

*Scene-setting:
A new reading of water governance through the lens of
actors, institutions, and scale*

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Format of session

00'-15'

Scene-setting: A new reading of water governance through the lens of actors, scale, institutions and knowledge: Naho Mirumachi & Andrea Gerlak

15'-30'

Actors: why power matters and how we understand it in water governance: Bob Varady

30'-45'

Institutions: To what extent do institutions matter for water governance in evolving contexts of water allocation and use?: Christina Cook

45'-60'

Scale: Multiscalar or transcalar? Issues of scale in water governance: Jeroen Warner

60'-90'

Q&A/open discussion

Water Governance

It has been widely argued that that current water crisis is fundamentally a problem of water governance. Consequently, water governance needs improvement and better understanding. However, defining water governance remains elusive.

“... Stressing the need to promote good governance at all levels including basin level, based on, inter alia, water planning, public participation and the sound management of physical infrastructure and natural systems as a means to effectively tackle the water security related challenges” (7th World Water Forum Ministerial Declaration, 2015)



Power in Water Governance

Implicit (and occasionally explicit) in debates about water governance is that power structures need to be dealt with in order to engage public participation or to achieve equity.

- Recognition of power imbalances, from transboundary rivers to urban water delivery
- Promotion of participatory approaches, with attention to access and allocation to mitigate power differentials
- Power facilitates different realizations of equity (indigenous, gender, sector equity, etc.)

Diversity in Governance

The pursuit of institutional architecture, criteria and principles of water governance may (unintentionally) impose uniformity to what is in fact a messy, complex socio-political and environmental context

Power operates in various kinds of water policy settings, meaning water governance mechanisms need to be diverse to fit such setting

Table 2.2 Overview of types of water policy arrangements

Type	Name	Water governance mechanisms
Authoritative	Hierarchy-based	Coercive, state-led water politics, state organization controls water, neocorporatism
Pluralistic-liberal	Market-based	Negotiation, power-plays, consensus building between interest groups used to solve water issues
Decentralized-communitarian	Network-based	Participatory form of society/egalitarianism, non-hierarchical. Participation used in water management and decision making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Conservative: revaluation of the traditional society/solidarity b) Republican: new balance between the traditional community and modern individualism/voluntarism

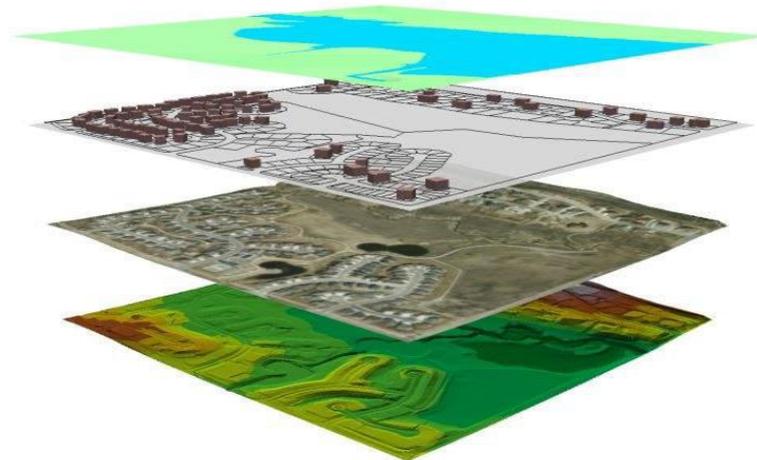
To explore how power is exercised in water governance, we propose three elements through which it can be better understood:

Actors



Institutions

Scale



Actors

The push and pull between various actors to secure water allocation, to regulate abstraction as well as externalities with policy, and to resist such interventions

- How and when do actors become relevant in water governance?
- How do actors exercise power?
- How do actors participate differently?



