

Governability of South Africa's Water Resources: Towards a Progressive Framework for Analysis

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Outline

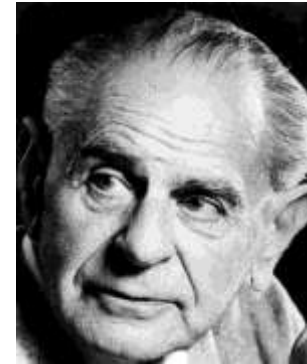
- Current state of **water governance research** in South Africa
- The way forward
 - Move away from a **positivist** view of governance
 - Broader examination of water governance is needed
- Alternative
 - **Agential Power**
 - **Governability**
- **Progressive framework based** on these theories is put forward
 - **Water Sustainability Flagship**
- Examples from the **Water Use Efficiency Project**
- Conclusion

Water Governance Research

- 2011 Study indicated that 86% of research based on a **positivist** paradigm
 - State centric: based on the 1998 Water Act (No. 36)
 - CMAs are predominantly covered
 - Natural scientists dominating
 - **Positivism:**
 - Knowledge generated from empirical testing of hypotheses against facts or evidence.
 - Methodologies from natural science to explain society.
 - Separate facts from values
 - Define concepts into precisely and accurately measurable variables.
 - **Post-positivism**
 - Human perceptions play a string role.
 - Facts, concepts and theories not separate from values – influenced by human agency.
 - Observations are human constructions.
- Broader examination of water governance is needed.

The way forward

- **NOT** a wholesale **rejection** of positivism – valuable contribution to water governance knowledge. [WRC Project K5/1770 - Water Use of Fruit Trees/CSIR PG Project on Water Footprints of fruit tree species](#)
- Change at the knowledge acquisition (epistemological) level.
- **Post-positivism** opens new ground and fill positivism's blind spots.
- Necessitates a **broader** examination of water governance.
- Framework **augments** positivists thinking.
 - Providing **alternative** theoretical lenses.
 - Infuse **novelty** in the decision making processes.
- **Theory** is important
 - Theory **simplifies** reality.
 - Make the **huge volume** of data interpretable.
 - Central to the policy process: **informing** decision makers' choices.
- A positivist **paradigm** - blind spots and the uptake of panaceas in the policy process.
 - Paradigm is a pattern, model or perspective assisting in **organising** and **guiding** research.
 - Key **assumptions** and how to **best** understand them are key.



Karl Popper
Post-
positivism

The way forward

- Kuhn's normal science era hypothesis:
 - Majority of scholars work within a particular paradigm.
 - Accepting the assumptions of the paradigm in an unquestioning manner.
 - These assumptions impact on how research is conducted, the resultant scholarly work and the implications for policy processes.



Thomas Kuhn
Paradigm Shift

Alternative

- A **fuller** picture is needed than what positivism presents.
 - **Normative aspects**, like the norms, views and attitudes of non-state actors are just as important.
 - [Water Use Efficiency in Agriculture Project](#)
- How do we move beyond this situation?
- Development of a progressive framework
- Based on two **post-positivist** ideas or theories
 - **Agential Power**
 - The capacity to influence policy.
 - Reflexive agential power – embeddedness.
 - **Governability**
 - Ability to govern.

Organising questions

Who are the actors, what makes them act and what are the consequences?

What causes change in nature and what are the impacts on society?

What are the dominant theoretical paradigms that underpin research and practice? This is to identify the paradigms at play around the issue and the policy processes to address the issue.

- How are problems and recommendations within research and around the issue framed?
 - See, explain, measure and proof/Positivism?
 - Observe and assess ideas, understandings and interests for decisions and actions/Post-positivism?

Assessing Agential Power

Thinking and Acting/Ideological Power

- How does the actor perceive reality and act on this perception?
- How does the actor justify its choices around a policy issue?
- What is the institutional context?
- How committed are individuals to creating opportunities and solutions?
- How do actors converse or tell stories about the issue?
 - What is the nature of the discourse?
- What is the nature of the social-historical context surrounding the issue?

Trade and Money/Economic Power

- What capabilities do the actor(s) possess to mobilise financial resources?
- Does the actor have the financial means to mobilise the resource?
 - What facilitate or impede such mobilisation?

Assessing Agential Power

Strength and Authority/Political Power

- To what extent is the state apparatus embedded in society to address the issue at hand?
 - Does a private-public-partnership exist?
 - Are there appeals to corporate social responsibility initiatives to assist and have these actually materialised?
- Are non-state actors and the state present or absent to address the issue?
 - What is the nature of their presence?

Relationships/Interaction

- What interest do actors have in the issue?
- What is the issue's degree of complexity and how do actors react to this?
- What change control and change enabling techniques are prevalent in the relationship between the actors?
- [What change control and change enabling techniques do actors use and react to?](#)

Assessing Governability

Diversity, dynamics and complexity and Ways of Governance

- What is the nature and extent of the problem?
- What opportunities exist to capitalise on and tackle the problem?
- Is the system self, co- or hierarchically governed, to what degree and combination?
- Is complexity reduced responsibly and effectively?
- Are dynamics regular or irregular? Be careful to ascribe irregularity with disruption and regularity with change for the good.
- Define the scale in terms of geography, time and institutional arrangements.

Assessing Governability

Images, Instruments and Action

- What are the fundamental norms linked to the policy?
- Which individuals and organisations are involved in the policy issue?
- What are their underlying normative stance particularly towards the issue and the general policy environment?
- What are their identities and interests, informed by their normative stances, towards the policy issue?
- How do norms influence interactions?
- What is the nature and extent of bio-physical change?
- What types of changes is unique to the bio-physical environment?
- What norms, values and principles guide the governance of the system?
- Are these norms, values and principles explicit or hidden?
- How do they find expression in the governance system and the interaction between actors and actors and the biophysical environment?
- What developments in society and the biophysical environment can bring about new norms to be taken up by actors and utilised in governance systems?
- How do norms, values and principles influence images, instruments and actions?

Assessing Governability

Orders of Governance

- What is the order of governance arrangements: self, co-, or hierarchical?
- Are these stand alone or mixed arrangements and what is the inherent dynamism?

Progression

Moving Forward

- What are we missing within scientific domains and especially in the way we construct knowledge (epistemology)?
- What is the state of the art around epistemological and/or theoretical developments?
- Which theories or paradigms can be converged for infusing policy debates through scientific variation?
 - Scientific variation or Analytic Eclecticism
- Is the governance system invested with fads?
- Is this assessment framework becoming a fad?
 - Is it going around unquestioned?
- How do different role players perceive the policy issue; simple, complicated, complex, chaotic or disordered?

Thank You

