

Socio-environmental monitoring and co-management strategies to favor groundwater recharge and sustainable use in southern metropolises: Toward a co-managed aquifer recharge model?

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- 1 Socio-environmental monitoring and co-management strategies to favor
- 2 groundwater recharge and sustainable use in southern metropoles: toward a
- 3 co-Managed Aquifer Recharge model?
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17 Abstract

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- 18 In rapidly growing Southern metropoles, climatic, anthropogenic and demographic pressures,
- 19 combined with centralized network deficiencies, favor individual initiatives to access freshwater e.g.,
- 20 illegal well settlements, pirate connection to the distribution network, rain harvesting and storage in
- 21 tanks. These strategies are amplified by extreme meteorological events (e.g., droughts) that also
- 22 trigger cognitive mechanisms, such as denial, opportunism or a kind of "myopic" competition to
- 23 access the resource without considering (knowing) collateral impacts. From these environmental and

social dimensions, this review first evaluates the arguments for the integration of Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) in socio-environmental observatories (SEO). SEO are structures concurrently monitoring natural, anthropogenic, and engineered processes but also relationships between stakeholders/managers and end-users. Second, in order to take advantage from the current private (and illegal) strategies, MAR implementation accompanied with a SEO structure is discussed to show how it promotes cognitive, social, economic, and governance conditions required for successful comanagement.

- Keywords: Contamination; Water resource management; Critical Zone; Aquifer Storage and
- 32 Recovery; Common-Pool Resources

Introduction: Multidimensional patterns of water resources and Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) interests in Southern densely populated areas

By 2050, the population living in urban areas will reach 68 % of the global population (9,7 billions), with up to 90% of this increase concentrated in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, where urban areas reach great population densities due to compact urbanization schemes [1] [2] [3]. In such hotspots of climatic, demographic, and anthropogenic pressures, groundwater recharge is threatened by soil impermeabilization, combined with heat island effects, further amplified by extreme events (droughts/floods) combined with fragmentation/disappearance of green areas [4] [5]. Concurrently, groundwater pumping is known to enhance groundwater pollution and saline intrusion risks for coastal cities [6] [7] [8] [9]. Therefore, major management plans are required to mitigate the impact of these changes on water supply in southern metropolises [10]. This makes Integrated River Basin Management and the so-called Integrated Urban Water Management (IUWM) very challenging, given that it must "promote the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare equitably without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems" [11]. This implies that IUWM policies should

account for both intrinsic (hydrological and biogeochemical aquifer functions) and extrinsic (climate change, overexploitation, network management, contamination, and salinization) control parameters, and articulate the "little water cycle" (i.e., the urban water cycle) with the "great water cycle" occurring at the regional (catchment) scale. In addition, IUWM also requires to integrate complex management strategies distributed throughout multilayer governance structures (from municipality to supra-national scales) as well as the multilayer social dimension of consumers [12] (Figure 1). Such a nested multi-level dimension is challenging to be addressed by geoscientists, researchers in human sciences, and water managers, and raises the need for tight co-investigations and collaborations between these communities [13].

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Over the short term, a possible way to (unsustainably) secure the human demand is to limit water consumption by ecosystems, which is often unintentionally accomplished by the increasing urbanized land use. In Southern countries featuring tropical and semi-arid climate, various studies demonstrated that deforestation and the reduction of crop surfaces first lead to the increasing availability of living space and water for human purposes [14]. Nevertheless, deforestation deteriorates in most cases the quality of the groundwater resource, leading to higher costs for drinking water treatment. This imposes a severe constraint to the installation and maintenance of water supply systems, in particular for local communities [15] with often lacking or deficient sewage water treatment facilities or even effluent collection networks. These deficiencies may partially contribute to an unmanaged artificial recharge of urban aquifers through leakages, that by definition are difficult to valorize for sustainable uses. In Southern metropoles, this weakness of centralized networks to face population needs is amplified by overurbanization, here defined as the land consumption rate (surface change of an urbanized land during a period of time - usually one year and expressed as a percentage of the land occupied by the city/urban area at the start of that time), being higher than the population growth rate. For instance, for Abidjan (Ivory Coast), this rate from 1960-2014 is 1.33, confirming a much faster surface than population growth [16]. Similar trends are observed in coastal Chinese megacities [17].

