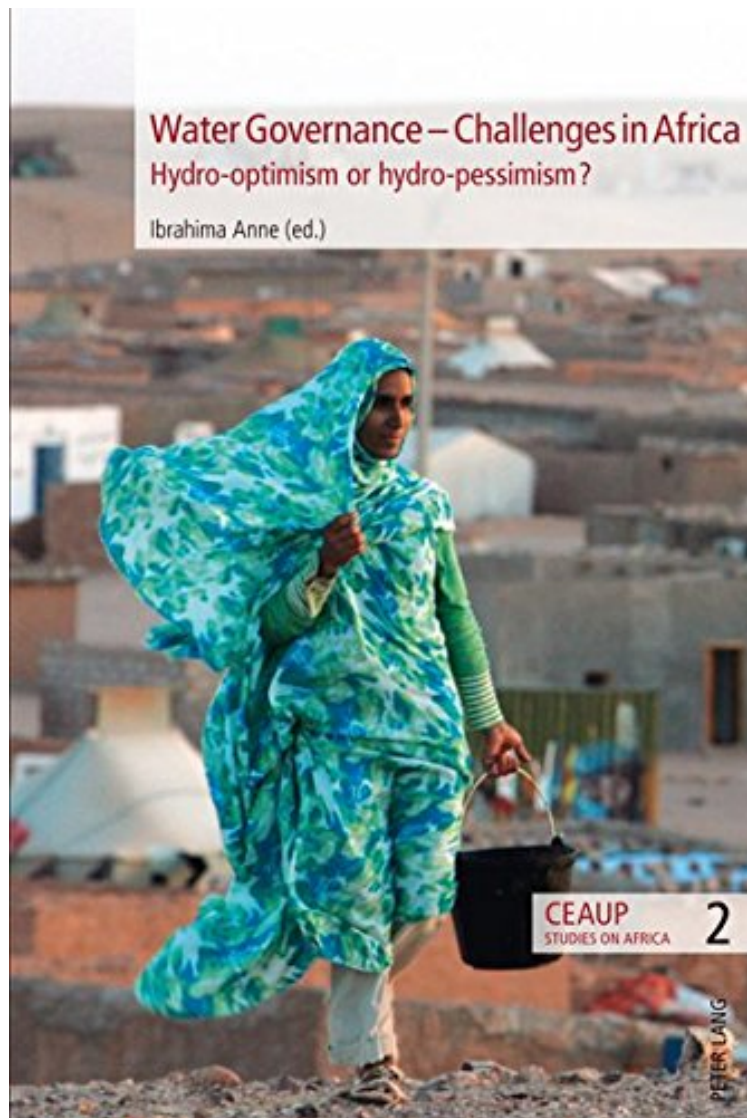


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Water Governance Challenges in Africa: Hydro-optimism or hydro-pessimism? (CEAUP Studies on Africa)

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Fresh water is indispensable to life and human activities. The improvement of livelihood of Africans is directly related to improvements of water supply and sanitation. There is also a strong and direct dependence of people on a particular natural resource that leads to the concept of social-ecological systems. This is demonstrated by conflicts over access and control of water as part of everyday local politics, which dictate the necessity of understanding practices and processes of local governance from a rural point of view. There is a need of exploring the relationships between the state and market regulation in order to guarantee full access to water. Water sector reforms are thus necessary to increase equity, efficiency and environmental sustainability, through a participatory approach involving water-users associations and basinmanagement committees. The success will though depend on social learning in this process, as it is crucial for human progress and survival in face of water stress that is aggravated by climate change, growing water demands from agriculture and urbanism, demographic pressure and tourism. The book is an endeavour of different specialities to tackle the different aspects of water governance challenge on the African continent. Indeed, policy debate and critical thinking on future development scenarios is a task just in its infancy. These papers can aid in a process of converging research efforts both North-South and South-South, which will bridge the optimism-pessimism divide. Whilst the hydro-optimists might say that the right decisions are being taken to futureproof Africa against natural and man-made hazards including droughts and floods (and deterioration in water quality), for the pessimists the future is always frightening.

About the Author Ibrahima Anne was born in Mauritania. After his studies in several countries (Senegal, Ivory Coast, Russia, Ukraine), he received his PhD in Environmental Microbiology from the University of Porto (Portugal). During his doctoral studies, he took training courses at the Technical University of Munich (Germany), the Agricultural University of Copenhagen (Denmark) and the University of Clermont Ferrand (France). He is a member of the *Societas Internationalis Limnologiae* and the Portuguese Association of Biologists. He currently works at the technical division of Degremont SA (Paris, France).