

TRADITIONAL PRESTIGE SYSTEMS IN THE CHILEAN RURAL SECTOR AS CRITICAL POINT FOR THE WATER MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the influence that the traditional prestige system of the rural sector in Chile currently has over issues such as participation and decision making within the water users associations (WUA), given the framework of water private ownership. This phenomenon is analyzed from a critical standpoint that considers economic action as a social action. From here, we understand the economic performance of the WUAs as a complex scaffolding that needs to be analyzed not only including material factors but subjective and symbolic ones in order to provide a new perspective aimed at improving water management. This analysis is based on a qualitative case study that included WUA leaders of the Chimbarongo sub-basin, which is a representative case of the social dynamics of the central valley of Chile.

PALAVRA-CHAVE: water users associations in Chile, water management, prestige systems, critical point, chilean rural sector