

TITULO: Reconfiguring hydrosocial territories, disclosing socially constructed scarcities; an analysis of State responses to permanent and temporal water deficits in Chile

RESUMEN: (1 Página)

This proposal is an aftermath of Professor Fragkou's previous project (Fondecyt Initiation 11130631) on socially constructed water scarcity. Previous research focused on how the desalination plant in the city of Antofagasta only favoured the regional mining sector, and did not succeed to overcome economic or perceptual scarcities on the urban level. In this project, I build on these results, expanding the focus and deepening my analysis on how State reactions manage to overcome permanent or temporal water deficits. I argue that the mobilisation of the State apparatus before water deficits principally aims to augment water availability prioritising to secure water provision for the economic activities of its interests, whilst maintaining other types of scarcities for disempowered actors. Apart from the Antofagasta Region, with chronic water deficit problems, being the country's driest area, and mining Region by excellence, I enhance Valparaiso to my analysis, the Region that has mostly suffered by the mega-drought that has been affecting Chile since 2008, even in its southernmost Regions. In order to carry out my research I employ the concept of hydrosocial territories, a concept stemming from the political ecology tradition that is able to grasp the complexity of the hydrological, socio-cultural, economic, and political relations that unfold in a territory, and detect the outcomes of these on water availability, distribution, and control. The contribution of the project is two fold. First, it will shed light on the impacts that State strategies, through the creation of water-related infrastructure and institutions before permanent or temporal water deficits, have on the hydrosocial territories. Given the complexity of the term, this means that this will be the first study to look into how long term strategies in arid regions (the desalination plant in Antofagasta) and short term strategies in areas affected by the mega—drought (distribution of water tank trucks and water scarcity decrees in the Valparaiso Region) have on particular aspects of the Chilean water management model, such as the water market. Second, it will contribute in understanding the effectiveness of these strategies with respect to eradicating not only physical, but also other forms of socially constructed water scarcities, focusing on the actors that suffer for them, thus making a multi-scale analysis from the regional to the household level.