Over a longer time scale, another way to mitigate water access difficulties is to adopt opportunistic approaches. In cities of developing countries, an increasing use of private, often illegally, drilled wells, is observed. For instance, Conicelli et al. [18] reported that about 88% of the 2.5 million tubular wells in Brazil, mostly located in metropoles, are illegal. A direct consequence of such personal initiatives is a range of conflicts with public authorities, because users are also well owners and claim the ownership of the territory where the resource is located, justifying the exploitation of the aquifer with minimum control [18]. Meanwhile, Bertrand et al. [19] showed that contamination hazards in Recife (Brazil) preferentially occur where population density is greater and where opportunistic water uses through well drilling are more frequent.

In this context, Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) strategies are mitigating techniques helping to control the impacts of contamination and overexploitation, assisting other water resource planning and management levers [20] [21]. Implementing MAR is highly dependent on site-specific parameters such as the quality and the availability of the groundwater resource, water to be recharged, local hydrogeology, operation and implementation costs, as well as the availability and the comparative feasibility of various MAR alternatives. In densely populated cities, new opportunities and challenges may be identified for areas suffering from impermeabilization of large soil surfaces, saline intrusion risks, and high potentiality for recharge by precipitation, e.g. through Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) wells, Aquifer Storage and Transfer Recovery (ASTR) systems, or River Bank Filtration (RBF) facilities [22] [23]. Although these approaches are technically affordable, their success over the long term will mainly depend on how production managers and end-consumers adopt their sustainable use and governance [20]. Hence, the successful management of water resources mainly depends on human behavior and education, and not primarily on environmental processes.

Groundwater systems are part of the so-called "Critical Zone" (CZ), which is the biogeochemical reactive layer of the Earth's surface exposed to the increasing pressure of anthropogenic activities [24]. As stated by the philosopher Latour [25], however, this physical definition may be completed by a more philosophical and challenging perspective: "To study, to live, to own, to survey or to police a critical zone is not at all the same thing as a piece of land or a territory", as the territory could not suddenly disappear under stress, while the critical zone could malfunction and "be ruined". Groundwater managers and consumers unfortunately often adopt denial of reality (and of the risk of disappearance of freshwater) as a cognitive strategy, which can partly be explained by the apparent abundance of water in some tropical urban areas (vicinity of the sea and large rivers, intense rainfall, etc.) [12]. Demonstration of socio-institutional denial about ecological issues is a major result in environmental sociology (e.g., [26]).

Although it is counterintuitive at first sight, these denials are concurrent with the previously mentioned opportunism to access alternative resources, such as illegal wells, because the recovery of drinking water is a daily challenge especially where the public investments for the installation and the maintenance of water distribution are insufficient. Asprilla- Echieverra [27] pointed out that this "heterogenous property scheme of groundwater" exists, especially where alternative strategies for groundwater access are found: water distributors who request permits for groundwater pumping, consider the resource as a centrally-managed resource, while "illegal" appropriators perceive the groundwater as an open access resource, without any coordinated management. This dimension can be related to the economic theory framing common-pool resources (CPR): the impacts of pumping and external costs are generally unknown or difficult to establish and benefits in conserving the resource will only occur in the future. This promotes unsustainable use and the so-called " myopic"

behavior or "business as usual". However, there is evidences that many individuals benefit from CPR not by real necessity, but by egoism and selfishness [27] [28] [29].

Therefore, people and stakeholders must realize, in a quantitative manner, that management decisions and resource use impact directly (either positively or negatively) natural processes. However, in case of repeated freshwater scarcity (contamination, restrictions), one can observe defiance within the population that loses confidence in public policies and stakeholders [13], and reciprocally some kind of contempt of the stakeholders for end-users [30] [31]. Furthermore, when community-driven networks exist, the population is strongly reluctant to adopt public or private solutions [30]. Thus, the intense fragmentation of networks in southern metropolises complexifies top-down solutions, partly because territory reflects intense power issues [32], strengthening the need to transform the local "territory" into a "critical zone" as proposed by Latour.

