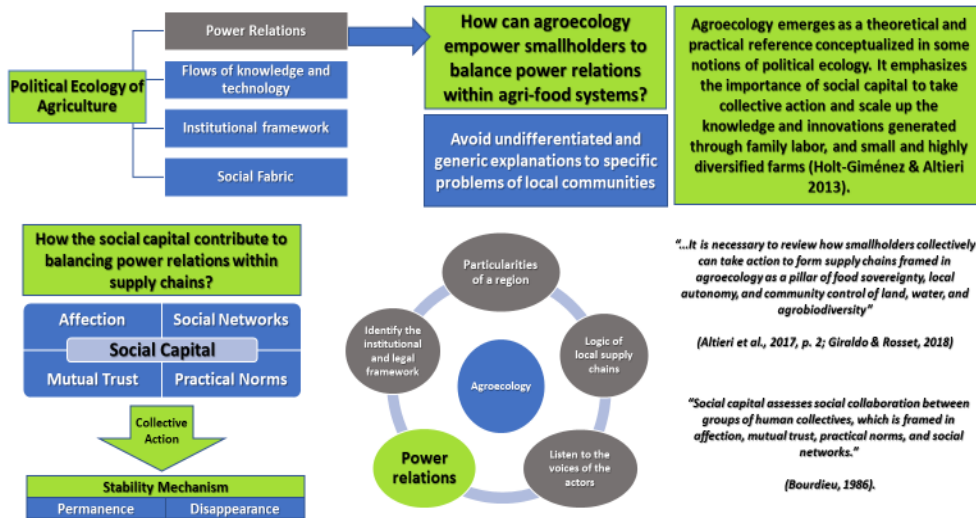




"Agroecology and power distribution within supply chains: Andean blueberry case in Colombia"

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1. Introduction: Power relations from the Political Ecology perspective

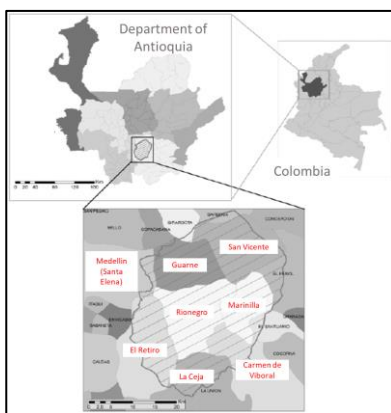


2. Andean blueberry: A promising fruit with some potential opportunities



- Endemic of the Andean areas of Colombia.
 - Research: nutritional and health benefits, adaptability, organic crop
- Challenges:**
- Seasonal production
 - Small farmers
 - Lack of access to markets and consumers
 - No structured supply chain
 - Land pressure

3. Research Methods



Mapping – Fruit Supply Chains in Colombia – Antioquia. Andean blueberry

Interviews: Academics, producers, marketers, consumers, and policymakers of Andean blueberry in the area.

To know:

- Actors involved
- Trends in research
- Institutional framework

Contrast

To know:

- Actors involved
- Perceptions: decisions, prices, legal framework, land pressure, institutions, relations

How does the social capital of the areas producing Andean blueberry in eastern Medellín contribute to balance power relations within supply chains?

Indicators of social capital

Bonding: Horizontal with the immediate network (family, friends, neighbors, etc.)

Bridging: Horizontal with other social groups and networks (social stratification, with other cooperatives, other networks, etc.)

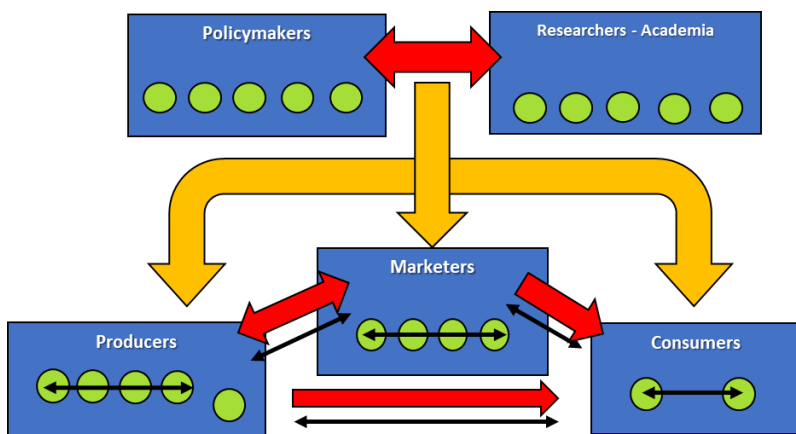
Linking: Vertical with institutions and authorities

Factors to find: Trust, Social Networks, Norms, and Integration

Participants	# Interviews
Researchers / Academics	5
Policymakers	5
Producers	5
Marketers	3
Consumers	2
Total	20

Data analysis: Examining power from the dependencies that exist in agricultural networks (Adapted framework by Hendrickson and James, 2016)

4. Findings



- Producers:** Strong bonding between neighbors, friends, and family. Those with higher social status have more power. Associations tend to be exclusive. High dependency on marketers.
- Marketers:** They gain power in controlling prices and connecting actors. They know the other marketers and middlemen to control prices, customers, suppliers, and market access.
- Consumers:** Their relations with producers or marketers are undifferentiated. They have access to research on the benefits of the fruit. The only driver to buy the fruit is the price.
- Academics & Policymakers:** Unidirectional relations with other stakeholders. The financial power of the government increases dependency. Policies and research are not contextualized to the realities of the area. Policies are not developed with the local communities.

5. Conclusions

- Forming agroecological supply chains for the Andean blueberry requires a significant component of inclusive social capital. This type of social capital facilitates the flow of information and the connection between groups, opening possibilities for innovation, investment, and win-win relationships, which balances power relations (Del Cioppo and Bello, 2018).
- The social capital of the area tends to be horizontally aligned between the immediate networks. This is an indicator of solid bonding social capital. However, there is a lack of trust in order to make external alliances (bridging), which concentrates power and increases dependency.
- There is a risk that having exclusive social capital among stakeholders will prevent the collective action from creating connections with other actors and institutions.
- The power configuration and the legal framework of the conventional fruit supply chains in Colombia impact agroecological supply chains, preventing smallholders from making decisions and forming alternative supply chains.

Acknowledgments

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