**2019 MaGrann Conference**

Department of Geography, Rutgers University

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**Small-Scale Agriculture in an era of Global Change: Landscapes and Livelihoods.**

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The continued transformation of global agro-food systems, rapid changes in natural ecosystems and growing conflicts over land-based resources are just a few of the many challenges shaping human-environmental relationships around the globe, often producing uneven and unjust outcomes for marginalized and vulnerable groups.

There is also a growing need to advance current understandings of the interconnectedness of human and natural systems, and the nestled, entangled and contested socio-nature relationships driving ecological and economic change across the globe. At the same time, research is needed to adequately address the diverse range of strategies people employ in their day-to-day struggles to secure their livelihoods, and the new and varied forms of capital accumulation and mis/appropriation of land and land based resources currently taking place under more recent guises of sustainability (e.g. green economy), justice (e.g. fair trade) and alternative development (e.g. forest carbon schemes).

The 2019 MaGrann conference seeks to bring together scholars in geography and other related disciplines to discuss some of these new and emerging themes around the ways smallholder practices and landscape outcomes are related. A major focus of the conference will be to explore how global trends in labor and food markets, reconfigure the production of agricultural commodities, how these land-based production systems are linked to smallholder practices, and the way these practices in turn (re)configure landscapes and their provision of ecosystem services. Smallholder agriculture is central to discussions on food security and global environmental change. Increasing demand for agricultural products such as coffee and cacao, has been an important driver of landscape change especially in tropical areas. Smallholders still account for the largest majority of agricultural output for these high-demand commodities and niche products—cacao, coffee, palm oil, rubber, but also quinoa, argan oil, acai, among others. Their practices, histories, and livelihoods are critical to the economic success of agricultural markets, but also to the assurance of a healthy and diverse diet to support the planet. Also, the ways smallholders practice cultivation has a direct effect on the configuration of landscapes and the ability of those landscapes to provide important ecosystem services.

We are inviting papers that address the following themes and questions:

1. Historical and contemporary **drivers** of change in smallholder practices (and well-being):
* In what ways have history and legacies of post/colonial practices shaped the choices of products, land use and farming practices in smallholder agricultural systems?
* How are smallholder agricultural practices being shaped/transformed through climate mitigation and adaptation discourses and projects?
* In what ways are new trends in labor regimes and global food markets reconfiguring smallholder farming systems?
* What are the various global discourses being used to justify, reinforce or facilitate new (or not-so-new) forms of dispossession, capital accumulation and mis/appropriation of land and land-based resources in different agrarian settings?
1. Smallholder **responses** to global phenomena:
	* What are the current livelihood strategies and practices being employed by smallholder farmers to cope or adapt to global environmental change?
	* What are the new and emerging markets and alternative food networks supporting smallholder farming systems and how are these markets and value chains being organized and tapped into by smallholder farmers?
	* In what ways are alternative or local/indigenous practices (including rights-based movements and other forms of citizenship claims) resisting or facilitating regimes of accumulation and dispossession?
2. Ensuing landscape and livelihood **outcomes**:
	* How do smallholder practices intersect with larger scale processes of environmental and economic change to produce differing and uneven livelihood outcomes and land use/cover change?
	* What are the specific ways in which smallholder agricultural practices are (re)configuring landscapes and their provision of ecosystem services?
	* What are the potentials and limitations of smallholder farming systems to contribute to biodiversity and environmental preservation?

We encourage both conceptual and empirical papers that offer fresh and unique insights into the often multilayered, embodied and nestled contexts within which smallholder livelihoods get negotiated in an increasingly complex and changing world. A key objective of the conference will be to produce a synthesis paper addressing how smallholders are linked to markets and the way landscapes are shaped in their biodiversity and productivity. The organizers will also lead a special issue in a peer reviewed journal (e.g. Environment and Society, Agriculture, Ecosystems and the Environment) with selected papers from the conference.