

# **SOWING THE SEEDS OF TRANSFORMATION IN THE COLOMBIAN ANDES: THE ROLE OF THE HUERTA (HOME GARDEN) IN FOSTERING AND SUSTAINING AGROECOLOGICAL PRODUCTION\***

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## ***ABSTRACT ORIGINAL***

The adoption of agroecological and related alternative farming practices is frequently cited as a viable strategy for fostering transformative change within agricultural and food systems. This study investigates the role of agroecology as a pathway of transformation of small-scale agriculture in the Colombian Andes. Drawing upon the “three spheres” model of transformation, which encompasses interactions between the personal, practical, and political spheres, the study explores motivations, actions, and political implications associated with the adoption of agroecology in three sites within the Bogotá region. The study employs a qualitative methodology, including in-depth farmer interviews and participant observation. Study findings highlight a range of economic, cultural, and ecological motivations within the personal sphere, all of which are driving farmers toward adoption of agroecology. These motivations, many of which are rooted in an ethics of care and connection, manifest in the practical sphere through actions including soil care, plant care, and care of seeds. Within the political sphere, these actions are contributing to micropolitical changes that are fostering broader shifts toward sustainable local food systems. Taken together, these findings suggest that agroecological practices can offer a viable pathway for addressing the current challenges in agriculture, promising a more sustainable and socially just future for small-scale farming. © Copyright © 2024 by the American Geographical Society of New York.