

# LOCAL GOVERNANCE OF HYDRAULIC WORKS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BANIKOARA IN NORTHERN BENIN

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## **Abstract:**

*The problem of drinking water has been a concern for governments, international institutions and scientific researchers for several decades. In Benin, the advent of decentralization has led to a new governance of water with new logics around hydraulic structures. However, local governance of the water sector was implemented more than a decade ago and various strategies have been initiated to ensure its effectiveness. However, this mode of governance continues to show many limitations. This research highlights these dysfunctions and their root causes. The methodology adopted to conduct this research is qualitative in nature. A few techniques were used to collect data, in particular: documentary research, interview, observation. The tools used to collect the data are the reading sheet, the interview guide, and the observation grid, respectively. Qualitative data has undergone content analysis. The result is the lethargy observed in the process of transferring skills and the many cases of circumvention in various forms of local management standards such as, for example, the community's non-adherence to the water sales standard, clientelism. Regarding their causes, the lethargy in the transfer of skills is explained by a power conflict and the community's non-adherence to certain principles of management of the works. This creates the gap that there is between these principles and the values of the company being studied.*

**Key Words:** Local water governance, Hydraulic works, strategies, actors.

## **1. INTRODUCTION:**

Water is therefore a multifunctional and multidimensional natural resource and the basis of all life. "Everyone needs water and there is no economic activity that does not depend on it in one way or another" (Dieng, 2011: 1). Water, also known as blue gold, is a commodity, like air, considered essential to human life. Access to this resource still poses enormous challenges in many parts of the world. (Briand and Lemaître, 2004: 98). However, according to Bartram (2012) and Payen (2011), around 50% of the world's population would actually have access to safe water, 25% would have access to water of questionable quality and 25% would still use water dangerous water. It is in sub-Saharan Africa that the rate of access to drinking water is the lowest in the world; 46% of the rural population has access to drinking water (UNICEF, WHO, 2008). South of the Sahara, around 300 million people do not have access to drinking water, more than a third of the continent's population. (Yonkeu, 2012). We therefore deduce that Africa is facing an immense "water stress". This can be explained by a severe water shortage which weighs on a large part of the population. In Benin, the phenomenon of lack of drinking water is a major problem faced by residents, especially in rural areas. (INSAE, 2007). In order to remedy this state of affairs, and to facilitate access to drinking water for all, Benin, with the support of NGOs and technical and financial partners, has had hydraulic structures installed in rural areas. However, according to the water and sanitation sector review, the service rate in rural areas rose from 44% in 2006 to 63.7% in 2012. The current service rate in urban areas is 63.4% while the ambitions included in the poverty reduction strategy for 2015 are 69% for rural areas and 75% for urban areas. However, there are disparities from one department to another in rural areas. (DNSP / MSP, 2014). Benin has 29,165 structures installed, of which 25,749 are functional, which is equivalent to an equipment rate of 76.6% and the service rate to 67.6%. Banikoara commune has 509 structures, 49 of which are defective out of a total need estimated at 1048 structures. Despite the efforts made to provide drinking water coverage in Benin and in the commune of Banikoara in particular, there is a lack of sufficient number of structures in certain areas. Also, a high rate of faulty hydraulic structures is recorded despite the high need for drinking water. The municipality therefore seems to be experiencing difficulties in the field of supply and distribution of drinking water. It is with a view to analyzing the explanatory factors linked to the difficulties of access to drinking water and the high rate of defective hydraulic structures that this research concerns the "governance of hydraulic structures in the municipality of Banikoara."