The twofold definition of the CZ introduced above has two consequences. At first, there is a need to document precisely pollution (anthropogenic contamination, salinization) and flux dynamics at low and high temporal resolution because these processes are impacted by long-term inertial (e.g., climate, seawater level) and "catastrophic" processes (e.g., depression due to intense pumping, major tides, floods) [9]. Combining high and low-frequency hydrogeological monitoring is a key competence of CZ researchers [33]. To prepare this contribution, we reviewed the literature to evaluate the temporal and geographical density of such monitoring facilities. Surprisingly, while short-term hydrogeological case studies are widely documented due to the extensive range of hydrogeological situations found in urban areas, we identified only a few references for long-term monitoring in a management perspective [34] [22]. In addition, most of these studies did not combine high and low-frequency monitoring, include parameters essential for the understanding of salinization, contamination mechanisms [35] or drivers of water-table variations [22] nor discuss alternative management policies. Of course, some authors quoted the existence of long-term databases, mainly from manager monitoring programs. However, these datasets are often

fragmented, whereas complete and regularly updated data are scarce. Therefore a very tight collaboration between researchers and managers is necessary to valorize better existing databases and to use them in a scientifically validated way [36].

Second, accounting for the "geopolitical" dimension of the groundwater resource in the CZ is not only a matter of hydrogeological monitoring but also a question of "socio-environmental" or "social-ecological" observation (SEO), an approach that has emerged in the 90's especially in Northern countries [37]. SEO's are research structures focusing on a specific area or over a range of sites illustrating a given socio-environmental challenge (and therefore including stakeholders) faced by the society. They aim to concurrently document sociological, anthropological, and ecological (*largo sensu*) dimensions together with long-term monitoring of environmental processes, as it is currently ongoing throughout, *e.g.*, the International Long-Term Ecosystem Research (ILTER) network [38] or the upcoming European eLTER research infrastructure (https://elter-ri.eu/). Despite ILTER is not an exhaustive consortium of socio-environmental observatories (SEOs), the only observatories focusing on urbanized areas and observing groundwater referenced in the related Dynamic Ecological Information Management System (DEIMS) [39] database are located in Europe (3 sites over 1237 sites), thus far away from Southern metropolises.

Therefore, the key question is how to combine the scientific need to characterize socioenvironmental dynamics, the need of public authorities to better control and manage groundwater
resources, and the owner perspective aiming at mitigate the restrictions in water uses? A potential
solution must consider the great extent of private (and often illegal) wells, the territorial
fragmentation due to individual strategic choices and community self-help initiatives, and the
growing scarcity of freshwater resources. In this context, a form of "public/private opportunism" to
implement MAR in SEOs might be a promising way. Implementing MAR using a part of the private
wells would allow to fill the gap between decentralized private/opportunistic and centralized
public/sharing water supply strategies (Fig. 2), and at least partially bring back the "open access

resource" to the "managed field". Similarly, Foster et al. [40], focusing on African urban development, argue for "decentralized closed-loop water-service systems" to rapidly account for accelerating water demand and limit dependence on more expensive centralized linear water-service systems.

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The interest of hybrid top-down and bottom-up co-governance or how implementing MAR

in SEOs?

Centralized public water supply systems have established boundaries between stakeholders/managers and end-users, in contrast to decentralized local systems (street, allotment) [41]. This review recalls that individual or community strategies, including illegal ones, are common in Southern cities, often making these boundaries irrelevant in the everyday life of many consumers. Strategic partnerships could replace or improve inefficient centralized top-down organizations [29] and consistently, co-management structures have in the past essentially been tested in agricultural areas where large amounts of groundwater are required (e.g., [42] [29] [43] [44]). Dobbin and Smith [43] stated recently that there is still little feedback on how to implement the acquired experiences and theoretical knowledge into an organizational strategy. Concurrently, a so-called "Public Private People Partnership" (PPPP) applied to MAR, was recently experimented in an agricultural region in Castilla y Leon (Spain) [45] and reveals that, to be operational, the cooperation scheme must allow to easily access good quality data (at a fine spatio-temporal resolution) [36] and limit the transaction costs for users and managers [42], especially the monitoring and enforcement costs. These costs corresponds to what interests SEO's, and on this basis, we review which are the cognitive, social, environmental, economic, and governance conditions to favor co-management and illustrate their implementation through ASR and/or ASTR. These techniques are the likely most affordable (despite being more expensive in an absolute cost evaluation compared to other techniques such as

infiltration basins), see [46]) and easy to implement in (over)urbanized areas to evaluate how these favorable conditions could be met.

