

## **UNDERSTANDING THE RAIN-MAKERS: WATER MANAGEMENT IN THE TEMPISQUE-BEBEDERO WATERSHED, COSTA RICA.**

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This research explores water management in the context of the Tempisque-Bebedero (TB) watershed in Costa Rica. Water management in Costa Rica is composed of a complex network of political-governmental structures that out-scales even the country's immense environmental management system. Previous studies have directed little attention toward understanding this complexity. Despite the importance of such analysis to the context of sensitive tropical landscapes. In the face of climate change, analysis which addresses the interactions between political, legal, and technical structures, ideology, and discourse are essential to understanding the way social systems connected to and respond to changes in natural systems. To this end, this study seeks to build a more foundational understanding of the actors, relationships, and culture of the water management system that shape bureaucratic processes and determine how access to this increasingly scarce natural resource is allocated to/by who, and why. Ultimately, governmental arrangements hold multi-scalar implications for responsiveness to climate-induced risks such as drought and flood. In dialogue with research in political and legal anthropology this work uses a mixed method approach to characterize the TB water management system. An important step to understand the challenges posed by climate change to water governance is to characterize the context in which natural and social systems intertwine and relate. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to a growing body of research that supports more equitable and just allocation of water through a deeper understanding of the water management arrangements which support those goals.

**PRESENTER BIO:** Oswaldo Medina is a Ph.D. student in the Anthropology Department at the University of Florida. His research focuses on water governance and policy. Before joining UF, he worked as the director of agricultural and development programs for the Ecuadorian government. He holds an M.A. in Sustainable Development Practice from UF.