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Role of governmental and local policy in forest degradation and sediment transportation to the Caspian Sea

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Forests protect water quality by slowing runoff, stabilizing soils and filtering pollutants. Conversion of forest land to other uses interrupts these natural processes and increases the potential for water quality impairment. Since soil erosion and sediment redistribution have implications for both soil and water resources, and scientists have established that the movements of soil, sediment and water are intrinsically linked, it is critical to implement integrated resource protection strategies. It is therefore, encouraging that policy maker and managers are now opting to manage soil erosion and sediment transfers at a catchment or river basin scale, as has been proposed in the Eu water framework directive, for example. Excessive or enhanced soil erosion due to poor land management can result in both on and off-site impacts that are detrimental to a whole range of receptors. Erosion, transport and sedimentation processes gain increasingly importance in socio – economical and ecological respect. This study seeks to survey the role of forest degradation and land use changes in soil erosion and ultimately sediment transportation by rivers. Based on problem-solving logic, it is possible to drive a five stage model of policy cycle which is consisting of: agenda setting, policy formulation, decision making, policy implementation and policy evaluation. The overarching objective of this thesis is to determine what strategies and policies need to be implemented in order to decrease the treatments arising from sediment transition into the Caspian Sea. In addition, this study seeks to examine the relationship between the extent of Hyrcanian forest degradation and the extent of sediments arising from both degradation and soil erosion which are transported to the Caspian Sea.