## 2. STATE OF THE PROBLEM:

Access to drinking water for all is essential through the installation and operation of hydraulic structures. The political authorities in order to facilitate access to drinking water to its population have decided to achieve the objectives set by the international community meeting in 1977 in Mar Del Plata in Argentina, that of "ensuring the entire population access to drinking water and sanitation services in order to reduce water-borne diseases. (WHO, 1990). In order to achieve these objectives, the State of Benin has established a water policy in the water sector that is reflected in various reference documents including: the national strategy for the management of water resources in the Benin (1997); adherence to the "Ouagadougou Declaration" (March 1998); adherence to the Millennium Development Goals; the conclusions of the 1st national water forum (2001); the draft national strategic document for the integrated management of wetlands in Benin and finally, the Government's 2nd Action Program (PAGII, 2001-2006) (African Development Fund, 2004). These various concrete actions confirm Benin's desire to make access to drinking water a priority in its development strategy. However, Benin has 29,165 structures installed, of which 25,749 are functional. The Alibori department, which is a landlocked area, has 2,780 hydraulic structures installed, of which 2,462 are functional (BDI / DG-Eau, 2015).

The municipality of Banikoara, for its part, has 509 structures out of a total need estimated at 1048 structures. (DG-Eau, 2017). These statistics confirm the achievement achieved in the water sector. However, this feat is not flawless because a large number of defective and therefore non-functional books have been recorded. This state of affairs is explained by the lack of maintenance of the structures installed. In order to guarantee better access to drinking water for all, with the advent of decentralization, the mode of governance has shifted from community management to delegated management. This therefore confers powers on the municipalities in order to allow them to fully exercise the project management in the field of the supply and distribution of drinking water on their territory according to article 83 of law 97-029. But it is clear at all levels that these are only theoretical attributions that suffer from consistent application. From the advent of decentralization to this day, the municipalities do not yet play the role conferred on them by the texts on decentralization. This situation can be seen in the persistence of difficult access to drinking water in the communities. On the one hand, the coverage of water needs has remained low, and on the other hand, the community management of the works is weak. In short, this means that nowadays, the reforms proposed by decentralization in the village water supply sub-sector are struggling to be really implemented. The difficulties or blocking factors are manifested by a lethargy in the transfer of competences on the one hand and by the rejection of the new standards resulting from the implementation of decentralization on the other hand. Faced with these findings, it is necessary to look for the difficulties of implementing the principles of decentralization in the water sector. This study on the "management of hydraulic structures in the municipality of Banikoara" attempts to answer this question. Objectives and hypotheses have been formulated in order to elucidate the first question to which this research attempts to answer. The general objective of this research is to analyze the causes of the difficulties in implementing decentralization reforms in the governance of hydraulic works in the municipality of Banikoara.

## 3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH:

To achieve the objectives, the research was based on a qualitative approach. For this reason, a few techniques followed by adequate tools made it possible to collect the data.

### 3.1 Techniques and tools for data collection

These are documentary research, interview and observation. The documentary research made it possible to know the various works that have been carried out on the subject and also to have useful information that could facilitate the construction of the object. Therefore, the tool that enabled this is the reading grid. Maintenance, for its part, is a technique which has made it possible to collect information relating to the modes of management of hydraulic structures according to the social standards of the study environment, which therefore made it possible to highlight the local management of structures against a background of circumvention of the regulatory framework established by decentralization. A tool was designed, namely the interview guide, which made it possible to collect the data. Finally, observation, being the third technique, made it possible to better understand a certain number of situations, so as to understand the behavior of individuals in their living environment. Thus, the observation grid being the tool accompanying this technique has made it possible to observe the state of functionality of hydraulic structures, the frequentation of users at water points, the activities developed around these points of water.

### 3.2 Sampling

The choice of respondents was made on the basis of two types of sampling: snowball sampling and reasoned choice. Being in a qualitative research, the non-probabilistic technique was used. A total of 88 respondents were reached before the saturation effect was reached, which was therefore the criterion which fixed the size of the sample. The sampling is made up of the different actors mentioned above. It was necessary to interview them because they are key people who intervene in the local governance of hydraulic works. The choice of the localities in which the surveys took

place was a reasoned choice. Four localities were chosen namely Sompérékou, Goumori, Ouinet and Toura. The first two localities are those which recorded a large number of broken down hydraulic structures. While the last two are those which recorded a low rate of failure.

