

# Peaceful Coexistence with Hints of Conflict Over the Use of Water Resources of the Dam of Salbisgo in Burkina Faso

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## ABSTRACT

Competition for access to water on hydraulic structures sometimes results on contradictory rationales of the various categories of water users. The increase in water needs has led to conflicts over the use of the resource. The dam of Salbisgo in the province of Boulkiemdé in Burkina Faso is an example of conflictual relations among the users of a hydraulic structure. This article aims at analyzing the power relations among water users over the use of the water resource of this dam. The methodology is based on secondary and primary data collected from some main users of the dam's water and also field observations. The results reveal that, the dam's water users have very different ways of conceiving the notion of competition for the dam's water, depending on their residence status and their village of origin. This competition not only leads to differing perceptions of the consequences of activities on the sustainability of the dam, but also on other activities carried out. Two categories of water users are to be considered. On the one hand, the first category is made up of users aware of the real danger of their practices on the dam. On the other hand, the second category are ignorants or users in bad faith, who accuse the first category to portray themselves as "good users" of the dam in terms of sustainable practices for its preservation. These mutual accusations, without immediate consequences, nevertheless provide fertile ground for conflicts in the use of the dam. Efforts are being made by some actors to limit their harmful practices, while others are still perpetuating them. This could undoubtedly create internal frustrations leading inevitably to crises among the users of the hydraulic structure.

**Keywords:** Competition, water use, categories of water users, dam of Salbisgo, Burkina Faso.

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## INTRODUCTION

A conflict of use is a manifestation of opposition among stakeholders due to the incompatibility of their practices. Stakeholders may exploit a resource at the same time and may therefore exert pressure on it. This is what contributes to situations of competition within the activities of each stakeholder, with each claiming primacy and legitimacy over the resource. In the case of water resources, players in a competitive situation can sometimes enter into open or latent conflict. Rivers, lakes and natural or artificial water sources are the subject of numerous conflicts in

terms of occupation and competing uses. Water, which is now a rare and coveted commodity, is often managed with difficulty for productive, recreational or residential activities (A. Torre & al., 2016, p. 18). The conflicts of use that arise around water points are the result of power plays and complex relationships among users (C. Baron and A. Bonnassieux, 2011, p. 23 ; L. Descroix, 2012, p. 79 ; L. Zerkaoui & al., 2016, p. 218). For example, the Daringa dam in Benin is used for a wide range of purposes, sometimes leading to numerous conflicts of use (F. Gangneron, 2011, p. 31). Activities such as fishing, livestock farming and

irrigated agriculture, particularly market gardening, are the most prominent around the dam. The multi-use of water resources, marked by competing activities, increases the pressure on the resource and is at the root of conflicts of use that severely test long-established social interactions (J-L. Sabatier and T. Ruf, 1995, p. 10). As a predominantly agricultural country, Burkina Faso has embarked on a vast programme of water development since the 1960s, to meet the food needs of its population and cope with climatic hazards. Around 1,700 small dams have been built (J.-P. Venot and P. Cecchi, 2011, p. 114). Because of their multiple uses and competition for access to water resources, these hydraulic structures are deteriorating over time. The Salbisgo dam (see map) was built in 1961 to supply drinking water to the town of Koudougou. It has become a focal point for a number of uses. The dam was initially designed to meet the urban water supply needs of the town of Koudougou. However, population growth, especially in rural areas, has increased the pressure on water resources, resulting in a massive rush by local people to use the dam's water resources. This influx of people towards the dam has enabled the practice of activities such as market gardening, livestock rearing, fruit growing, domestic use, etc. All these activities have an impact on the quality of water. All these activities put pressure on the dam's water resources and compromise their sustainability.

