

**PART III**  
**ASSESSMENT**

## CHAPTER 7

### A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSNATIONAL ROLE OF INTEREST GROUPS IN THE KUNENE AND ORANGE RIVER BASINS

#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to compare the two case studies by using a synthesis of the 'process and institutions studies' (Peters, 1998: 13) comparative method, comparative mapping (based on Brinkerhoff and Crosby's [2002] political mapping) and the dynamics of distant proximities (Rosenau, 2003). The 'process and institutions studies' comparative method is used since only a small number of case studies, namely two, have been conducted. The chapter consists of four parts. Firstly, a comparison is made of interest groups as transnational agents, based on their actual transnational role and involvement. Secondly, a comparison is made with reference to two generic types of criteria, namely processes and institutions. Under these two generic types a number of sub-criteria are used for comparison purposes, namely micro-macro interactions; organisational explosion; bifurcation of global structures; weakening of states and territoriality; authority crises; subgroupism; the nature and structure of the institutions' authority; the authority types of the institutions; and the nature of the states and interest groups' (the institutions) transnationalism. This also involves an application of the comparative map of Brinkerhoff and Crosby's (2002) 'political mapping'. Thirdly, the comparative map is interpreted in order to identify the similarities and dissimilarities of the case studies. Finally, a conclusion is drawn.

#### 2. A Comparison of Interest Groups as Transnational Agents

This comparison of the transnational role and involvement of the interest groups in the two river basins is made with reference to the types of interest groups involved, the approaches used by the interest groups, the roles they played and the factors determining their success.

##### 2.1. Interest Group Typology

What is notable regarding the role and involvement of different types of interest groups is the large number of associational (promotional) interest groups in both cases. This is mainly due to the nature of the issues involving the construction of large dams. In the first place, many interest groups from an environmental background, more specifically those who promote sound environmental practices through their endeavours, are convinced that large dams have a detrimental impact on aquatic and marine ecosystems. Secondly, according to many interest groups, particularly those with a human rights background who promote the cause of minority groups, large dams also have a negative impact on humans.

Also notable is the fact that more associational (sectional) interest groups are involved in the Orange River basin than in the Kunene River basin. This can

be attributed to the prominence of labour issues during the construction of the LHWP, which is obviously not the case in respect of the Epupa Dam project, since it is only a proposal at this stage. Thus the issues of a WRMP, whether planned or constructed, will influence the type and the number of interest groups involved. The location of the WRMP also plays a role—in this respect Epupa is planned for a remote part of Namibia and the LHWP was constructed in remote parts of Lesotho. In the case of the LHWP, the project has a more significant impact on metropolitan and industrial nodes situated some distance away from the Project, than is the case with the proposed Epupa Dam. Both locations, however, contain rural communities that are affected, leading to the involvement of communal interest groups in both cases.

## 2.2. Approaches

The interest groups used a number of approaches (see Table 18). In the case of the LHWP, the technocratic approach was used more frequently than in the case of the proposed Epupa Dam. Grass-roots mobilisation, coalition building and the power approaches were used to an equal extent during the lobbying campaigns against both WRMPs. The reason for this is the complexity of the LHWP in technical, financial and legal terms. Because of these complexities, the interest groups had the opportunity to use the technocratic approach more often and had to involve more actors than was the case with the proposed Epupa Dam. For instance, Lesotho, South Africa, the World Bank, other financial institutions and a number of contractors were involved in the technical, financial and legal arrangements of the LHWP, whereas in the case of Epupa only one legal agreement between Angola and Namibia dictated the terms of reference. At this point, it will be pertinent to indicate that in the case of the LHWP, not all the interest groups were against the Project, but rather against the manner by which the LHDA implemented its compensation policy. At present, this is not the case in respect of the proposed Epupa Dam where all interest groups oppose the project.

**Table 18. The approaches used by the interest groups.**

Approaches used			
Kunene River (1994-2003)	Number of times the approach was used	Orange River (1985-2003)	Number of times approach the was used
Technocratic	3	Technocratic	7
Grass-roots mobilisation	3	Grass-roots mobilisation	3
Coalition building	5	Coalition building	7
Power	6	Power	5

## 2.3. Interest Group Roles

Since similar approaches were used in both river basins, the agential roles of interest groups were largely alike, although certain dissimilarities also emerged (see Table 19).

