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Comparative Water Law, Policies, and Administration in Asia: Evidence from 17 Countries

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Description / Abstract

Conventional wisdom suggests that improving water governance is the key to solving water insecurity in developing countries but there are also many disagreements on operational and methodological issues. In this paper, we build on the work of Saleth and Dinar and surveyed 100 water experts from 17 countries in Asia to compare 19 indicators of water laws, policies, and administration among and within countries from 2001 to 2010. We present the results of our study in a comparative dashboard and report how water governance indicators vary with a country's level of economic development, which ones do not and how and why some indicators change overtime in some countries. We have two main results. First, our initial findings suggest the possibility of water Kuznet's curve, i.e., certain water governance indicators vary with a country's level of economic development. However, more studies are needed given the caveats and limitations of our study. Second, the results have practical value for policy makers and researchers for benchmarking with other countries and tracking changes within their countries overtime. We conclude with implications for a second-generation research agenda on water governance.

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