The Salbisgo dam is located in the Sambisgo-Yitaoré district. The dam is a major water reservoir for the commune of Ramongo. It serves several villages in the commune and contributes to local development through the income generated by activities around its banks. The National Office of Water and Sanitation (NOWS) is the major user in terms of water abstraction. However, the other categories of users, i.e. livestock farmers and market gardeners, are often involved in sometimes serious mutual conflicts, which are resolved either amicably or through a local authority. In fact, users are finding it difficult to exploit water resources as they see fit due to the dwindling or even drying up of the dam. Against this backdrop, there have been several disputes over the use of the resource among the various stakeholders. Indirect stakeholders, most of whom live outside Salbisgo, are not left out of the conflict. Relations among users are sometimes peaceful and sometimes conflictual. This article analyzes the power relations among water users in the use of the dam's water resources. The article first looks at the coexistence of users in the use of water resources at the Salbisgo dam. It then discusses the competition within the activities carried out in the vicinity of the dam and finally analyzes the perceptions that the categories of users have of this competition.

## METHODOLOGY

The article is essentially based on secondary and primary data as well as field observations. The secondary data founded in the review of literature the subject to assess the state of knowledge on conflicts of use and/or competition

for access to water on hydraulic schemes. The primary qualitative and quantitative data were collected from leaders of agricultural and market gardening cooperatives, local political authorities, the representative of the National Office of Water and Sanitation (NOWS) in Koudougou and the Regional Direction of Water and Sanitation of Center-West (RDWCW). The surveys covered the two villages bordering the dam, namely Salbisgo-Itaoré and Salbisgo-Dapoya. Because of the absence of a database on the number of dam users, two hundred and ten (210) dam users per village were randomly selected and surveyed according to the type of activities carried out. The total number of participants is four hundred and twenty (420) dam users.

The collection tools were the interview guide and the questionnaire. Field observation was used to capture the realities on the ground in order to supplement the data obtained from the interviews and surveys.

All the data collected is analyzed using appropriate techniques. Qualitative data were first recorded, transcribed manually and processed before a content analysis model. The interviews were transcribed literally in order to remain faithful to what the respondents said. The content analysis consisted essentially of listing interesting passages (in the form of verbatims used throughout the writing process) and relevant passages with a view to identifying concepts, key words and ideas for analysis. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms were used to identify the respondents. Sphinx statistical processing software were used to analyze the quantitative data and draw up tables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### In the Meanders of A 'Peaceful Coexistence' Over the Use of the Dam's Water Resources

The categories of stakeholders exploiting the dam's have long lived on good terms when it comes to sharing the water. In fact, the dam itself, although initially intended to supply drinking water needs to the town of Koudougou, has seen a massive rush of users towards its banks for some time. The legitimacy of the uses is being questioned among all the categories of users. Nevertheless, the different uses made by each user are not being called into question, as everyone benefits from the dam's resources.

#### *The Legitimacy of Water Uses According to the Categories of Dam Users*

The multiplicity of the dam's water users gave rise to questions within the legitimacy of the user categories. Some claim their exclusive exploitation rights, while others just need access to water.

Normally, the National Office of Water and Sanitation (NOWS) was designated by law as the legitimate operator of the dam. Over time, however, other demands for water have been added. These include off-season crops such as market gardening, followed by livestock farming, fishing

and domestic uses. Despite this, the Nows sees itself as an ordinary user like any other. This allows it to be on good terms with other users. In fact, the Nows does not rely solely on the Salbisgo dam to supply water to the town of Koudougou ; it also relies to a large extent on the River Mouhoun. For example, during the dry season, the Nows is no longer able to draw water from the dam of Salbisgo. Pumping practically stops in mid-March. Meanwhile, the vast majority of agricultural users, particularly market gardeners, use the water to irrigate their plots.

In addition, although the Nows is legitimately recognized as using the dam's water, it has no power to oust other users who draw water from it. It is not the Nows's prerogative to operate the water body; nor does it seek to do so. The only occasions when the Nows can question the other users of the dam is when their practices tend to pollute the water of the dam or to damage the dam, since this same water is used to ensure the water supply of the town of Koudougou.

### ***Relations Among the Different Categories of Users of the Dam's Water***

The change in use of the hydraulic structures is linked to the unofficial withdrawal of the State from the management of hydraulic structures. In practice, this disengagement has resulted in the transfer of management skills to local populations, who are inclined to become autonomous despite their limited experience in this management task.