**Table 19. The roles played by the interest groups and the frequency of these roles over time.**

Approaches used			
Kunene River (1994-2003)	Frequency of the roles	Orange River (1985-2003)	Frequency of the roles
Opinion generation agent	9	Opinion generation agent	5
Standard creation agent	0	Standard creation agent	1
Norm creation agent	2	Norm creation agent	10
Epistemic agent	1	Epistemic agent	1
Agenda construction agent	2	Agenda construction agent	1
Interactive agent	12	Interactive agent	7
Representation agent	4	Representation agent	3
Transnational agent	10	Transnational agent	11
Policy shaping agent	5	Policy shaping agent	11
Institution creation agent	0	Institution creation agent	1
Watchdog agent	1	Watchdog agent	3
Oppositional agent	9	Oppositional agent	6
Guardian agent	2	Guardian agent	0
Assistant agent	2	Assistant agent	2
Safety provider agent	2	Safety provider agent	1
Empowerment agent	3	Empowerment agent	1

One of the most important reasons why these similarities and dissimilarities are so noticeable is because of the time dimension. As previously indicated, interest groups have been involved in the LHWP for nearly two decades (1985-2004), whereas they have only been involved in the proposed Epupa Dam for one decade (1993-2004). More importantly, in both cases the interest groups did not play significant philanthropic roles, although this is more evident in the case of Epupa than the LHWP. The plight of the Himba is an important consideration in this regard, for the Himba community (organised into the EAC) performed many of the philanthropic roles towards its members. The Lesotho highlanders did not organise themselves into an interest group, but rather utilised other existing interest groups opposing the LHWP.

In both cases, the interest groups were at most equal in their roles as transnational agents. This is explained by the contemporary internationalisation and globalisation of domestic policy issues. However, the interest groups in the Orange River basin were more involved as policy shaping and norm creation agents than those in the Kunene River basin. This is not only as a result of having been involved for a longer period in the Orange than the Kunene River, but also because the LHWP's impact on the environment and the population has been more wide-ranging and traumatic than the Epupa project is expected to be when constructed. The LHWP, firstly, had an impact from the source of the Orange to its mouth and secondly, it had an impact on both the Lesotho and to a certain extent South

African communities. The Epupa Dam, will affect a shorter stretch of river and although it also involves two states (Angola and Namibia), will involve fewer communities. The latter, however, has a high emotional quality since it involves the Himba's minority rights.

Because of this emotional quality linked to the Himba way of life and minority rights, the interest groups on the Kunene River issue are more involved as opinion generation and interactive agents than those involved in the LHWP. As a result, the need to raise sympathy towards the Himba, led to a higher frequency of interaction between the interest groups and decision-makers.

## 2.4. The Success of the Interest Groups

The relative success of the interest groups, in modifying governmental policies concerning the WRMPs, was influenced by a number of factors (see Table 20). One of the most important considerations is the fact that Angola is not overly enthusiastic about the proposed Epupa Dam. This has had a significant influence on the interest groups' lobbying campaign over the Kunene River scheme, because Angola does not support the proposed Epupa Dam, which is weakening Namibia's position. Other factors had an influence in both cases.

**Table 20. Factors influencing the success of the interest groups.**

Factor	Influence: Yes/No	
	Kunene River	Orange River
Maintaining contact with important policy makers.	Yes	No
Variation in the domestic and international political structure over time.	Yes	Yes
The governing elite influences interest group effectiveness.	Yes	No
Aspects unrelated to interest group/government relations.	Yes	Yes
Policy type and political arena.	No	No
Public opinion and dominant ideology in society.	No	Yes
Interest groups exemplifying socio-economic issues have more status in society.	No	No
Temporary circumstances.	Yes	Yes
Level of interest group support.	No	Yes
Expertise at interest groups' disposal.	Yes	Yes
Type of sanctions or rewards interest groups employ.	No	No
Their influence stems from policy consequences.	No	No
Power or influence flows from their resources.	Yes	Yes
Success is derived from interest groups' access to government.	No	No
The interest groups achieve success because they triumph in the decision-making process.	No	No

It is notable that there has been a variation in both the domestic and international political structures over time. This factor, together with temporary circumstances, had an impact on the success of the interest groups involved in both WRMPs. The end of the Cold War, political reform in South Africa, Namibia's independence and Lesotho's changed identity impacted significantly on the involvement of interest groups in both river basins. This meant that more interest groups could apply pressure on national governments as well as on international institutions such as the World Bank and on other government leaders.

