

# THE NATURALIZATION OF UNEQUAL WATER ACCESS IN CAMPINA GRANDE, NORTHEAST BRAZIL

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## Study object










- Drought cycle in Brazilian Semi-arid since 2012
- Water supply conditions in urban area
- Users' perceptions on the impacts of the water rationing

## Tools and data

- ✓ Campina Grande city 402,912 inhabitants in 2014 (INSA 2012)
- ✓ Water shortage risk map
- ✓ An intentional sample of households
- ✓ 21-months qualitative research – sample period Oct 2014-June 2016
- ✓ Political Ecology perspective

## Results

- Water storage units: water tanks, barrels, jars, buckets, plastic bottles, cisterns
- After water rationing: measures to water-saving, water consumption reduction and increase water storage capacity
- Comparing a high-income user's narrative with a low-income user's: a common perception that *nothing changed* among them – The interpretation of that similarity: the naturalization of impacts by the low-income users, who, with or without rationing, keeps his water-saving routines (a *water-underconsumption style*).

Household income	Water storage capacity <sup>1</sup> (liters/household)	Number of people in the household	Water consumption <i>per capita</i> (m <sup>3</sup> /month) <sup>2</sup>
	275 l 	2 a 8 	< 2,0 / 2,0 – 4,0
	1.100 l 	2 a 5 	< 2,0 / 2,0 – 4,0
	1.167 l 	2 a 4 	2,0 – 4,0 / > 4,0

(1) mean value for Oct 2014-Jun2016 period per household

(2) The daily water volume to meet the basic needs of a person, according to the UN, is 110 liters (equivalent to approximately 3.3m<sup>3</sup>/month)

## Conclusions

- Historical water scarcity has shaped cultural aspects related to the Brazilian semi-arid population: water saving and water storing, and associated with a *water-underconsumption style* by the low-income strata
- Although user's narratives are similar, practices and perceptions differ according to income strata
- The field research suggests that the permanent exposure of low-income users to restrictive water access may influence on the naturalization of unequal water access and acceptance and resignation about structural water scarcity observed among them.