### 3.3 Data processing and analysis

The recorded interviews were first used to make a transcription. The qualitative data was carefully listened to and transcribed. The quality of the transcribed data determines the reliability and validity of the interview. Thus, the transcription made it possible to obtain a database which was reinforced by the report of the observations made from the various notes taken. Then, a manual count was done to identify areas of interest. Word software was used for this purpose.

## 4. Data analysis:

### 4.1. Dysfunctions in the process of implementing the principles of decentralization in the governance of hydraulic structures

- Brief review of the powers to be transferred to the municipalities within the framework of decentralization

With the advent of decentralization, a new legal system was defined to organize the village water sector. We have in fact moved to a governance that makes local communities more responsible, the participatory approach. Law 97-029 of January 15, 1999 on the organization of municipalities in the Republic of Benin defines the attributes of said municipalities in this area. It stipulates that, "the municipality is the contracting authority in the field of the supply and distribution of drinking water on its territory in compliance with the sector strategy, regulations and national standards in force". It specifies in particular that:

- the municipality is in charge of the construction of hydraulic infrastructures (article 90);
- the municipality is in charge of the supply and distribution of drinking water (article 93);
- the municipality exercises its powers in accordance with sector strategies (article 108).

From these provisions, we observe a strong empowerment of local communities. Local authorities are now responsible for identifying needs, programming and installing structures. The State therefore supports them by providing them with the necessary resources for this work. The municipalities are also fully responsible for the governance of works on their territory and they do so in harmony with the regulatory framework defined by the State. According to said legal framework, simple works are delegated to an individual. But in the case of complex structures (Ministry of Energy and Water, 2008), the municipality can delegate the operation of its village water supply systems (AEV) to a farmer or to a consumer association according to four scenarios:

- the farmer's contract;
- the tripartite contract;
- the production - distribution contract;
- the consumer association contract.

In the case of the municipality of Banikoara, the local management method in force for complex structures is the farmer's contract. In this system, in fact, the municipality enters into a contract with the manager (a farmer in the case of a complex structure and a delegatee in the case of a simple structure). in the administration of works in its territory and defines the mode of management, ensures or supervises the choice of actors to be involved in the process (the delegates or farmers) without referring to the State in any of these stages.

But, these reforms which, nowadays, should improve the previous provisions seem to be in crisis of operationalization.

Most of the powers to be transferred continue to be disputed and shared between the municipalities and the state representation, DG-Eau. This situation is illustrated through two examples, namely the tutoring of the DG-Eau in the construction process of the structures and the interference of state actors in the local management of the structures. These two situations prove the non-application of decentralization reforms in the village water supply sector in Banikoara; this therefore calls into question the real autonomy of the municipality.

- Decentralized state: too many prerogatives and little competence

The municipality of Banikoara, for the realization of its works, benefits from the support of DG-Eau through the decentralized water service. The latter provides the municipality with qualified personnel as well as the necessary equipment for the construction of hydraulic structures. Thus, the town hall proceeds to the construction of the works and then to the supply of water to its population as the texts stipulate. The decentralized hydraulics service is required to play its role of citizen watch by providing its expertise to the town hall in carrying out the works. Analysis of the speeches collected reveals that DG-Eau, through the decentralized hydraulic service, goes beyond the tasks conferred

on it by the texts by exercising together with the town hall the tasks that are its own. Thus, he is involved in the construction of works, the choice of delegates and even in the management of the works. Suddenly, it arrogates to itself the right of supervision and even of design. It remains present in the construction process of structures. The DG-Eau demands to be kept informed of all projects for the installation of works as can be detected in the following declaration:

*"When the town hall wants to carry out a work, it sends us the report; now we are correcting and making proposals to her, that is, telling her what she should do. She, in turn, takes this into account when carrying out the work. This concerns the entire chain of the procedure for carrying out a structure according to the standards set by the DG-Eau "(E1B, 2016).*

However, one of the drawbacks of this procedure is the lengthening and complexity of this process of carrying out the work. There is therefore a refusal by these state actors to leave the hand free to the municipal authorities. They set themselves up as their guardian, imposing procedures on them in water infrastructure construction projects. They are even present in the programming, the phase of identifying needs although they are not on the ground.