The same applies to aspects not directly attributable to interest group-government relations. The latter had an impact on the success of the interest groups. In the case of the Kunene River, it was Angola's disapproval of the Epupa site that had a greater impact than the interest groups' lobbying campaign. In the case of the Orange River, Lesotho's new identity had a bearing on the decision to allow the ombudsman to investigate the compensation policy of the LHDA. Nevertheless, the expertise at the disposal of the interest groups was admittedly a significant factor in bringing pressure to bear on the governments and project authorities in both cases. Not only did the interest groups have technical expertise on the environmental and population impacts of large dams, but also legal expertise as in the case of the LAC. The technical and legal expertise were shared by the interest groups on a continuous basis, and enabled some of them to produce convincing arguments against the WRMP. Because of this expertise, they also had at their disposal an element of 'scientific proof', thus adding weight to their impact and ability to influence the other actors. In both cases, this enabled the interest groups to influence government, IGOs and project authorities.

### **3. A Comparative Map of the Case Studies**

As previously indicated, use was made of the 'process and institution studies' comparative method. This method allows for the selection of a small number of cases and to indicate both the nature of the processes and the institutions, and the nature of the water politics involved. The processes and institutions provide the sub-criteria used for comparative purposes, in other words these two elements constitute the generic aspects from which a meaningful comparison of the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in the Kunene and Orange River basins is derived. Furthermore, the selected criteria, contained in the comparative map (see Tables 21 and 22), are as broad as possible in order to identify both similarities and dissimilarities (Cooper, 1996: 192; Peters, 1998: 13).

Based on these criteria, the comparative map is used in the same way as a conventional topographical map of a landscape to locate direction-finding beacons (see Tables 21 and 22). Like a topographical map, the comparative map is divided into sectors separated by lines of 'longitude' and 'latitude'. On the 'longitudinal' (vertical) column, the processes and institutions, with their different criteria are situated, while on the 'latitudinal' (horizontal) rows

dissimilarities and similarities are situated and separated by a line (meridian [blue arrow]), the deviation from which indicates the extent of dissimilarity and similarity. The processes and institutions are similarly divided by an 'equator'. Aspects of the case studies will be located on the map to indicate to what extent they are dissimilar or similar. In summary, to make sense of these similarities and dissimilarities, the comparative map simplifies the 'real world' by condensing it into two dimensions: horizontal and vertical (Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002: 164).

This facilitates theory building on the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in water politics. As such, the comparative map is not only applicable to interest groups involved in transnational water politics but can also be applied to other situations where interest groups, or any other non-state entities, are involved. Furthermore, what is of utmost importance is not the mere placing of criteria on the map, but the interpretation of these criteria and discovering why they are found in a specific location.

In this regard, and based on Brinkerhoff and Crosby's (2002: 164) discussion of the purpose of 'political mapping', the different levels of politics (subnational, national, regional and supranational) and the complexities thereof can be overwhelming. 'With the quantity of information available, political analysis and determination of what is important are daunting tasks. The difficulty stems largely from problems of processing the information; that is, how to organize the information and make it useful' (Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002: 164). In short, the comparative map is therefore utilised to organise and make sense of the information generated by the case studies.

It must, however, be borne in mind that the comparative map lacks dynamism, considering that changes in the political landscape often take place at a rapid pace. A single comparative map is therefore a mere 'snapshot' of a given situation in time. It is a 'loyal representation' of a situation in a particular time dimension. This can nevertheless be an advantage to the political scientist, activist and decision-maker. Similar to time-lapse photography (*via* a series of individual photos) the dynamics of politics within the river basin start to take shape if the cognitive mapping is applied over time (i.e. in respect of a time-series) (Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002: 165).

