

UC ANR Water Webinar



A Glass Half Empty & Underrepresented, underserved, understudied

By: Dr. Angel Santiago Fernandez Bou, Water Systems Management Lab, UC Merced

Day/Time: Friday 11/20, 3 - 4 PM

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://ucmerced.zoom.us/j/93722796133?pwd=a2FsKzBTUGVtOEovSTNVanRSNjZMdz09>

Meeting ID: 937 2279 6133; Passcode: 92837

Speaker Bio: Dr. Angel S. Fernandez-Bou works on multidisciplinary projects to preserve resources and habitat for society and nature. His focus is on finding solutions for Biosystems challenges that require combinations of Engineering, Environmental, and Socioeconomic approaches. Angel S. holds a PhD in Environmental Systems (UC Merced), a MSc in Biosystems Eng. (UFF, Brazil), and a BEng in Agricultural Eng. (UPM, Spain).

Abstract: The first part of the talk analyzes media coverage about the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act to understand impacts on public participation in common pool natural resources management and to identify represented stakeholders and solutions involved in groundwater sustainability. We analyzed 365 newspaper articles from California newspapers in three readership locations. Most newspaper articles included few stakeholders and solutions, illustrating isolated, short narratives. Results indicate bias for featuring agricultural industry, politician, and water managers' voices, and solutions for managing water resources were focused on new supply, demand reduction and infrastructure investment. The trends and gaps in representation in California media coverage may contribute to the public's low levels of engagement in groundwater planning.

The second part of the talk focuses on biases and gaps of knowledge in a corpus of California state bills, newspaper articles, and scientific publications (2017 – 2020) to estimate the frequency and quality of disadvantaged community representation. In all influential texts, disadvantaged communities are underrepresented: about one in four Californians live in disadvantaged communities, but only one in 2000 news and scientific publications cover them. The concerns of disadvantaged communities and their representation in media, legislation and research also do not necessarily match. Developing effective policies requires addressing nuances and co-occurrence of structural inequities in partnership with local stakeholders. Holistic coverage in newspapers and community-based approaches may increase awareness and understanding of disadvantaged communities, helping tailor policy solutions and building the political leverage needed to implement them.

Host: Safeeq Khan, CE Specialist in Water and Watershed Sciences