The Nows in Koudougou plays the dual role of user-payer and 'sensitiser' on how the dam should be used to ensure its long-term existence. Similarly, the fishermen say they are on good terms with the market gardeners. A fisherman at Salbisgo-Itaoré said: 'There's a mutual comprehension between us and the gardeners; when you're fishing, you can drop by a garden to say hello. We can exchange some tomatoes, with 2 carps. He'll go and cook his sauce ; you'll go and cook yours too<sup>1</sup>'. The other users, i.e. the farmers and brickmakers, express the relationships they have with the other users.

Agricultural users, known as market gardeners, are the category of users who do not maintain the good relations (24.52%) with other categories of users. They sometimes have conflictual relations with other users. They engage very few dialogues (8.09%) with them in the event of conflict (4.76%). The few peaceful relations (5.95%) they have with other categories of users, namely brickmakers, livestock farmers and fishermen, are often overlooked because of the distance between their workplaces. Bricklayers, stated that they had few relations (13.81%) with the other categories of users, compared with fishermen (11.42%) and livestock farmers (9.04%), who had even fewer. As far as dialogue to resolve emerging conflicts is concerned, fishermen are among the other two users groups, i.e. those

who do not take the initiative, i.e. bricklayers and livestock farmers. However, in terms of good relations among users, livestock farmers are the ones maintaining themselves out of the three user groups, except the market gardeners.

In fact, market gardeners occupy an important place on the dam because of their numbers. They are scattered around the dam, with their individual way of doing things. They are virtually permanent users of the dam, unlike other categories of users such as livestock farmers, brick-makers and fishermen. The latter three are intermittently present on the dam. This could explain the virtual absence of relations with the market gardeners. Most of the fishermen work with other fishermen and sometimes with market gardeners from neighboring localities or those far from the Salbisgo dam. Déjo puts it this way: 'If they come, we work together, and they leave. There are no worries. There are people from Koudougou who work with us here, there's no argument'<sup>2</sup>.

In terms of good relations, users at Salbisgo-Itaoré have more good relations with other categories of users than those at Salbisgo-Dapoya. This could be explained by the almost permanent availability of water resources in the downstream part of the dam, at Salbisgo-Itaoré. In addition, the cooperative organization is highly developed there, which is an asset for consolidating links among users and favorizing social cohesion.

Social cohesion, the basis of good relations among the stakeholders around the dam, is currently perceptible but could well be eroded by some latent tensions among users over the use of the dam's water resources. The users of Salbisgo-Itaoré face tensions sometimes due to the lack of dialogue among users. 30.24% of users at Salbisgo-Dapoya say they have no relations with others, compared with 28.57% at Salbisgo-Itaoré.

68% of migrants said they had no relations with other users, compared with 56% of locals. This significant difference could be explained by the isolation of migrant users in their market garden plots. They build makeshift camps in which they stay in order to keep an eye on their plots.

23% of migrants say they have no dialogue with others, compared with 17% of native users. As dialogue is a means of preventing or resolving conflict, non-natives are not the most 'gifted' in this exercise. But overall, less than half of both native and non-native users are reluctant to enter into any kind of dialogue with others.

15% of native users have conflictual relations with others, compared with 4% of non-native users. This is relatively low and could justify the low level of conflict over water use. A few isolated cases make it possible to qualify this low rate of respondents confronted with conflicts over the use of water from the dam.

<sup>1</sup>Interview with Déjo, a fisherman at Salbisgo-Itaoré, November 2022.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Déjo, a fisherman at Salbisgo-Itaoré, November 2022.



Finally, as far as good relations are concerned, 12% of native users think they have them, compared with only 5% of non-native users. The social climate already prevailing among the indigenous users can be the main reason. The stability of the social relations that already prevailed influenced their answers to this question. Despite this ‘peaceful coexistence’ among users, there is competition within the different activities practised on the banks of the dam.

