

Water governance and hydrosocial territory network : the case of groundwater contract in Sebou Basin in Morocco

Abstract

The configuration of actors and spaces around water system in Morocco has been a special and controverted issue over last decades. It has been discussed by few and insufficient academic researches and studies while the matter of water scarcity, drought and overexploitation, in the region, represent increasingly a huge source of population concern as well as public authorities one. The design of space, the cultural, historical, social references and water governance are not the only variables that could have an impact on the transformation of hydrosocial territories. Besides, hydraulic infrastructures represent one of the most important components of the pattern, and the distribution of people, around those assets, the kind of their activities, their deep relation with land, contribute enormously in the territory modelling and its development. The Sebou Basin is one of the most important basins in Morocco, in which water governance is increasingly complicated with the multiplicity of actors, policies and strategies, especially when those are not converging towards a specific goal, or when the goals are serving divergent interests. This paper aims to explore the pertinence and eventually the contribution of groundwater governance mechanism, materialized by the groundwater contract, in order to enhance hydraulic environment and reduce water deficit and scarcity in Sebou Basin in Morocco. The `groundwater` contract is meant to be a way of struggle against overexploitation and abusive use of underground water and preserve the natural reserve of the ecosystem in the region. However, human practices have been long working, consciously or unconsciously, against the assigned objectives that are far from being reached in terms. Moreover, the related policies acknowledge huge number of misunderstanding, failure, dissonance and ignorance from local authorities as well as the rest of stakeholders. The article highlights different perspectives and challenges to show how the articulation of the relation between different components, social, natural, political, of the territory could play a major role in the whole water governance scheme.

Keywords: Water governance, hydrosocial territories, public policies, hydric stress, sustainable development.