From a cognitive perspective, i.e., at the individual scale, co-management implies that a common objective among end-users is targeted; in the framework of groundwater resources, this means that common threats are perceived credibly and transparently by users and testify the bad exploitation of the resource and its consequences [42]. These common threats may be of environmental (water table decrease, well salinization or contamination) or legal/social nature (temporal water restrictions, closing of wells) [42] [29]. Here the SEO scientists may provide scientifically constrained data and subsequent modeling to show the trends over the resource, what is recognized be highly necessary for MAR [20]. Nowadays, the Internet of Things together with smart sensors installed at neuralgic points of the water management system (water level, electrical conductivity, turbidity meters, pluviometry) allow to visualize online the state of the groundwater resource in a simple web page or smartphone application, as recently proposed in the SMART-Control project for MAR facilities, which implement ASR and ASTR in NE Brazil. This is expected to favor the "linking social capital", i.e., the bi-directional top-down and bottom-up relationships between end-users, stakeholders, and the scientific community, but also the so-called "citizen involvement" [36].

From a social point of view, this civic participation might be supported by the community-based social marketing applied to water resources, provided that some populations are more influenced by social norms than by a real perception of environmental risks. Consistently, Dobbie and Smith [43] illustrated in a rural area in Honduras that more uniform social norms favor the more efficient management of water treatment plants. This latter strategy is therefore conditioned to a somewhat "social homogeneity" favoring trust and the "bonding social capital", i.e., the sharing and reciprocity of social values among the users [42], promoting a form of "hydro-solidarity" [47] [48] that may improve coordinated water management. In contrast, where groundwater users have unequal means

and power, and divergent interests, it is hard to reconcile their objectives [42]. In the case of a SEO for MAR, this aspect can relatively easily be checked previously to the implementation and further monitored, due to the somehow restricted perimeter of influence of MAR.

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Cognitive and social related levers mentioned above, to be operational, require also economic and institutional models that are supportable and acceptable by each part of the co-management consortium. At first sight, the economic feasibility of MAR remains a complex subject as one may have difficulties in evaluating economic benefits and risks, particularly the effect of possible system under-performance [49]. However Gao et al. [50] simulated for the city of Perth (Australia) that water injection in aquifers in order to implement a "strategic storage" (helping in facing drought or network shortage) can provide a relatively low-cost insurance for cities with suitable aquifers. The cost savings depend on the aquifer loss (through lateral flows [51]) but the authors stated that the solution is still attractive compared to solutions that exclude water banking, e.g., desalinization. Consistently, Ross [52] stated that evaluating benefits may be performed from the costs of the next best alternative solution and the value of production using recharged water. Other methods such as the "willing-to-pay" may be performed and require information's from the end-users [49]. Therefore, although Cost-Benefit analysis of MAR systems is site specific, we argue that in densely populated areas suffering water shortages, MAR is expected to be likely economically viable provided that highvalue uses (and even economically inestimable in case of catastrophic events as a total water network shortage) such as potable and some industrial water supplies, are performed [49]. Beyond, a major economic argument to implement MAR in a SEO in densely drilled area is that existing wells can be transformed into ASR or ASTR injection wells. In some cases, the original well owners would already cover a part of the capital costs for well constructions (Table 1). It would be however dampened by lower energy costs related to easier pumping thanks to shallower groundwater level after MAR implementation [45]. In parallel, integrating MAR in SEO may also positively influence the cost-benefit analysis equation for the stakeholders in term of information acquisition through hydrogeological and socio-environmental monitoring by the research community. Recently, based on the proposed approach by Ross and Hasnain [46], the evaluation of levelized costs has been performed for a range of MAR sites mainly localized in Northern countries [52]. Levelized cost of MAR is the constant level of revenue necessary each year to recover all the expenses over the life of the project (assumed to be 30 years by Ross [52]) divided by the annual volume of water supply and allow a direct comparison with other water access alternatives.

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These socio-economic boundary conditions must be translated into a governance framework (Fig. 3). In this perspective, the pressure-state-response (PSR) model has been broadly used in various SEO and shown to be efficient in producing indicators for socio-ecosystem management [53]. The same institutional actors as the centralized and multi-layered governance (Fig. 1) may be integrated (white squares). The international and national scale managers (e.g., UN representative's group such as IPCC) provide global or regional information about future climatic and demographic trends, and international strategies remain rather external to the observatory itself. Secondly, the state/regional water/urbanization/health agencies are expected to supply hydrological, land use and health screenings for the regional groundwater catchment. Local (metropole scale) authorities manage/monitor the local water resource and define the duties and right in water injection and pumping. This approach is largely inspired by feedbacks from regions that have already earlier experimented with MAR institutionalization. For example, since 1986 the Arizona state (USA) delivers a range of permits, mainly to public and industrial actors, to perform MAR, provided that the recipient demonstrates its technical, hydrogeological, and environmental feasibility. This leads to a permitted storage volume that can be transparently consulted online [54]. In this framework, the "recovery well permits" impose an equilibrium between the injected and extracted water volumes. In contrast to the multi-layered and centralized institutional organization, the end-consumers which are in this scheme considered as critical components and no longer as "unengaged and silent observers" [53] have representative in the management structure.