The construction of drinking water supply structures still requires close collaboration between the municipality and the Water Department. In reality, the exercise of the municipal Project Owner (MO) in Drinking Water Adduction (AEP) is being done gradually and the decentralized technical services of the State at the departmental level (Water Services) still ensure a enjoy the game. This passage illustrates the close collaboration between the municipalities and the State through the decentralized hydraulic service: *"The consulting service supports us in carrying out the works. The water service gives us ideas on what to do from the submission of files to the completion of the works "(E2B, 2016).*

There is a certain questioning of the prerogatives of the municipality as defined by the rules of decentralization because the municipality fully ensures, without having recourse to anyone, the establishment and construction of the works. The state always remains the master of the game. This can be seen in the various actions it takes. The decentralized hydraulic service has competent and qualified human resources who support the town hall in the construction process. As the town hall is lacking in human resources, it is required to seek the support of the decentralized service whenever it proceeds with the construction of hydraulic structures. Thus, the agents of the decentralized service use their power to pass their decision. All this shows that it is the DG-Eau that governs the decision-making process through the actions of the decentralized hydraulic service in Alibori. This is understood through the following:

*"If I take the department of Alibori, the municipalities do not yet have the qualified human resources to carry out the works. So here in hydraulics, we have hydraulic engineers, geophysical engineers, hydrogeologists. We have all these technicians who can judge a study report made by the technical service of the town hall and who can qualify the completion of the works. But today, in the municipalities, we do not yet have this quality of staff. It is true that services exist in the municipalities, but the human resource that could revitalize the sector does not exist. " (Eki, 2016).*

All this shows that it is the DG-Eau that governs the decision-making process through the actions of the decentralized hydraulic service in Alibori.

➤ Interference of state actors in the local governance of structures

Another form of bypassing the regulatory mechanism instituted by decentralization in the village water supply sub-sector concerns the interference of state actors in the local management of hydraulic structures. Local governance concerns in fact the administration of works, their modes of operation; their monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the actors who are responsible for ensuring said administration. This management should it be recalled, should fall to the municipalities. In short, this means that we should see an absence of the State in these processes as in that of the construction of works.

However, in reality, in Banikoara, such accountability is far from operational. Two constitutive elements of the local governance of structures illustrate this state of affairs well. The first step is the choice of delegates and secondly the monitoring and evaluation of the management of local delegates.

Speaking of the issue of the choice of delegates, we actually notice a flagrant intrusion of DG-Eau in the process. The analysis of the speeches collected from the local authorities as well as the agents of the decentralized water service also reveals their assistance in the process of choosing the delegates. According to article 93, the municipality is responsible for the supply and distribution of drinking water. For this reason, it delegates the operation of the structure to a farmer whom it retains after studying the file. Testimonies collected from local authorities revealed that state representatives are present at all stages of the process so that they sometimes manage to significantly influence the choice of delegates. They in fact use the financial power and the technical competence of which they have the monopoly to make necessary such a collaboration breaking with any desire of respect for the legal framework established within the framework of decentralization.

The second fact which illustrates the interference of the State in the local management of the structures lies in the work of monitoring and evaluating the management of those responsible for the hydraulic infrastructures. Indeed, this work is justified by the need to ensure efficient management guaranteeing "the good health" of the infrastructures

and by extension the sustainability of the water service. As such, it automatically reverts to the municipality to which the contracting authority is recognized and notified earlier.

But in the information collected, it was noted that we are once again far from this ideal. It should be recognized that the work of monitoring and evaluating the structures provides opportunities for descent into the field. The agents of the decentralized hydraulic service pursue their interests more than the efficiency of work. This interest is nothing other than the mission bonuses they receive outside of their respective salaries. Having this as a gain that is beneficial to them, it has therefore been difficult for them to cede this competence which they continue to exercise to the great dismay of local elected officials. The latter complain about it regularly, as we can read in the comments below: "*The monitoring and evaluation of the management of the local delegates has been torn from us by the water DG, it is they who do it*" (E2B).