### Competition Within Activities on the Banks of the Dam

Competition for access to water from the dam leads to competition within different activities. This competition can be seen above all in water abstraction. One farmer commented:

‘Well, that’s up to each individual. In any case, they earn more than we do: those who do the gardening. For them, it’s three (03) months, it’s over. But we’re here. A chicken like that can’t do anything for three (03) months’. (Interview with Gopacelo, a farmer in Salbisgo-Itaoré, November 2022).

Market gardeners are the main beneficiaries of the dam in terms of the profitability of their activity. In just a few months, they find themselves with large sums of money. Other categories of users, such as livestock farmers, do not benefit from the dam as much as they would like.

Today, the Nows has no major competitor when it comes to drawing water from the dam. But there used to be a few companies that competed with them:

*‘It’s true that Faso-Fani previously used to draw water, and SONABEL also used it when they had their power station, they used raw water to cool the transformers. FASO-FANI also used it because they had a large field where the water came in to cool the machines. There was the Goundi center, which had students for agricultural and other tests; they too used raw water, but they no longer do. It’s now closed. When I arrived in 2014, 2015, 2016, they drilled a borehole there. [SONABEL no longer uses it. Nor does SOFITEX]. (Interview with Omigor, a manager at Nows in Koudougou, November 2022).*

Before the Nows became a major operator of the Salbisgo dam, it faced competition from several companies, including FASO FANI, SONABEL and SOFITEX. These companies used the water to cool their equipment. SONABEL could not use it to produce electricity because the flow is not strong enough to turn hydraulic turbines. Today, some of these companies have disappeared and no longer use the water from the dam. Only the Nows uses it to supply water to the town of Koudougou. Omigor adds

“that the Nows doesn’t ‘bother’ the other users, we’re right on the dyke. Those at the bottom, I can say, are the ones competing with us, but we manage to get along<sup>3</sup>”

The Nows, as an autonomous state structure, does not compete with other categories of users for permanent access to the dam’s water. The other categories of users, especially fishermen, sometimes face physical constraints in accessing the dam site due to the practices of market gardeners and brick makers. They sometimes enter into dialogue with them or even accuse them head-on of dam site degradation:

‘Those who make the canals are often told. Because today, if you want to go into the water there, you have problems. You’ll come across a canal there, and if you’re not a strong, you can’t get out, you’re dead.’ (Interview with Déjo, a fisherman in Salbisgo-Itaoré, November 2022).

The canals dug in a scattered fashion by the market gardeners on the edge of the dam are the cause of accidents because the rainwater that has covered them gives passers-by no visibility to avoid them. This is why the fishermen, who are obliged to enter the water to fish, are complaining to the authorities in charge of the dam that the digging of irrigation channels and the holes dug by brick makers for their activity should be systematically stopped. This creates a kind of competition in digging irrigation canals. Badoubo points out that:

*‘There are farmers who are a long way from water. So they dig irrigation canals. There’s a bit of competition, with everyone willing to get to the water by the shortest route. So there are often these rivalries. But to a lesser extent. Otherwise, it’s not very noticeable.’ (Interview with Badoubo, a manager at Ramongo town hall, November 2022).*

Competition in the digging of irrigation canals is an obstacle to the long-term survival of the dam due to silting. The phenomenon, although imperceptible, does not leave the people in charge of the dam indifferent. The impressive sinuosity of the irrigation canals has completely altered the landscape of the dam in such a way that the access roads to the market garden plots are virtually non-existent, as the farmers are installed in an anarchic fashion. One farmer gave a meaningful explanation for the competition among farm users: ‘‘Yes, there is competition, everyone works to become popular<sup>4</sup>’’. Agricultural users, driven by the desire to become ‘popular’, are obsessed with results to the detriment of the dam’s sustainability. On the one hand, this ‘competitive frenzy’ to see who can produce better than the other could be a kind of healthy emulation. But, on the other hand, it is detrimental not only to the dam but also to the cohesion among the users themselves, increasing the desire to be the best producer.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Omigor, a manager at Nows in Koudougou, November 2022.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Kobikana, head of an agricultural cooperative in Salbisgo-Itaoré, November 2022.