Finally, Critical Zone and human science researchers must consider the interfaces between regional, local, and the SEO scales as well as the interactions between stakeholders and consumers (linking social capital), between each end user (bonding social capital) and potentially with the users outside the SEO perimeter (bridging social capital). This role is quite often endorsed by nongovernmental organizations in developing countries, especially in rural areas but we argue that a greater scientific implication would also benefit to the research communities (consolidated data acquisition), as it was suggested by Foster [55]. Here their missions are to ensure data operation (collection, concatenation, organization) in a recoverable way with and for each actor, e.g., usable for building adapted indicators to evaluate the hydrogeological, environmental, and sociological impacts on the MAR implementation over the long-term. Consistently, for each arrow in Fig. 3, representing socio-environmental and water flux drivers, or resource responses to MAR operations, indicators should be delineated. Zheng et al. [56] recently proposed specific indicators for MAR regarding groundwater quantity (long-term water table change, annual ratio of recovered vs infiltrated water), quality (temporal exceedance rate of recovered/ambient water or source water), ecology (e.g., changes in ecological flow in adjacent ecosystems), energetic stress (energy requirement for each recovered cubic meter) and social sustainability (e.g., related to governance transparency).

This institutional organization should favor research –action programs and is expected to lead to a renewed approach for interdisciplinary programs. As mentioned by Flyvbjerg [57], social science matters when it defends a perspective that Aristoteles called "phronesis", meaning that the presence of social scientists is not only tied to the measure of social acceptability, but mainly to the democratic and pedagogical dimensions of socio-technical projects, in order to increase the reflexivity of the partners.

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Conclusion and perspectives

This paper aimed to review two dimensions appearing as promising to face long-term groundwater-related challenges in southern densely populated areas by implementing MAR (Managed Aquifer Recharge). The first one is the role of SEOs (Socio-Environmental Observatories). To be operational over the long-term, SEOs must be as interactive as possible by integrating the three above-mentioned communities (managers/stakeholders, end-users, scientists), mainly because MAR strategies require public acceptance and trust, which has decreased a lot in cities with repeated domestic water shortages [12]), as well as dialog triggered by experts. The implementation of SEO is part of the perspective of institutional recognition of a problematic situation and its originality comes from the effective (and not just formal) inclusion of users in their management. In this sense, it is a question of recognizing the errors of a centralized management of water, and of considering that various mechanisms of participation and/or deliberation prove to be essential if it is a question of modifying the social practices. Informal alternative water access strategies in Southern metropoles, often illegal, demonstrate that non-coordinated decentralization already exists in order to mitigate centralized system failures. Decentralized but co-governed structures constitute therefore a third way to better manage urban water cycles. Such structures are easier to implement than centralized and expensive management systems and should favor water user's security by providing services like resource monitoring and analysis [58].

This co-management scheme for MAR in SEO, however, could still evolve by integrating a new institutional actor, the water resource itself (Fig.3). Legal recognition of ecological elements such as rivers or mountains already exists [59]. Groundwater - whose invisibility is one of its significant characteristics - should similarly achieve legal recognition to benefit from institutional innovations such as hybrid forums or spokespersons that would have the responsibility to defend "their client" with institutional autonomy. As defended by the Actor-Network Theory, it would also highlight the agency of so-called natural elements.