Once again, it is the financial power and the quality of human resources that explain this influence of the decentralized state structures over those decentralized in the commune of Banikoara. In short, the local governance of hydraulic infrastructures, recognized by the municipalities as a prerogative, is in fact today a competence denied to the local authorities in Banikoara. There are many incursions by state actors into the process. But, this is only the first level of getting around desired reforms. The same problem arises in the local governance of works. We will expose its aspects in the lines that follow.

#### **4.2 Local governance of works against a background of bypassing the regulatory framework established by decentralization**

##### ➤ Clientelism in the choice of delegates

By virtue of the law n° 2001-07 of May 9, 2001 relating to the control of public works, the municipality ensures the public control of works of water works. It is she who decides on the construction of the water works, has them carried out on her own behalf and is the owner. It also has the right to retain a delegatee according to the criteria adopted to manage the works. This competence is not fully ensured by the municipality of Banikoara. It is carried out in concert with the decentralized service which continues to give its approval in the process of choosing delegates. Thus, it was noted that in Banikoara respecting the principle of the choice of the delegatee proved difficult in many cases. The choice of delegates is therefore often subject to nepotism. Local actors, together with DG-Eau, which has always taken on the role of monitoring and evaluating the activities carried out, place their charges. The two actors in this specific case cover each other, DG-Eau helping local elected officials to place those they want and vice versa. In fact, the analysis of the speeches collected reveals that the phenomenon is favored by the fact that, taking into account the advantages of the market to be gained from the town hall, most of the applicants offer bribes (present in kind or in cash) in the goal of obtaining the market so that the 'highest bidder' wins the market at the expense of the most deserving. This bribe is considered a gift offered, which is actually a gateway to requesting a favor from the authority. This allows you to prepare the ground beforehand and gain the esteem of the authority in order to benefit from its good graces. This marks submission to authority which in return is hoped for consideration and benevolence. Thus, the selection of the farmer or the delegatee does not take into account his managerial skills but rather the bribe involved. During the field surveys, complaints were recorded on this subject as shown in the example below after:

*"When the town hall launches its call for tenders, many of us apply and when you don't know anyone, your file doesn't go through. Knowing that, you have to give them a few things sometimes it's money or sometimes a gift in kind and even after that you have to look to the influential people. Talk to them and make them a promise by telling them this: if you give me the deal, I will pay you 300,000 francs each year into your account for your personal interview "(E5T, 2016).*

Apart from the bribes observed in the choice of manager, there is the political patronage that some local authorities encourage in order to widen their circle. Municipal authorities sometimes prefer to give the contract to an applicant with whom they are members of the same political party. They thus enlarge their circle and practically also have a hand in all the development activities of the municipality. It is also another source of income for them. That is, share the money that the town hall should take. In short, it is clear that in the choice of delegates and farmers to be made responsible for the management or operation of the structures, there is a circumvention of the standards. This is an example that illustrates very well the refusal of local actors to consistently implement the reforms required by decentralization.

##### ➤ Non-payment of fees

The payment of royalties is also a constitutive rule of the local management of works according to the standards of decentralization in Banikoara. In fact, in the type of contract that the town hall has signed with the farmer or the delegatee, each of the parties has its share of the profit which it deserves. The manager must periodically pay a fee to the town hall and when he does not do so, the town hall terminates its contract. Thus, some of them fail to pay the royalties but on the other hand, others do.

*"The royalty to be paid is enormous. The town hall before fixing the amount should call us and together we would decide on the amount to pay. Now she has fixed her amount on her own without consulting us and without even taking into account our realities because they do not live with us. Now the price she set is a lot; which means that not everyone is able to pay the fixed amount ..."* (E1S, 2016).

As for the complex works managed by the farmer, most of them find it difficult to meet their contractual obligations for several reasons. The farmer for the management of the work hires a fountain operator who takes care of the sale of the water and an operator who takes care of the control of the number of m3 sold. The latter sometimes keep the proceeds from the sale of water for themselves. *"Where the money goes, there is always a problem. When you entrust the management of something to someone, it is difficult for that person to be faithfully accountable"* (E3K, 2016).

