

A Future History of Water

ANDREA BALLESTERO

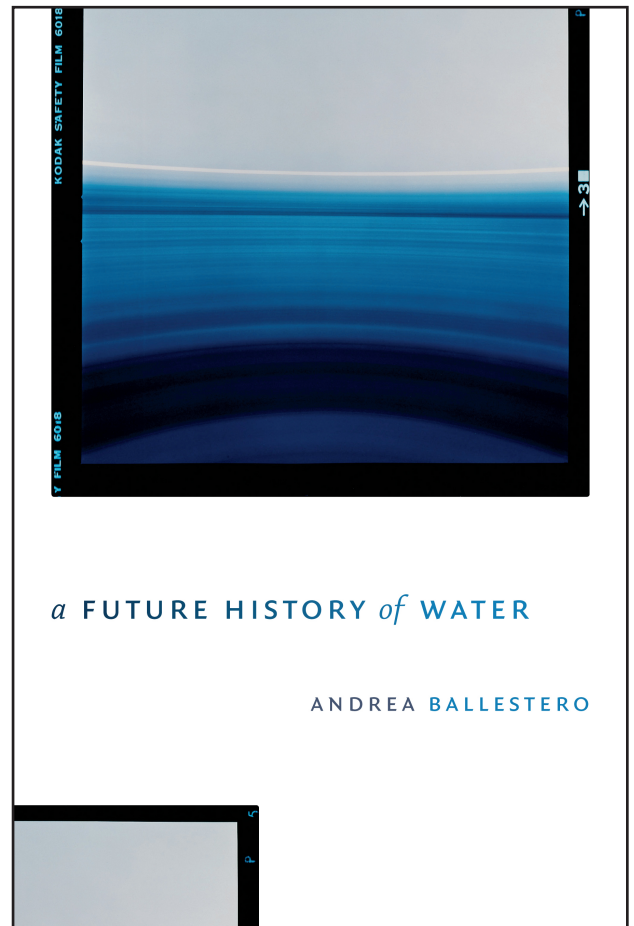
Based on fieldwork among state officials, NGOs, politicians, and activists in Costa Rica and Brazil, *A Future History of Water* traces the unspectacular work necessary to make water access a human right and a human right something different from a commodity. Andrea Ballestero shows how these ephemeral distinctions are made through four technological devices—formula, index, list and pact. She argues that what is at stake in these devices is not the making of a distinct future but what counts as the future in the first place. *A Future History of Water* is an ethnographically rich and conceptually charged journey into ant-filled water meters, fantastical water taxonomies, promises captured on slips of paper, and statistical maneuvers that dissolve the human of human rights. Ultimately, Ballestero demonstrates what happens when instead of trying to fix its meaning, we make water's changing form the precondition of our analyses.

ANDREA BALLESTERO is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Rice University and Director of The Ethnography Studio.

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"Andrea Ballestero is one of the most eloquent environmental ethnographers of her generation and one of the most important ethnographers of scientific practice that I have ever encountered. Her writing is beautiful, her theoretical and analytic ability are stunning, and the connections that she makes between her empirical evidence and larger conversations in the social sciences are breathtaking. While there are other anthropologists who write about the kinds of techniques that Ballestero dissects, historicizes, and theorizes, nobody does it while always grounding them in social relations and social reproduction."

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