



### **Call for Presentations & Papers:**

## **Conference on Social Water Studies in the MENA (Middle East and Northern Africa) Region: State of the Art and Perspectives**

**28. – 29. September 2014<sup>1</sup> in Madaba-Amman, Jordan  
on the Campus of German Jordanian University (GJU)**

### **Co- convenors:**

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### **Background**

Social studies dealing with environmental issues aspire to integrate the perspective of different disciplines, such as anthropology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, and to combine it with appropriate content from the natural and technical sciences. The aim of such an interdisciplinary approach to environmental issues is to gain a deeper understanding of human behaviour and organisation, not abstracting it from its underlying social, political and economic structures and cultural aspects.

Recently, convenors of this conference initiated a dialogue and reviewed social scientific work on water in the MENA region. This process revealed that technical knowledge and discourse about water management in the region has been vast, while the social scientific aspects of social water studies have been receiving much less attention. At the same time, water use and management problems in the region are rarely addressed from an interdisciplinary perspective. Nevertheless, as the last 30-40 years of social science and interdisciplinary international scholarly work on water management and use have shown, adopting an interdisciplinary perspective can help answering key questions concerning the way individuals and societies address water, what the underlying reasons are and, last but not least, what contributes to and what counteracts sustainable water management.

Against this background this conference aims to initiate a stock-taking of social science research on water issues in the MENA region and to illustrate how a social science perspective could be further developed. Relevant work on water can address such diverse issues as: water use and management in agriculture, water supply and sanitation, coordinating among different water uses and water planning, water infrastructure development, ground and surface water use, water re-use, water harvesting and recycling, water pollution control, (Strategic) Environmental Impact Assessment,

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<sup>1</sup> Start 9:00 am on 28 September, end of presentations 6 p.m. 29 September.

trans-boundary water management, hydro-politics and the political ecology of water, water governance, collective action in water management, the water-agriculture-food-energy nexus, water and tourism development, fisheries, climate change induced changes in water use and its social implications, etc.

**The workshop pursues the following three objectives:**

- I. Taking stock of social science and interdisciplinary research on water in the region.
- II. Exchanging among internationally renowned scientists on water research elsewhere and discussing the way social sciences, its most innovative methodologies and interdisciplinary work can contribute to our understanding of water issues.
- III. Exploring if and how underlying aspects related to education and research in the MENA region influence the role of social science approaches and interdisciplinarity in water research and further examining societal preparedness to address these issues from a social science perspective.

**In order to achieve these objectives the workshop invites contributions that address one or several of the following questions and related aspects:**

1. What is the behavioral dimension of water use and management in MENA countries?
2. How is water use coordinated in different domains/sectors, and how are conflicts addressed?
3. What is the role of land tenure in relation agricultural water use?
4. What is the role of the state in water use, management and infrastructure development?
5. What is the role of international organizations in water use and development?
6. How is water management organized in different contexts , how can we evaluate this?
7. How do traditions, religion(s) and social structures influence water use in region?
8. What is the role of participatory and cooperative approaches in water management?
9. What is the role of recent economic, social and political changes for transformation of water management?
10. What is the role of paradigms and paradigm shifts in water management?
11. What are methodologies applied to the social study of water management in the region?
12. How are education and training in general and with regards to water management in particular structured and what role do social studies approaches play in that regard?
13. Cases illustrating the political economy and political ecology of water in the region.
14. Case studies and previous projects addressing water management success and/or failure in relation to community behavior.

**Proposals for papers and presentations in regard to these questions as well as in relation to interrelated aspects are invited. Please, send abstract (350 words abstract) and a short biography (200 words) to [watermena@outlook.de](mailto:watermena@outlook.de) by 18 June 2014.**

**Participants will be selected for either oral or poster presentation and informed by 16 of June 2014. All selected participants are held to submit a full paper by 15 September 2014. Travel, conference participation, and accommodation will be reimbursed to the participants.**

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