The sedentary nature of non-native agricultural users is also a factor that exacerbates competition for the dam’s water resources:

*‘In any case, they [the migrants] start next door from the outset and then a few times later, they move out. They build their small houses next to the water, they sleep there, cook there and eat there.’ (Interview with Gopacelo, a breeder in Salbisgo-Itaoré, November 2022).*

The installation of non-native users on the banks of the dam has given rise to a kind of competition, which will subsequently lead native users to adopt the migrants’ production methods. But they are unable to do so:

*‘Well, those from Ouaga don’t fence off their plots, they sleep over there; in the morning, at noon, in the evening, they’re over there. No animal can come and spoil their crops. But our people here want to imitate them, but they can’t. You go and make a garden, you don’t fence it in, you can do a week’s work, but you’re not high up there. If someone says that your uncle has died or that your son-in-law is dead, you’ll need to go there. Otherwise, we used to cut off the prickles, then fence them in. Now that the people from Ouaga have come, they don’t fence.’ (Interview with Bijo, an authority in Salbisgo-Itaoré, November 2022).*

Competition in production methods inevitably has consequences for the structure and is a potential source of conflicts among users. The local people are not yet familiar with the appropriate methods of production on the banks of the dam. The use of the same rudimentary

production techniques does not allow high production. The non-attendance of local users on the plots exposed them to the invasion of roaming animals. Sometimes, this causes tensions among these users and the owners of the animals, who argue that market gardening plots must be fenced off to avoid animals’ invasion. This situation sometimes leads to tensions among the protagonists, which nevertheless are solved very quickly.

Furthermore, because each user uses the water from the dam, it is difficult to observe the competition that takes place in the use of the water resource. As production methods are not the same on market garden plots, behaviour differs according to the objectives sought by each user installed on the dam. However, financial reasons lead some to ‘exaggerate’ their ways of using the dam by taking huge quantities of water resources more than they need. The excess of water is released back into nature with no possibility of being recovered for other uses. When asked if there are any other users who hinder their activity or prevent them from carrying it out, one fisherman said outright : “[...] if it’s not those who dig the canals who can hinder our activities. Otherwise, no one can stop us from fishing”<sup>5</sup>. These words reveal the prevailing climate among water users. The market gardeners who want to carry out their activities are encroaching on the activities of other users, such as the fishermen who move from one part of the dam to another.

Users’ opinions differ as to the existence of competition within their activities on the banks of the dam (see Table1).

**Table 1.** Competition for water resources

	Agriculture	Brickworks	Livestock	Fishing
Competition	32 (7.61%)	10 (2.38%)	15 (3.57%)	8 (1.90%)
No competition	150 (35.71%)	69 (16.43%)	64 (15.23%)	72 (17.14%)

Source: Field Surveys, December 2022.

The data shows that the proportion of dam water users facing competition is relatively low compared to those who are not in competition. 7.61% of market gardeners thought they were in competition, compared with 35.71% who said they were not. Brickmakers represent 2.38% who think they are in competition, while 16.43% do not feel that their activity is in competition with other activities in the use of the dam’s water resources. 3.57% of livestock farmers said they were in a competitive situation, but 15.23% said they were not. As for fishermen, 1.9% said they were in competition with other activities on the banks of the dam, while 17.14% said they were not.

It should also be noted that competition for water from the dam is characterized by excessive use leading to the dam drying up in the dry season. This drying up leads to the early withdrawal of market gardeners from their plots.

Similarly, livestock farmers use other sources of water to water their animals. Fishermen, for their part, are being forced to give up their activity because the availability of water resources has a major impact on this activity. Brick-makers very often resign themselves to abandoning the site for wetlands likely to contribute to the fabrication of bricks. Users also perceive the consequences of their activities on the dam differently.

**Perception of The Impact of Activities on the Dam’s Water Resources**

Activities on the banks of the dam have an impact on the structure. These impacts are not perceived in the same way by all users. To varying degrees, users believe that their activities have little or no impact on the long-term existence of the dam (see Table 2).

<sup>5</sup>Interview with Phibi, a fisherman in Salbisgo-Itaoré, November 2022.

