

ENVIRONMENTAL DEBT OF THE CHILEAN WATER MARKET SYSTEM

Rodrigo Fuster Gómez; Alejandro León Stewart; David Saurí Pujol

ABSTRACT

Several scholars studying the Chilean water market as a system to manage water have focused on the economic (dis)advantages, while excluding its environmental implications. In this paper we analyze the perception of water users in the semi-arid Limarí river basin in Chile in terms of the need to add this latter dimension to their water management procedures. In doing this we used a Participatory Integrated Environmental Assessment that integrates scientific, technical, and traditional knowledges. We applied the PIEA through a dialogue between the relevant communities for the assessment and the communication process of this highly complex issue. In order to evaluate the current water management system and practices we focused on three dimensions: water availability, water quality, and environmental knowledge. Our results show that the environmental dimension has been incorporated only recently into managerial practices as a response to the requirements of the Integrated Water Resources Management paradigm.

PALAVRA-CHAVE: Water market, Chile, Environmental