

## **Bridging the gap between conservation and sustainable development in African cities: Co-governance of urban wetlands in Wa, Ghana**

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### **Introdução**

Wetlands in African cities are undergoing rapid transformation, driven largely by land scarcity and increasing property values. These pressures are compounded by legislative and institutional weaknesses, spatial and political conflicts, poorly defined property rights, and persistent power struggles between state institutions and traditional authorities. Consequently, collaboration between state and traditional authorities is often proposed as a viable governance framework for urban wetland management

### **Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo**

Limited studies examined how collaborative governance could be used to manage wetland in African cities. We investigate how a collaborative governance framework can promote sustainable urban wetland management in Wa, Ghana by examining (1) the extent of urban wetland conversion between 2005 and 2025, (2) the factors that motivate stakeholder participation in collaborative governance of wetlands (3) the approaches for implementing collaborative governance of wetlands and (4) examine the principles that should guide collaborative governance of wetlands.

### **Fundamentação Teórica**

The study draws on stakeholder and collaborative governance theories to examine urban wetland management. While the stakeholder theory focuses on understanding the competing interest of different social groups and devising ways to balance that with the broader social goals, collaborative governance theory emphasizes that state and non-state actors could work together to address complex problems (Mahajan et al., 2023; McNaught, R. (2024).

### **Metodologia**

The study employs a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design. First, Spatio-temporal Landsat image analysis of wetlands in Wa was conducted using the Maximum Likelihood Classification (MLC) algorithm in ArcGIS and supported with Google Earth imagery for from 2005 to 2025. Second, Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with 28 relevant stakeholders were analyzed using thematic analysis

### **Análise e Discussão dos Resultados**

The findings from the spatio-temporal Landsat image analysis show that wetlands in Wa declined by 47% between 2005 and 2025. Thematic analysis of the interviews conducted reveals that collaborative governance is feasible and widely supported by all the study participants. The stakeholders were motivated by the ecosystem services wetlands provide, particularly flood control.

### **Considerações Finais**

The study concludes that forging stakeholder collaboration for urban wetland management should be guided by trust, transparency to achieved the desired results. Drawing on the stakeholder theory and collaborative governance framework, the study underscores the need to strengthen institutional capacity, build trust, ensure transparency, and foster multi-stakeholder collaboration to ensure the sustainable management of wetlands as critical urban ecological resources in African cities

### **Referências**

Mahajan, R., Lim, W. M., Sareen, M., Kumar, S., & Panwar, R. (2023). Stakeholder theory. *Journal of Business Research*, 166, 114104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114104> McNaught, R. (2024). The application of collaborative governance in local level climate and disaster resilient development - A global review. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 151, 103627. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2023.103627>

### **Palavras Chave**

Ecosystems, Urban planning, Wetlands