent on agricultural income they are more vulnerable, as they have no alternatives for development outside the agriculture sector as an incentive for diversifying local economies.

The analysis also showed that beyond the predictable and well-known fact of heterogeneity of family farming in each country, significant differences exist between the different regions and countries. These differences are more representative among the groups or types of farms examined in this classification. There are particular territories and regions in which specialized family farms predominate, and others where a combination with the other two types is more prevalent. This element of regional diversity and its

<sup>8</sup> The studies using household surveys, such as those for Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Guatemala, work with households self-reporting their principal activity (at least for the head of household) as self-employed farmer. It comes as no surprise, then, that NON-agricultural rural incomes are low, as if we had analysed ALL RURAL households, including those in which no family member self-reports as a farmer, it is likely that non-agricultural income would be better represented. Nor do the studies using agricultural census data (Brazil and Chile) capture ALL non-agricultural income, as in this case the point of entry is that the respondent has a farm, which does not always include all rural households. (Thanks to Julio Berdegúé for his comment clarifying this situation.)

relationship with the different types of family farming was very clear in Chile, Colombia and Ecuador. The authors of the respective studies underscored that the location of family farms may be of importance to their economic performance, which opens up the question of territorial and regional dynamics.

Last, but not least, the study showed similarities among the countries in terms of databases and available sources of information for work on family farming. The exception is Brazil, with a relatively up-to-date agricultural census (the most recent is from 2006) allowing data to be used according to the family/non-family farm classification. In all the remaining countries analysed, data are relatively flimsy and research must be done using secondary data on family farming. Were it not for household surveys, many of which are done on a sample rather than a census, and the possibility of extrapolating self-employed status as a proxy for family farming, no analysis would be possible. In our view, this is a constraint that calls for concerted action among researchers and policy setters to improve the quality of and access to statistical information on family farming.

With respect to the most obvious differences, there are two important points to be made. The first has to do with programming actions on family farming in each country. Although information currently circulating on family farming reaches each country through international organizations as if it were a “new” social and political category, the debate is taking place in each country context in quite different ways. In most countries, the social category that continues to be relevant and most widely recognized is campesino farming, whereas family farming is seen as an imported idea or discourse. Unsurprisingly, then, there are difficulties understanding the differences between the concept of family farming and the definition

of guidelines or policies, as well as difficulties differentiating between a campesino and a family farmer.

The second difference between the countries studied relates to the existence of public policies on family farming. Whereas in countries such as Brazil these policies are relatively advanced, in others such as Guatemala they are matters of social and intellectual interest but limited action by governments and government agencies. In still other countries, such as Chile, the discussion on family farming falls within agricultural policy as a whole and is not dealt with separately.

### **Recommendations for policy on family farming in Latin America**

Any attempt to present a set of policy options or recommendations on family farming on the basis of the six reports presented could lead to a risk of reductionism and overgeneralization. Accordingly, the suggestions presented here are based on both the reports on family farming in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico and the author’s specific understanding in each case.

Some of these recommendations are more general and some more specific in nature. With respect to the former, all six studies point to the need for improved intersector and territorial dynamics of family farming in order to understand and explain the factors underlying change. This is especially true of the reasons why many farmers remain in rural areas as rural residents but without any interest or willingness to engage in agriculture as an economic activity and primary source of income. In this case, it is recommended that a study be undertaken to determine whether there is a relationship between regional economic dynamics and

the increase in the number of farms that have ceased agricultural production. It would also be important to review policies on credit and stimulus for access to production factors, as they are likely not the most appropriate for multi-activity farms.

The foregoing leads to a second general recommendation relating to, first, current policy behaviour and, second, new initiatives to strengthen and/or support these family farmers. In this case, the studies demonstrated the need to think beyond the point of entry to rural property and construct policies and actions under a broader approach that includes rural development and food security. This may be the way to ensure that policies on family farming cease benefiting a small group or elite that use the resources essentially for the same activities and actions with little innovation and creativity, generating repetitiveness and monotony.

The third general recommendation has to do with the diversity of family farming. It is not sufficient to identify and recognize the fact of heterogeneity. Changing policy design also involves making adjustments in programmes and actions during the implementation period to include all actors who have need of such policies.

The fourth recommendation, which is somewhat related to the previous one, is that policies on family farming need to develop sufficient capacity for innovation to create mechanisms that can overcome both excessive dependency on government and the kind of repetitive solutions and proposals that treat family farmers as poor and dependent. In both cases, approaches that reinforce such dependency are to be avoided, for they generate a risk of patronage and perpetuating vicious circles that make farmers more dependent upon policies rather than empowering them. In theoretical terms, the

role of public policies and capacity-building need to be analysed.

In addition to these general recommendations, there are a number of more specific recommendations relating to more objective issues and referring to the types of family farming examined here, supported logically by the specific studies on each of the six countries. In most cases, these suggestions were taken directly from each country report.

