



Polycentric Governance in the uMngeni River Catchment: *A case-study*

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Context & Background

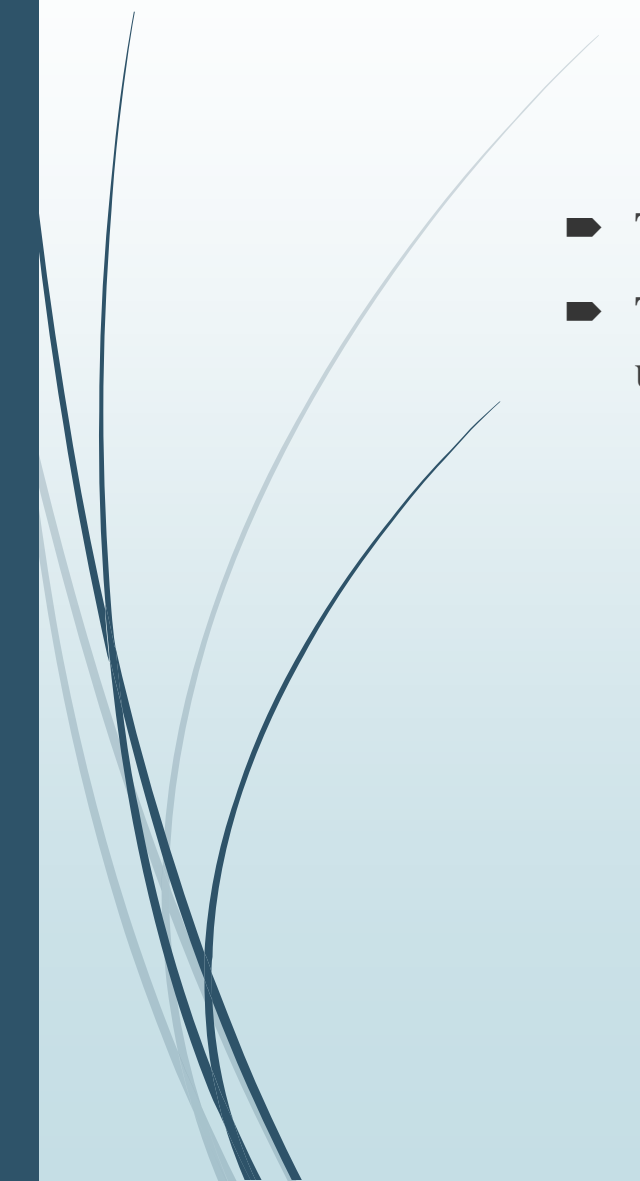
- In the literature that was reviewed, the idea of polycentric (cooperative governance) is closely related to the idea of participatory governance as well as community-based governance.
- It is also linked to the notion of co-learning.
- In broad terms cooperative governance is a process where multiple actors both from within government and different parts of civil society work together to manage, respond to, and coordinate in relation to a specific issue of mutual interest. Cloete et al. (2003)
- Water is conceptualized by its physical flow & by rules, social practices and political and socio-economic aspects (Bakker 2003)
- Further, water is “a symbol of identity, power and citizenship” (Mosse 2008:948) and according to Graefe (2006) drinking water is a sign of separation of power.
- Therefore the management of drinking water is not merely influenced by scientific-technical or natural factors; it is also greatly influenced by society as well as social relations of power and culture (Conca 2006; Mosse 2008; Yaffa 2011).

Context & Background cont'd

- ▶ The current decline of the health of the uMngeni River has significant consequences for water security, community health and the local and regional economy if not arrested and reversed (Clacey, 2015).
- ▶ An urgent co-operative effort on water efficiency connecting all parts of society is a highly crucial way to address this risk timeously.
- ▶ Despite the fact that, the government is chiefly responsible for delivering water infrastructure, the solutions that are needed currently, cannot be surely vested on the government – a shared responsibility. (ActionAid, 2016).
- ▶ We need a paradigm shift in the way we put significance on and manage water. (ActionAid, 2016). A cooperative/ polycentric governance is the most effective way to help curb current water governance challenges and yield useful results (Ostrom, 2010).

