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Explaining the ecosystem services inequality re-produced by large-scale avocado growing in northern caldas, Colombia

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Abstract

Avocado (*Persea Americana* Mill) cultivation has gained momentum in the world market; however, the social and environmental implications of large-scale production (e.g., land grabbing, land use change, deforestation) have been highlighted. Therefore, the claim of this research is that large-scale avocado cultivation produces social-ecological disruptions because monocultures affect the ecological structure of land (natural capital) and its capacity to provide Ecosystem Services (ES). In addition, large-scale avocado production generates ecological distributive conflicts in the place it is produced. Therefore, by employing the Ecosystems Services Inequality framework, this research aims to identify the multidimensional implications produced by large-scale avocado cultivation on the social-ecological system in a particular study area in Colombia. To analyse the problem, the research strategy is a single case study, and methodologically, a qualitative method design was proposed. With this research, several results are expected; on one hand, an overall discussion of monocultures as a driver of ES degradation. Followed by this, the analysis of large-scale avocado Hass as a driver of social-ecological disruptions in northern Caldas, Colombia. In addition, the most important expected result is the identification of the causal mechanisms that allow the emergence of negative implications due to large-scale avocado growing. Along with this, it is expected to provide a strong theoretical and methodological framework for future research in the field of ES and agriculture by analysing historical patterns and drivers of avocado production. As a more general outcome, it would be ideal if the results provided could participate in the decision-making process in a real context.

Keywords: Agro-extractivism, ecosystem services, inequality, monocultures, social-ecological systems