

# Flow and Practices: The Politics of IWRM in southern Africa



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# Background

- Since Dublin 1992, IWRM as 'panacea' to address water management crisis ('sanctioned discourse')
- Flagship project of GWP and others
- Rapidly spread from temperate regions to the global south
- Quasi IWRM industry and key in water reform processes
- BUT: experiences mixed especially in Africa (due to complexity of basins; overlapping and competing systems etc)

# Approach and Focus

- Unraveling how and why European/ global actors and institutions are promoting IWRM;
- Flow of ideas across European and African based supranational bodies (e.g. GWP, African Water Facility); bilateral aid agencies and national agencies (e.g. ministries of water)
- How adopted, modified, translated , re-shaped & implemented in African contexts can contexts (Moz; SA; TZ; Uganda; Zim)
- Multi-sited and comparative; Critical / reflexive
- Attentive to issues of power and gender relations

# Four levels of interaction

- Globally/ across Europe ( GWP, WWC and NGOs)
- Regionally (SADC water secretariat; GWP offices); ministerial meetings
- Nationally (ministries, bilaterals, private sector, local NGOs GWP national chapters)
- (4) River basin (local water managers, local communities and women and men; , local authorities

# Conceptual Framework

- History and ambiguities around IWRM
- Definitional challenges
- Politics obscured and trade offs ignored
- Despite criticisms very attractive (Nirvana to boundary?)
- Spread and uptakes
- Flows, Translations and Practices

# Understanding Flows

- Policy as process and heterogeneous (Shore and Wright)
- IWRM as global sanctioned discourse (Foucault)
- Regimes as 'agreed upon rules' (e.g. TSB regimes)
- Water policy networks
- Global Policy transfer networks (Mukhtarov)
- Structure/ agency in policy processes (e.g Cherlet and Vernot)

# Translations, adoptions, transformations

- ‘Translation as the spread in time or place of anything – claims, artefacts, goods (Latour)
- Donor/ government relationships – ownership (Whitfield et al )
- Agency of rural people, river basin authorities, officials etc. (e.g. anthropology of development )
- Thus, key to pay importance to history, culture, agency

# Practices



- Relationship between structure and agency around IWRM
- Historical approach to understand water reform processes
- Local histories, contexts profoundly shape IWRM outcomes on the ground
- Local institutions as dynamic / processual (Cleaver, Mosse, Mehta et
- Bricolage and Legal pluralism



# Methods and Methodology

- Multi-sited ethnography (global, regional, national and local river basins)
- Following actors, people and events
- Interviews/ FGDs; key informants
- Policy and discourses analysis
- Comparative analysis

# Impact and Consortium

- Academic outputs (Special Issue of Water Alternatives) and Presentations
- Briefings and policy dialogues
- WRC Dialogue – Monday 21 September – Farm Inn Pretoria
- 9 Master's Theses across Europe and Africa and curriculum inclusion
- IWRM and I -

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