In terms of lessons learned, the first point is that there are recommendations clearly directed to specialized family farmers (i.e. those who reproduce economically and socially by means of agricultural activities and still have very limited participation or relations with other economic sectors). Other recommendations focus on multi-activity family farmers, who combine agriculture with other activities or sources of monetary income. Equally, some recommendations focus on rural households, whose members live and reproduce socially based on non-agricultural activities and income. The diversity found leads one to believe that each type of family farming has specific needs.

For specialized family farmers, the suggestions are as follows:

- a) Strengthening specialized family farming involves policies on access to assets such as land and, above all; water. In many cases, the small size of the property and limited access to water place heavy constraints on the expansion of production and therefore on agricultural yields. Family farmers have very significant needs, including access to assets such as land and water but also higher educational levels, access to technical assistance services and rural extension. We consider policies and programmes on access to productive assets and technologies to be important tools in improving production conditions

and mitigating the precarious conditions of the most vulnerable family units.

- b)** A second set of public policies on farmers who depend heavily on agriculture as a source of income relates to improving activities that generate more value added or expand the steps in production processes within farms. On one hand, this will enable family farms to benefit from the predominant factor – labour – boosting competitiveness and reducing underemployment. On the other, adding more value can expand the portfolio of products to be taken to market, lowering dependency and broadening strategies for economic positioning. In both cases, we are making reference to building productive capacity at family farms.
- c)** The third set of important policies for these family farmers who depend heavily on agricultural activity relates to reducing the use of external inputs such as seed and fertilizer. These can be gradually replaced with organic manure or less intensive techniques for plant and animal management, such as agro-ecology and direct seeding without removing plant material from the soil. The proposal is not only to incentivize more sustainable production systems to lower costs but also, fundamentally, to increase the resiliency of the farms. Today, there are innumerable low-cost resources and technologies that are relatively well known and disseminated by public agencies and NGOs in virtually all countries of Latin America. This makes such alternatives viable, provided that local knowledge and conditions are respected to allow for true interaction or interface between the innate knowledge of farmers and the empirical and scientific knowledge of mediators, without one ruling out the other but arriving at a natural complementarity.
- d)** Another set of policies on specialized family farmers has to do with markets. It is already recognized that farmers need more and better markets and not just access to conventional markets. These are generally dominated by oligopolies of transnational agrifood enterprises that impose a technical and productive package and pay farmers for quantities produced. In most cases, contract farming has represented a form of subordination of family farmers to large marketing chains, which control the flow of inputs and outputs. The farmers have no option but to accept the production conditions and form of remuneration imposed upon them. This is just one type of market or form of market access. Our proposal is not to eliminate it but to subject it to more effective regulation and oversight. In view of the foregoing, new markets that family farmers help build are channels of access to private commerce, such as agro-ecological fairs or markets in city neighbourhoods and small supermarkets supplying consumers in surrounding areas. They may also be short supply chains that reduce physical distances and transaction costs. Another option is to tap public and institutional markets that have been supported with government policies and programmes, such as those supplying schools and hospitals, or distributing food to the poor and vulnerable.

For multi-activity family farmers and rural residents, the following suggestions are put forward:

- a)** For multi-activity farmers with multiple income sources, the most effective public policies may be those that can strengthen intangible training and assets, such as better vocational training and access to education.

- b) Similarly, family farmers who do not depend exclusively on agricultural activities and income sources and who also have multiple ways of connecting with the economic dynamic may benefit more immediately and effectively from policies and programmes that broaden internet access and/or improve rural communications. At present, information technologies are not only a factor of access to the labour market and a way of doing business and economic exchange, but also a tool for interaction that may be decisive in enabling young people to value the social space in which they live. Isolation and lack of access to the globalized world of social media can have a negative impact on the decision of young people to stay in rural areas or emigrate to urban areas. In this sense, for this group of farmers who no longer depend exclusively on agriculture as an occupation and source of income, access to information and communication technologies is fundamental.
- c) Multi-activity family farmers and rural residents whose livelihoods no longer depend exclusively on agricultural activities may also require more support in the form of improvements or reforms in infrastructure and services, just as specialized farmers do. In their case, however, the improvements needed are not to activate the means of agricultural production but to upgrade physical assets and, fundamentally, to improve living conditions, such as access to water, health care services and housing. For this reason, public policies and programmes to meet these demands, such as housing, can have a positive impact on these groups of family farmers.

methodologies and information sources on family farming. Statistics services for agriculture and rural sectors in Latin America need to be improved to include the specificities of family farming. Needed are not only definitions and similar forms of understanding to facilitate comparisons between countries but, more specifically, more sophisticated ways of accessing data and developing collection techniques. International organizations and, particularly, national governments play an essential role in this regard.

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A final recommendation relevant to all types of family farmers in Latin America is the need to improve databases and standardize

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