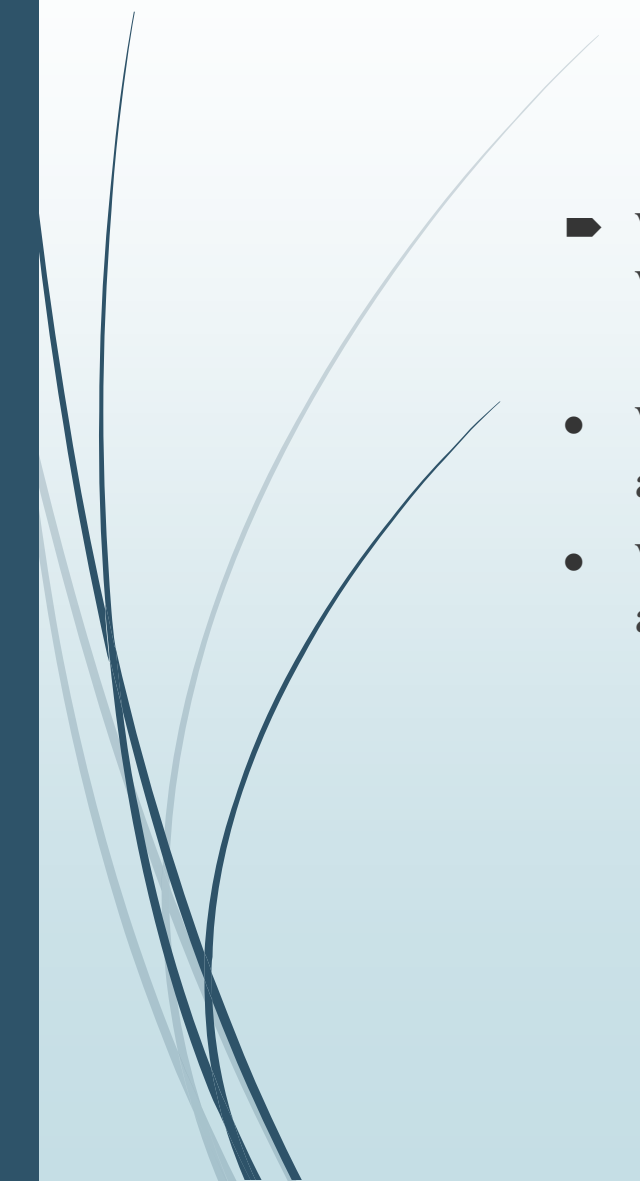


Objectives & Aims of the study

- To understand power relations; influencing conditions in the catchment
 - To understand how far are the elaborated Water Governance mechanism applied in uMngeni catchment
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The research is guided by the following questions:

- ▶ What are the influencing conditions and formal and informal institutional structures in the Water Governance in the uMngeni?
 - Who are the stakeholders in the Water Governance in uMngeni and what are their range of actions, interests, capacities and interpenetrations?
 - What are the causes of that poor water governance and what are the conditions, structures, and interrelations promoting the mismanagement the water resources?
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Theoretical Framework

- Theory: Political-Ecology
- Political Ecology is an interdisciplinary multi-dimensional research approach that tries to address this complexity and applies the nexus of resources, politics and social sciences (Krings, 2008).
- The understanding of Political Ecology theory as a multidimensional approach at the nexus of political, nature and social science (Krings, 2008; Rauch 2009, Zimmer 2010b) will be used for the analysis in this research.
- Political Ecology entails an examination of natural resources and the relations of power between different actors (Krings & Mülle, 2001; Reuber 2005, Beckedorf 2010).
- Power means hereby the access to and control of drinking water resources as well as the interaction between other actors (Bryant & Bailey, 1997).



Theoretical Framework cont'd

- ▶ The Political Ecology is based on a human-environment relationship with a strong actor-orientation (Krings 2002; Reuber 2005). A key factor to understand actor relations is a power analysis between actors.
- ▶ To sum up, Political Ecology is a highly dynamic research field evolved in many different directions but opens up a promising way to study water related management and governance issues. In Political Ecology especially actors and structures are crucial which is transferred in the analysing framework of this research.

Power cube cont'd

- ▶ Power cube analyses is not a theory, however:
- ▶ A power cube is one of many approaches to analysing and understanding power.
- ▶ The power cube approach has grown through the work of a number of people. The power cube is a framework for analysing the levels, spaces and forms of power, and their interrelationship.
- ▶ It is useful in letting us explore various aspects of power and how they interact with each other.
- ▶ It lets us visually map ourselves and our situation, including other actors, relationships and forces, and then look at possibilities for movement, mobilization and change.
- ▶ The forms dimension refers to the ways in which power manifests itself, including its **visible, hidden and invisible** forms.
- ▶ The spaces dimension of the power cube refers to the potential arenas for participation and action, including what we call **closed, invited and claimed spaces**.
- ▶ **The levels dimension of the power cube refers to the differing layers of decision-making and authority held on a vertical scale, including the local, national and global.**

List of works cited

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