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- impacts of global changes in a southern coastal metropolis: When will it be already too late?
- 354 Crossed analysis in Recife, NE Brazil. Science of The Total Environment 2018, 618:645–657. **This
- work illustrates the interest in combining sociological/anthropoligical and hydrogeological
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- 357 layered system: a multi-layered water resource, managed by a multi-layered governance system and
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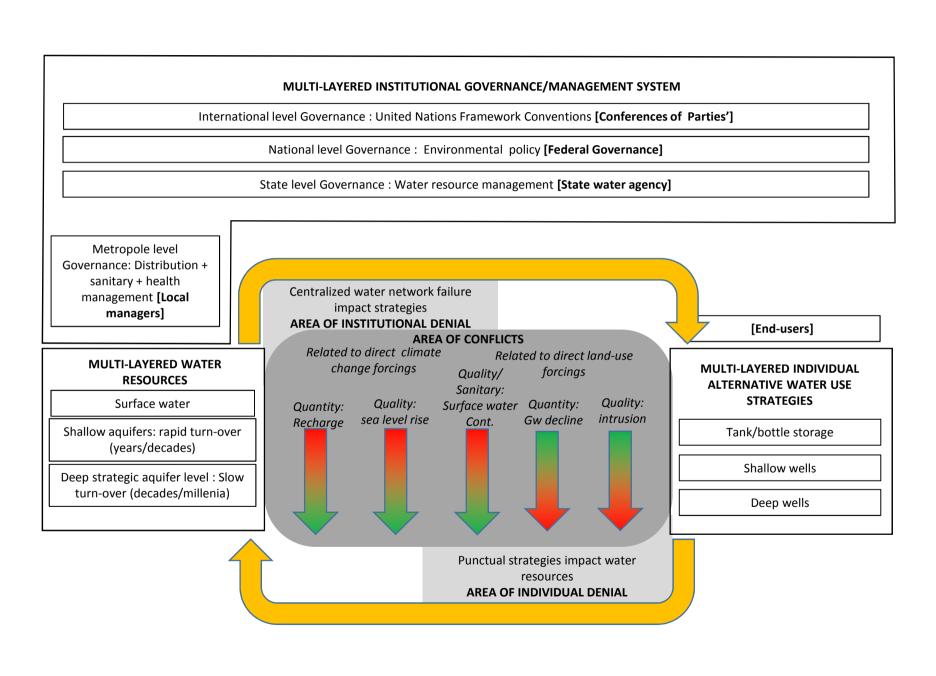
FIGURE CAPTIONS

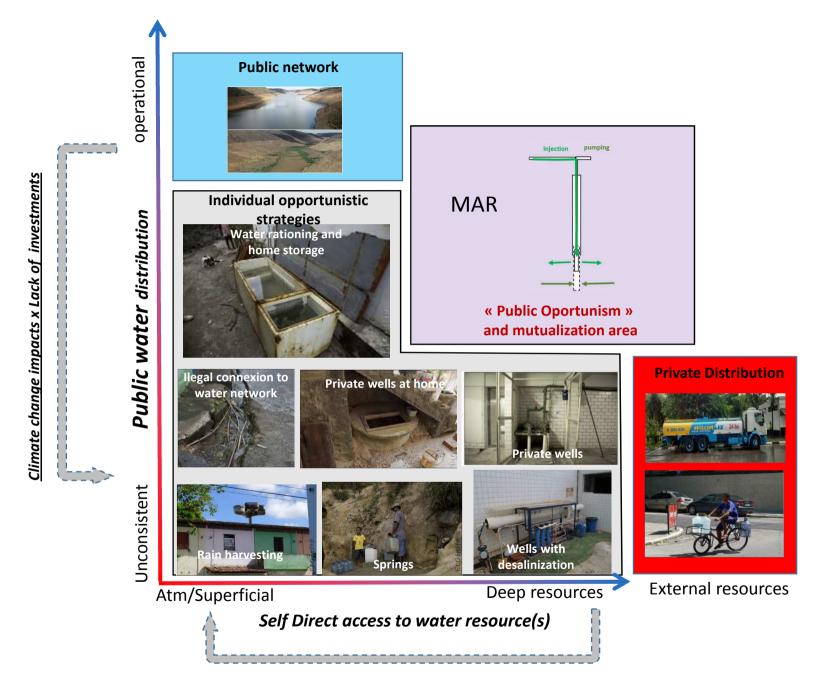
Figure 1: Conceptual scheme of the imbricated multilayer water system in Recife (Brazil). The water resource is located in 3 geological layers; is managed by a multilayer governance system and may be consumed/used through various decentralized strategies, related to the contrasted socio-environmental integrations of the population. Under global climate forcing and local demographic pressures, this may lead to conflicts i.e. risks from quantitative, qualitative and social (e.g., sanitary) points of views, which face some institutional and individual denials.

