

CULTURAL SERVICES OF AGROECOSYSTEMS

Agroecosystems vary widely because of local particularities and farming practices, and thus they may enrich landscapes with a multiplicity of domesticated cattle and plants, cultivated soils, and different modes of life. However, this enrichment is at risk with the increased industrialization of agriculture, which leads to the systematization and homogenization of farm production, less cohesion in between life cycles, simplification of landscapes, and loss of biological and cultural diversity. To recover a more holistic view on rural landscapes, the ecosystem services (ES) framework focuses on the human well-being that may be retrieved from balancing between provisioning, regulating and cultural services of ecosystems. Commonly, comparing those kinds of services uses a monetary metric, such that cultural services are mainly only discussed in terms of agrotourism or recreation. But, this again leads to a reductionist approach, especially given the variety of cultural perceptions and features of landscapes. To gain a deeper understanding of the cultural complexity of agroecosystems, I conducted an explorative qualitative research with narrative walking interviews in the northern area of the Argentinean Andes. Based on my preliminary results, I will discuss the specific relationships between farmers and nature, such as lifestyles, knowledge, skills, association with nature, or institutions for resource management, which, considered as cultural expressions, support bio-cultural diversity and system resilience.

Dipl. LÖK Cornelia Steinhäuser

Research assistant and PhD student,

Working Group Applied Landscape Ecology and Ecological Planning

Institute of Landscape Ecology, University of Münster,

Heisenbergstr. 2, 48149 Münster

cornelia.steinhaeuser@uni-muenster.de