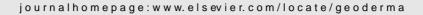


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Geoderma





Application of multivariate statistical methods and inverse geochemical modeling for characterization of groundwater — A case study: Ain Azel plain (Algeria)

Lazhar Belkhiri ^{a,} , Abderrahmane Boudoukha ^b, Lotfi Mouni ^c, Toufik Baouz ^d

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abstract

Multivariate statistical methods and inverse geochemical modeling were jointly used to define the variation and the genetic origin of chemical parameters of groundwater in the Ain Azel plain, Algeria. Interpretation of analytical data shows that the abundance of the major ions is as follows: Ca≥MgN Na N K and HCO₃ ≥ClN SO₄. Q-mode hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA) was employed for partitioning the water samples into hydrochemical facies, also known as water groups or water types. Three major water groups resulted from the HCA analysis. The samples from the area were classified as recharge area waters (Group 1: Ca-Mg-HCO₃ water), transition zone waters (Group 2: Ca-Mg-Cl-HCO3 water), and discharge area waters (Group 3: Mg-Ca-HCO3-Cl water). Inverse geochemical models of the statistical groups were developed using PHREEQC to elucidate the chemical reactions controlling water chemistry. The inverse geochemical modeling demonstrated that relatively few phases are required to derive water chemistry in the area. In a broad sense, the reactions responsible for the hydrochemical evolution in the area fall into three categories: (1) dissolution of evaporite minerals; (2) precipitation of carbonate minerals; and (3) weathering reactions of silicate minerals.

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Corresponding author.

E-mail address: BELKHIRI Laz@yahoo.fr (L. Belkhiri).

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^a Department of hydraulics, University of Hadj Lakhdar Batna, Batna 05000, Algeria

^bLaboratoire de recherche en hydraulique appliquée Université de Hadj Lakhdar Batna, Batna 05000, Algeria

^cLaboratoire de technologie des matériaux et de génie des procédés de l'université de Bejaia, Targa-Ouzemour 06000, Algeria

^dLaboratory of Organic Materials, University of Bejaia, Targa-Ouzemour 06000, Algeria