**Table 2.** Perception of the impact of activities on the dam's water resources by user category

Categories of users	Agriculture	Brickworks	Livestock	Fishing
Incidence	73 (17.38%)	38 (9.04%)	38 (9.04%)	31 (7.38%)
No impact	25 (5.95%)	10 (2.38%)	12 (2.85%)	14 (3.33%)

Source: Field Surveys, December 2022.

The data in the table above show that, overall, the users do not think that their activities have an impact on the dam's water resources. In fact, 17.38% of market gardeners thought that market gardening had no impact on the dam, compared with 5.95% who thought the opposite. In terms of the importance of the impact on the dam's water resources, 2.38% of market gardeners and 9.28% of others respectively thought that market gardening had no importance and little importance on the sustainability of the dam. Only 7.38% and 0.95% of other market gardeners felt that their activity had an impact on the structure. Brickmakers represented 5.23% who thought that their activity had no importance in terms of impact on the dam's water resources. And 1.19% of them believe that their activity has a significant or even very significant impact (0.71%) on the dam. As for livestock farmers, 3.09% felt that their activity had no significant impact on the dam, compared with 2.85% who felt that the activity could contribute to damaging the hydraulic structure. Finally, it emerged from the surveys that 1.19% of fishermen said that their activity had little or no impact on the dam's water resources, compared with 3.80% who saw it as a major source of damage to the dam.

Clearly, a large number of users do not recognise that their activities can have an impact on the sustainability of the dam and its water resources. This situation could well be explained by the users' ignorance of the impact of their practices on the sustainability of the dam:

*"African operating method requires a great deal of awareness-raising, [...] raise awareness [...], so that people understand the ins and outs of dam misuse. I once told the market gardeners that when they're farming, there are times when the dam runs out of water, and if you don't try to make it sustainable, there will be times when the dam bed will be arable land. They know that the dam is deteriorating as it goes along. Some do it out of ignorance, others because they're looking for their bread. You tell him to stop. He'll tell you, if I leave it like that, what am I going to do"* (Interview with Omigor, a manager at Nows in Koudougou, November 2022).

*"People do it on purpose, even though they know what they should and shouldn't do on the dam. Others do it out of provocation; they wait for the reaction of the councillor or the chairman of the CVD so that they can start a conflict"*. (Interview with Migo, an authority in Salbisgo-Itaoré, November 2022).

The behaviour of the stakeholders around the dam on the issue of water use is highly complex. While some are aware of their practices, others are unaware of the harmful nature of theirs on the dam and its long-term preservation. Those who are aware of this limit certain practices as much as possible, such as digging irrigation canals. Those who are unaware of the impact of their practices perpetuate them. A third category of users are those who despite their awareness of the adverse effects of certain practices on the sustainability of the dam, nevertheless, turn a deaf ear, if their objectives are met: to produce and make a profit no matter what the consequences can be. This can also be attributed to a lack of production factors or irrigation methods that respect the environmental sustainability of the hydraulic structure. Considering these categories of users, it should be noted that, despite the numerous awareness raising campaigns, some users continue to engage in certain prohibited practices in the vicinity of the dam. This clearly demonstrates a certain contempt for standards, or even their systematic rejection because they are in contradiction with the objectives and logic pursued by these players. An authority in Salbisgo-Dapoya also mentioned that: "They do it consciously, with full knowledge of the facts. They think that by moving away, they will spend more money and effort on their activities. Because the machine, the pipes, require resources, but if they are close to the dam, it's more advantageous for them. They see and they know that the dam is silting up, but the lack of resources means that they don't want to move away. Otherwise, they are aware of the state of the dam". This really shows that users are aware of their practices on the dam, but due to a lack of financial resources, some are resigned to perpetuating these practices.

The same observation was made by a local political authority, who said:

*"They know what they're doing isn't right, but they'll tell you they have no choice. The big problem is that they don't think about future generations. If you think that future generations are going to suffer because of you, you need to change your mentality. Just compare your personal profit to that of the children in the future. Not everyone is going to work in an office, everyone is looking out for themselves"*. (Interview with Bijo, an authority in Salbisgo-Itaoré, November 2022).