Indeed, all these reasons constitute constraints linked to the implementation of the new reforms, more precisely that concerning the payment of fees, which is a reform born with the principle of professionalized management instituted by decentralization.

➤ Rejection of the principle of selling water

The sale of water is a centerpiece of the local management system for hydraulic structures established by decentralization. The money from the sale of water makes it possible, in particular, apart from the upkeep and maintenance of the system, to replace spare parts, to make extensions in order to increase the number of water points, to pay the royalty to the municipality and also to ensure the profit of the farmer. For management clarity, the sale of water requires accountability. This allows you to know the number of m3 sold, and the income due to each of the agents. The reporting is periodic, it can be weekly, fortnightly or monthly. *"I take stock of what I've sold to the operator when he comes for the check and it sometimes depends on he comes on the second Friday of the month or the last Friday of the month. But when it is time to sell the water he comes, every Friday and now in turn, he updates the farmer"* (E3O, 2016).

It is important to notify in this perspective that water from wells is preferred to that from pumps because it is accessible without monetary compensation, as can be seen in the following statement: *"What will the baatonu do with the pump water if there is water in the well? If it is not even that (...) the health workers have asked for what we consume pump water, I was never going to buy water because at the baatonu we do not sell water, it is given"* (E6G, 2016).

It therefore appears that resorting to the purchase of pump water remains a constraint, and it is not to everyone's taste.

### **4.3 Logic and factors associated with the problem of implementing decentralization reforms in the field of village water supply in Banikoara**

#### **4.3.1 Reasons for the delay in the transfer of skills**

➤ Race against the loss of legitimacy

The transfer of powers to local authorities gives a decisive role to municipal authorities in the control and allocation of the sums generated by the operation of AEVs and FPMs. This change is resented by those in charge of DG-Eau services who see themselves "stripped". Not wishing to lose their legitimacy, the services of DG-Eau do not transfer the skills required to facilitate the task of local authorities. Here are some thoughts collected on this subject:

*"The transfer of skills has stripped us, we remain in the offices seated, doing nothing because our activities have been given to the municipalities. Now we need his activities to get money on the ground because there are mission costs. Pay alone is not enough. Now, if we are taken away from all these activities, we will confine ourselves to the offices where there is only paperwork. If we really transfer everything, what will become of us? That's why we can't be in a rush to transfer. If it is not that the law forces our hands, who will agree to do it"* (E3K, 2016).

Thus, for the hydraulic service, not wanting to lose all the prestige that surrounds the possession of power, otherwise the fear of becoming a service without any authority in the commune of Banikoara, leads the agents not to transfer all the powers to the municipalities.

➤ Need to conserve power

Beyond the legitimacy that state actors seek by retaining the powers that they should delegate to local elected officials, they are also motivated by the desire to retain all of their power with the attributes attached to it. The desired legitimacy is in fact a condition for keeping a certain hold on local actors. The power of the actor comes from his legitimacy and the recognition of this legitimacy confers more authority and therefore more power. It should be remembered that the management system for the village water supply sector, as in all other sectors, grants a lot of power to state actors. They decide whether to install structures requested by local stakeholders, launch calls for tenders for

such facilities, supervise their construction and organize local management of infrastructure. Thus, the refusal to transfer skills can be interpreted both as a rejection of innovation but at the same time as a struggle to retain power.

## 5. DISCUSSION:

The commune of Banikoara, like several others, does not yet have adequate technical structures, material, financial and human resources required to carry out, as it should be, and the activities inherent to the powers which are transferred to it, in particular that concerning the supply of tap water for the entire population. These results corroborate those of GWP/AO (2009) following their work on the management of drinking water in developing countries. GWP / AO finds it necessary to provide considerable technical support to the municipal authorities in order to ensure optimal governance of the activities relating to the powers transferred to the municipalities.

