

Master Thesis

# **Worlding the Drought in South India: Food and infrastructures of more-than-social movements**

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## Abstract:

This thesis sheds light on how rural communities re-organise their material resources and infrastructures in the context of exacerbating water scarcity. I discuss empirical research findings in light of the work by scholarship from political ecology, STS and the environmental humanities. In particular, I engage with an emergent strand of literature concerned with the politics of matter and the commoning of more-than-human worlds. By employing Papadopoulos' framework of experimental practice, I assess the interactions of humans with the material conditions of their water scarce lives, and their attempts to craft autonomous infrastructures from below. I start by outlining a political ecology analysis of the injustices that characterise access to staple foods, such as rice and millets, and the role of bore-well technology in shaping the hydraulic infrastructures of rural Tamil Nadu. In everyday water scarcity, these emerge as two contested materialities, strictly related to the limits and possibilities of accessing water and food. I assess how these circumstances affect the reproduction of the drought, as a socio-ecology characterised by loss, abandonment, and endless constraints. Hence, I explore how the engagements of committed humans with these matters may result in the emergence of new possible alternatives, and transform the way one may perceive, feel, and exist in that "world". Hence, in this thesis, I am trying to re-compose the framework of experimental practice, with empirical data and observations from the field in order to assess how the setting up of the drought may change or transform by the means of grassroots' engagements from below.

## Keywords:

Worlding; drought; more-than-social movements; infrastructures; India; Tamil Nadu;