Many users are aware of the impact of their practices on the dam. Despite awareness campaigns, "they listen, they



are aware, but they tell themselves they have nowhere else to go. They know it's no good, but where are they going to go? '<sup>1</sup>

The continuation of practices is also a major bottleneck :

*' Well, I'm not just going to take Salbisgo. When you talk to the local people about the dams I've visited, the reasons they give are that when you build a dam on the downstream side, you have to have a facility. But if you don't have that, how are people going to settle ? In a haphazard way. '* (Interview with Hadou, a RDWCW agent, November 2022).

The apparent cause of the anarchic settlement on the banks of the dam, with all its consequences, is the lack of areas adapted to off-season crops downstream. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to exclude a user from his market garden plot while no alternative is offered. As a reminder, many of them earn their living from market gardening and other related activities using the dam as their main source of water. In this respect, it is not surprising to note that all agricultural practices have a perverse effect, particularly its filling with weakened soils. Normally, the land upstream of the dam should not be farmed. The situation persists not only because people have settled on the banks upstream of the dam, but also because there are no modern farming areas.

Users cannot yet ensure that occupancy standards around the dam are respected. This perpetuation of practices is not due to a 'lack of will' on the part of users.

## DISCUSSION

The coexistence of water uses raises the question of the legitimacy of users in the exploitation of water resources. Nevertheless, there are peaceful relations among some of the users of the dam of Salbisgo. This does not hide the fact that there is a great deal of competition over the use and sharing of the dam's water. It should be recognized that in Saga, Niger, there are local social arrangements for the management and use of water resources, and this helps to maintain pre-existing social ties over the long term. Indeed, the market gardeners, who, through their kinship relations with the rice growers considered to be the only legitimate users of the water from the schemes, also manage to gain access to the water resource to facilitate their production (C. Baron & al., 2008, p. 11). The current operating dynamics of the dam of Salbisgo point to conflicts of use and complex conflictual relationships. In addition, the irrigated system in the province of El Hajeb in Morocco is also punctuated by conflictual dynamics that have taken place over a fairly long period of time, with complex and sometimes unclear interplay among actors. This community presents a social construct that is not yet immutable, i.e. that changes according to the interests of the stakeholders in force, as well as the community references

at work, i.e. social, territorial, cultural and historical. These references and the 'differential' mobilisation of social groups in conflict situations illustrate the many social recompositions experienced by the Aït Idir communities of irrigators. This also illustrates the weakening of the social and territorial roots of this community following the exogenous interventions of the Makhzen, the Protectorate and the Moroccan state (A. Hmouri & al., 2017, p. 91). The multi-use of water through sometimes competing activities such as agriculture, livestock farming and fishing is a real brake on the sustainability of irrigated systems and the environment (F. Brondeau, 2009, p. 5).

## CONCLUSION

All in all, the behaviour of the categories of users around the dam generates competition for access to water. As each stakeholder is driven by the pursuit of its own interests, this inevitably results in some tensions in the use of the resource. In fact, as long as the dam was operated by a single category of user, there was not enough competition for water. However, with the increase in users' water needs and the scarcity of resources due to worsening climatic conditions, water points such as dams are becoming coveted areas due to the availability of water and the opportunities offered in terms of production by these hydraulic structures. At the Salbisgo dam, there is a profusion of users practicing different activities, with conflicting objectives and interests. Despite this, the users maintain good relations with each other. The different categories of users perceive, to varying degrees, the competition that exists around the dam. On the whole, users do not feel that their activities have any impact on the structure. But in reality, a closer look observation of the practices proves the perverse effects of the behaviour of the different categories of users exploiting the dam's water. From peaceful relations at the outset, we are tending towards increasingly conflictual relations due to the unequal use of the resource and the monopolistic situations observed among certain categories of users. These conflictual relationships pave the way for the possibility of conflicts of all kinds in the use of the dam's water resources. These latent conflicts for some and vehement for others, have very different causes and consequences. The types of conflicts observed depend largely on the relationships that the users have with each other.

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