Principles were developed following the institution of decentralization. The decentralization texts therefore provided for the standard to be followed by strategic actors concerning the management of water infrastructure. But in the municipality of Banikoara, there is a circumvention of the norms regarding the governance of hydraulic works. This is reflected in the behavior or attitude of strategic actors proving the existence of a social reality which prompts them to act in this way. This new way of doing things demonstrates the gap between the facts of the actors and the texts prescribed by the standard. However, Olivier de Sardan (2008) through one of his works affirms that there are significant gaps between the official standards that govern administrations, public services in Africa and the real behavior of their agents.

This therefore means that all African States in the management of the different institutions have in common this gap between the official norm and the practical norm. These results are therefore in line with ours. Still in this process of governance of structures, the results revealed that the circumvention of the standards observed can be explained through the non-involvement of grassroots actors in the decision-making process, hence there is a mismatch between social standards and the reforms introduced. The non-application of official standards by most African States demonstrates that “real governance” in African States differs, therefore from the “good governance” advocated by the Sustainable Development Goals. In short, the mismatch between official and practical standards gives rise to a new form of parallel governance. Olivier de Sardan (2008) asserts that this is a governance characterized by clientelism, neo-patrimonialism, impunity etc ... which corroborates the modalities of governance of hydraulic works in the municipality of Banikoara. This type of governance is not taken into account by development institutions obsessed with their desire to establish good governance drawn from the Western model. These three chronic evils which undermine governance in Africa constitute a "levy bridge" through which strategic actors pass to increase and maintain their power and legitimacy. Crozier and Friedberg (1977) assert that power is a relation and not an attribute of the actors. It is linked to the relationship of exchange, of negotiation. It is a goal-oriented relationship that is not transitive and that is reciprocal, but unbalanced. It is a balance of power from which one can derive more than the other, but where one is never totally helpless against the other. In politics, for Max Weber (1922), power is the ability to get things, and especially individuals, to behave as desired. In the field of drinking water supply, local communities have acquired power through the principles of decentralization and are able to exercise it. Communal authorities use their power to get what they want from the population and other strategic actors. Local actors use their power to delegate the management of a hydraulic structure to one of their loved ones, or also use their power to install infrastructure in a community of their choice in order to retain their electorate for the second and with a view to having another source of income through the delegatee for the first. While at first glance this initiative may be beneficial, it can nevertheless lead to the phenomenon of patronage between the authority and the grassroots population (KAM, 2011). The various strategies of various parties that go against decentralization reforms have an impact on the governance of water infrastructure. In fact, the tutoring of the DG-Eau in the process of construction of the structures and the interference of state actors in the local management of the structures leads to slowness in the process of construction of the latter.

## 6. CONCLUSION:

Local governance indicates how politics is conducted and how power is exercised at the local level. Briefly, from the gap observed between the good governance advocated and the bad governance, emerges a parallel mode of governance which reflects the real governance of African States, which therefore constitutes a major obstacle to the development of local entities. It is urgent to notify that the transfer of skills is a reality but the municipality of Banikoara in the hydraulic sector is experiencing slowness in the transfer of skills. This delays the municipality in the realization of hydraulic structures, which therefore explains the low presence of hydraulic structures in this municipality. Also, it is urgent to underline clientelism, favoritism, impunity etc ... which are facts, which explain the lack of transparency and fairness in the management of water infrastructures, thus leading to their non-sustainability. The effective implementation of the legal texts of decentralization in the hydraulic sector will lead the different actors to fully play their roles without any interference and also contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

For better sustainability of structures, the sector must include its policy in an approach that effectively respects the standards of decentralization in terms of the participation of beneficiaries in the management of hydraulic structures

while taking into account socio-anthropological realities. In this context, water and the governance of hydraulic structures will have to be placed in a more socio-anthropological perspective than economic, political and above all not industrial because in the current context, water has become a technical object due to its mode of manufacture and by its mode of existence then of governance (Gilbert Simondon, Marcel Mauss, Ellul Jacques).

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