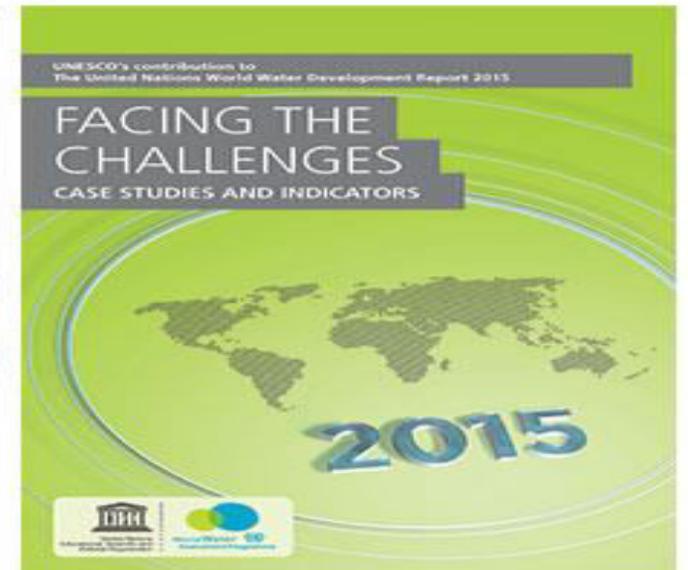
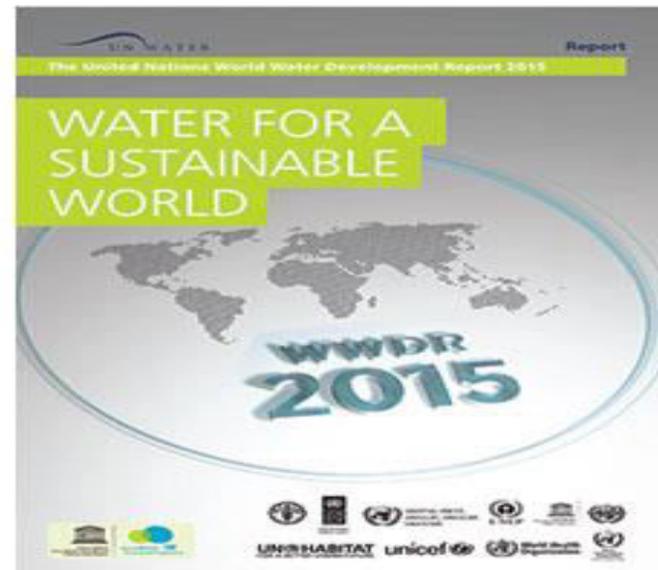
LEARNING TOGETHER TO
MANAGE TOGETHER

— IMPROVING PARTICIPATION IN WATER MANAGEMENT —

Institutions

State led and 'hybrid' public-private institutions that focus on various aspects of efficiency, effectiveness, or inclusiveness

- Are the existing institutions appropriately addressing and solving important water challenges?
- What kinds of features are necessary for institutions to cope with changing contexts of water allocation and use?



Scale

Governance is often expressed at the basin-level (eg, IWRM). At the same time, *global* water governance is often advocated despite water problems being local

- To what extent is spatial scale important to water governance?
- Can governance without scale be imagined and practiced?
- What advantages or blind spots does multi-scalar water governance bring about?

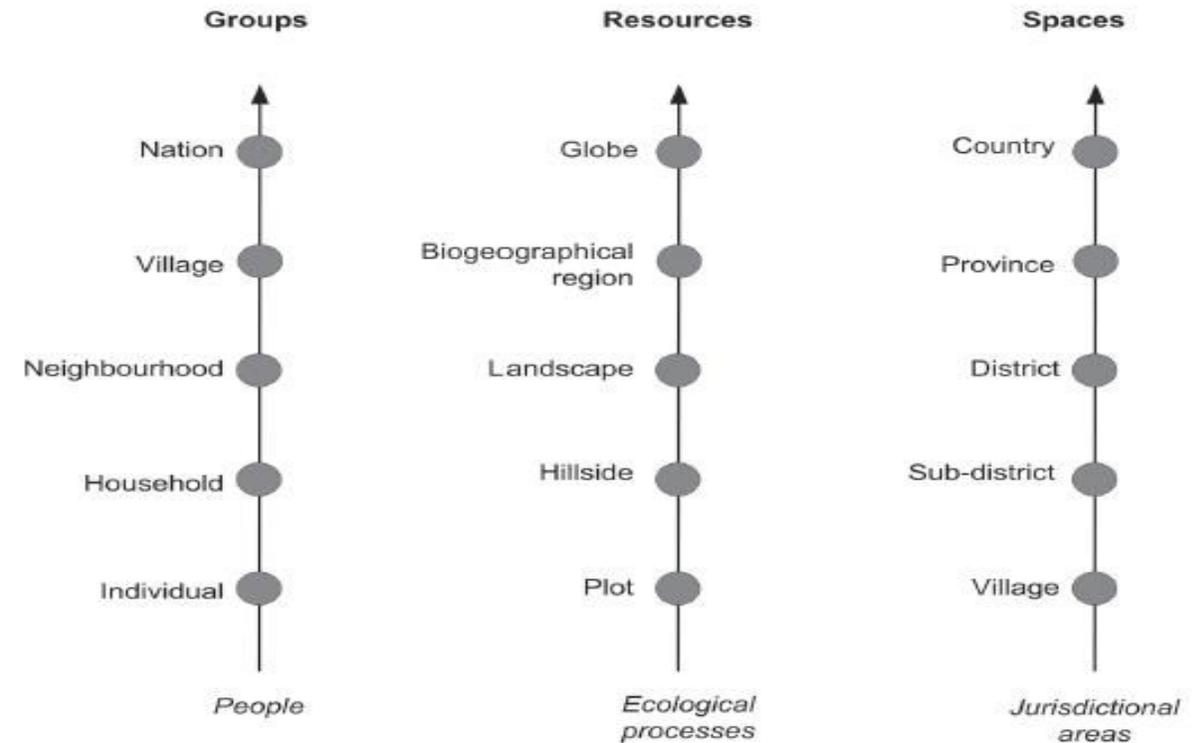


Figure 1. Three scales important to conservation in upper tributary watersheds. Examples of possible levels are shown with circles. Labels underneath each scale indicate entities being aggregated as move up levels.