



Tropentag, September 10-12, 2025, hybrid conference

“Reconcile land system changes
with planetary health”

Understanding social learning and agrobiodiversity knowledge exchange in peasant markets of huancayo, peru

CARLA ERISMANN¹, MICHELLE CHEVELEV-BONATTI²

¹*Leibniz Centre for Agric. Landscape Res. (ZALF), Sustainable Land Use in Developing Countries, Germany*

²*Leibniz Centre for Agric. Landscape Res. (ZALF), Sustainable Land Use in Developing Countries, Germany*

Abstract

The Andean region of Peru is recognised as a global hotspot of agrobiodiversity, particularly for crops such as potatoes, quinoa, and other native species (Velásquez-Milla et al., 2011). Agrobiodiversity and the associated traditional knowledge are declining globally due to various factors, including agricultural intensification, changing diets, economic pressures, and climate change (Zimmerer & de Haan, 2019). This study examines social learning processes related to agrobiodiversity in peasant markets in the Huancayo region of Peru. It investigates whether and how these markets may serve as venues for knowledge exchange and community-building that could support *in situ* conservation of crop diversity. Specifically, the research analyses social interactions through the lens of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and triple-loop learning (Medema et al., 2014) frameworks. Social learning is understood here as a process of iterative reflection that occurs when experiences, ideas and environments are shared with others (Reed et al., 2010). In the context of agrobiodiversity, social learning can involve the exchange of information about crop varieties, cultivation practices, culinary uses, and the cultural significance of different plants and animals. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines mini-ethnographic fieldwork and expert interviews, the research analysed social interactions and knowledge-sharing practices in four local markets. The findings suggest that while some social learning takes place, particularly in the context of practical farming knowledge, there are limitations to deeper reflection and community-building that could support agrobiodiversity conservation. The markets serve essential economic and social functions for peasant farmers but face challenges from changing food systems and pandemic disruptions. The study discusses implications for supporting informal food networks and agrobiodiversity-oriented development.

Keywords: Agricultural extension , agrobiodiversity, mini ethnography, peasant markets, social learning