

Tsafir Gazit:

Checks and Balances in the Israeli Water System

The management of the Israeli water system was formulated during a period noted by the high level of trust placed in centralized state planning and management. Hence, this system is noted for the degree of its centralization, and by the high level of integration of water resource planning. Yet, this system has failed to protect the main water resources. This paper argues that the main reason for this failure is the differential checks and balances system implicitly instituted in Israel. The differential checks and balances on water allocation between sectors resulted in excessive exploitation of water reservoirs due to the power of the agricultural lobby in the checks and balance mechanisms. The result has been an erosion of the checks and balance mechanisms. It is argued that instead of eroding these mechanisms they should have been restructured so that they would better represent the multitude of interests and concerns that pertain to water management in the 21st century.

Key words: Checks and balances; water; Israel; Interest groups.