Figure 2. Range of individual strategies in Recife (Brazil) to face water resource shortage in poorly managed and/or under catastrophic conditions (i.e., droughts, floods, general domestic water network contamination). Pictures from Cary et al. (2018) or from G. Bertrand.

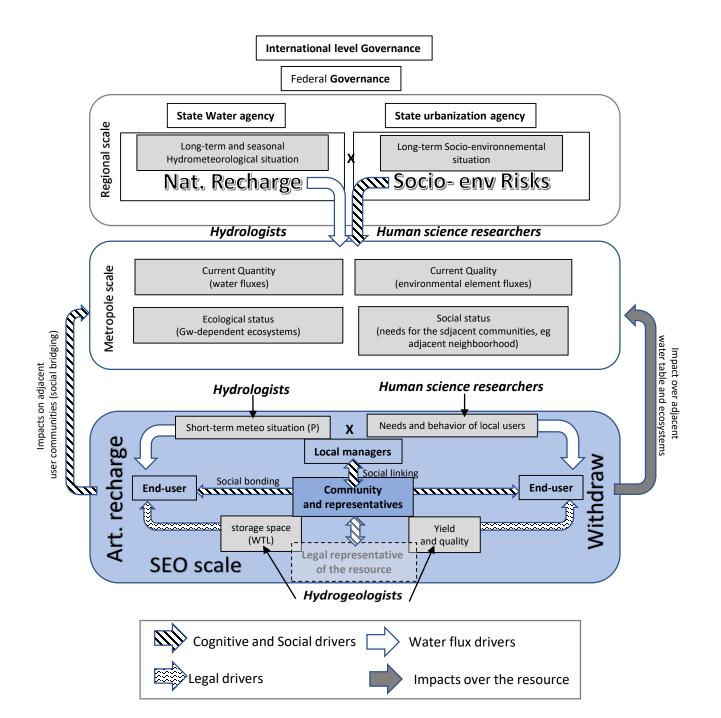
Figure 3. General structural pattern of a socio-environmental observatory focusing over MAR implementation in urban environment. The same actors as in Fig. 1 are found (white squares). Researchers community works at the interfaces between regional and local scales as well as at the interface between large scale or local managers and end-users. For each arrow representing socio-environmental or water flux drivers or resource responses to MAR operations, indicators should be delineated making the hydrological and socio-environmental processes accessible to users and managers. The water resource itself might be integrated as a management consortium member, if its recognition as a juridical person is processed.

Table 1: Cost distributions of MAR implementation in a SEO.





<u>Climate change impacts x increase of</u> <u>individual strategies leading to salinization</u>



	Costs for the owner	Costs for stakeholders	Costs for SEO structure	Surrounding users	Remarks
Capital and financial costs (considered as sunk costs)	-Feasibility study (hydrogeological investigation) Drilling and well installation Pump acquisition/installation - Building used for Rain harvesting	- Feasibility study for Rain harvesting, - Roof pipes and filtering unity before injection well	- Sensors and telecommunication - Visualization platform (software + hardware)	N.a.	In case of handmade wells, additional costs for well evaluation prior MAR scheme implementation is required (potentially partially covered by stakeholders) Debt service payment are not indicated but should be included in case loans were taken.
Opportunity costs (considered as sunk costs)	In the case of existing private well is used for ASR or ASTR, that should be a common model in densely urbanized area, the opportunity costs related to land selling or for building are neglected considering that ASR does not consume a large surface, that can still be used for other purposes.			N.a.	N.a.
Operation and Maintenance costs	- Electricity for Pumping - Injection Well maintenance - Operational labor costs (injection survey)	-Filter and pipes maintenance services - Administrative labor costs - Communication and valorization actions to public	- Consulting service labor costs (water quality and quantity monitoring, analyzing and reporting, sociological analyses - Sensor maintenance - Communication and valorization actions - Formation	N.a.	Injection well maintenance costs could be divided between owners and managers as an incentive for owners Fixed costs (electricity, offices) are not indicated as they correspond to the functioning of the institutions but should be formally included in the economic plan
Social (non financial) costs/capital	-Participation to the co-governance or election of a representative - Social mobilization through participative communication				Participation of surroundings users (in the same neighborhoods or under influence of recharge strategy) could be proposed as they benefit from the MAR. This can strengthen the bridging dimension of the social capital since bounding social capital is assumed to exist prior the project and linking social capital dimension is developed through the co-management functioning.