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The Peruvian Andes innovators are in the rural communities: Interpreting quinoa farmers' viewpoints using visual Q methodology

Andean farmers are maintaining ancestral biocultural heritage diversity as exemplified by the case of quinoa biodiversity. In the last two decades, the agricultural boom and bust of quinoa in both local and global markets have generated interest in creating social and technical innovations to increase farmer incomes and ensure farmers benefit from their biocultural heritage. This paper employs Q methodology techniques to explore 36 farmer's viewpoints from three villages in the region of Puno, when contemplating their production goals and potential to adopt technologies to improve productivity. Our results describe three emerging viewpoints as biocultural, technological or social innovators. The three viewpoints describe different issues currently guiding heritage, production and market choices. While the FAO forecasts clear innovation pathway as the establishment of a collective trademark for the Andean quinoa, farmers in the region of Puno showed different viewpoints regarding the innovation that they would like to develop. Farmers will require tailored innovation pathways encompassing and valorizing their biocultural heritage, their collective organizations and introducing novel technology. Starting the innovations pathway from their values and production and market goals, will facilitate the sector transformation that many stakeholders currently predict, but not supported adequately.

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