

IRSA - CONGRESSO MUNDIAL DE SOCIOLOGIA RURAL (01/10/2025 A
20/01/2026) - IRSA 14 - GLOBAL CRISES AND SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL
TRANSITIONS IN RURAL TERRITORIES

**TOWARDS JUST TRANSITIONS IN CHILE: UNDERSTANDING THE
IMPACTS OF THE WATER SYSTEM RULES IN RURAL VULNERABILITY**

Anahi Ocampo (anahi.ocampo@uchile.cl)

Pilar Barria (pbarria@uchile.cl)

Maria Christina Fragkou (mariac.fragkou@uchilefau.cl)

Carlos Guzman (crsguzman@uc.cl)

Kate Altemus Cullen (kate_cullen@berkeley.edu)

The capacity to deal with unexpected change weaves social and environmental elements. Social elements (e.g. economic resources, knowledge, leadership capacities, etc.) are necessary to make improvements in the natural environment (e.g., biophysical properties, hydrological conditions), as well as the natural context supports or hinders social elements. Exploring these connections is important when we aim at addressing the interlinked and cross-scale impacts of land-water-energy policies. Chile is undergoing the implementation of several national-scale policies aimed at addressing carbon neutrality, landscape restoration, and climate change adaptation international compromises, while

experiencing a more than 12-years severe drought. Drawing from three case studies on water crises and adaptation, we present insights that show how the Chilean water management legal system, along with other policies, have increased vulnerabilities on rural land.

The Aculeo case presents how farmers experienced dissimilar adaptive capacities due to historical structural effects of the implementation of the legal water system and export promotion policies. The Cachapoal case shows how voting rules associated with water shares ownership result in less capacity to influence and to face challenges. Finally, the Maipo case explores how the non-prioritization of water for human consumption in the pre-2022 water legal system influenced the possibilities for today's local climate adaptation.

These cases show that understanding the impacts of past and existing rules on adaptive capacity can help prevent the current and future consequences of policies in land-water-energy nexus and transitions. It also shows that it is important to understand contextual conditions prior to implementing any development policy, as they are vulnerabilities that can result in increasing injustices. This is especially important in rural territories where the disconnect of land ownership from water ownership has already caused compound impacts with justice implications for some.

Palavras-chave: transitions; adaptive capacity; vulnerability; social ecological systems; institutional analysis.