

FROM PARTICIPATORY WATER RESOURCES PLANNING TO COLLECTIVE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

A lack of transparency and communication between authorities and users and among users themselves has traditionally jeopardized sustainable groundwater management in southern Spain. Recently, the regional government and its newly established water agency have promoted the creation of user boards in several basins in order to improve the management of the heavily pressured groundwater bodies. On the other hand, traditional river basin planning processes are modified and participatory approaches are introduced as prescribed by the new European legal framework. However, several problems are observed in relation to the functioning of these participatory processes as well as of the boards and their involvement in the planning process. This article discusses to what extent different initiatives have been successful to engage users and the public in collective management of the groundwater resources. It does so by focusing on a case study in the semi-arid region of Almeria in the south of Spain.

PALAVRA-CHAVE: water resources planning, decision making, participation, collective management