#### **4. Reading and Interpreting the Comparative Map**

From the comparative map, it is self-evident that the water politics of the two case studies exhibit similarities as well as dissimilarities. In this section, these similarities and dissimilarities are 'unpacked' and explained.

##### **4.1. Processes**

The process-based criteria of comparison are micro-macro interactions, organisational explosion, bifurcation of global structures, weakening of states and territoriality, authority crises and subgroupism.

#### 4.1.1. Micro-macro Interactions

In the case of the proposed Epupa Dam project, individuals occupied a central position in the lobbying activities against the dam. The physicist from South Africa was responsible for the initial involvement of interest groups in its water politics. Therefore, an intentional micro input initiated the development of the power relationship between the interest groups and the Namibian government. However, the Himba community was already aware of their plight should the dam be built. Thus, the plight of the Himba, an issue raised by themselves in concert with other actors, was the initial 'tipping point' (trigger event) that led to activists lobbying against the planned dam. The actions of activists from the IRN, especially Christa Coleman, should also be noted in this regard. However, her involvement started only after Himba opposition against the suggested dam was well advanced.

This trigger event led to activists pressuring policy- and decision-makers (in the Namibian government and NamPower). This was done through appeals to shared values and 'scientific proof', to address the problem. Nonetheless, the reactions of the elites amounted mainly to alternative interpretations and avoidance (disinterest and apathy). Furthermore, the decision-making elites also used appeals to shared values and scientific proof to refute the claims made by the interest groups. Regardless of these control techniques on the part of the discursive elites, the interest groups responded through disagreement and defiance, counterforce, disputation, alternative interpretation and avoidance (disinterest and apathy). This led to a mutually reinforcing situation, for every argument put forward by one party would result in a counter-argument by the other party. This is termed a discursive trap, wherein both actors are jostling to get their arguments accepted by society, but from which none will escape because of the salience and importance of the debate to each one of them. This is an important feature of the water politics of the proposed Epupa Dam project, especially regarding the interaction between the interest groups and the Namibian government. However, this is not the case concerning the interaction between Angola and Namibia regarding the intended construction of the Baynes or Epupa Dams, which has led to a situation where a final decision on the Epupa project has been deferred.

Regarding the micro-macro interactions between the actors during the implementation of the LHWP, interest groups featured more prominently in the initial lobbying activities against the Project. The MCC posted two field workers in the project area in 1985. This was followed, in 1986, by the student protests in Maseru in an attempt to disrupt the signing of the Treaty. In 1988, a concerted effort was made by ecumenical interest groups to produce recommendations, together with the affected communities, regarding the impacts of the Project on these communities. Consequently, more interest groups from abroad became involved in the LHWP's water politics. Thus, the interest groups were responsible for fashioning macro consequences. More specifically, a transnational interest group (the MCC) was at first responsible for raising the awareness level of the Highland



communities should the LHWP be constructed. In short, an intentional macro input led to the transnational lobbying of interest groups against the LHWP. The opinion of collectivities therefore became the 'tipping point' in the involvement of interest groups in the LHWP's water politics.

Moreover, interest group leaders viewed the problem differently than the pro-Project elite, as mass opinion in South Africa and Lesotho remained unchanged despite a recognition of the problem. In 1986 government leaders ignored the students' opinion. It was only later, when a transnational campaign against the LHWP was initiated that policy- and decision-makers from South Africa and the World Bank in particular responded to the problem in terms of their own values and deliberations. On the part of South Africa, this was mainly due to the ANC's changed identity. This transnational action led to an increasing interaction between the interest groups and their leaders, on the one hand, and the government of South Africa, the LHDA, the TCTA and the World Bank, on the other.

This being the case, the action on the part of the interest groups involved various control techniques i.e. 'arm twisting', bargaining, appeals to shared values, and 'scientific proof'. In contrast, the state collectivities reacted to these techniques through disagreement and defiance, disputation, alternative interpretation, avoidance (disinterest and apathy) and conditional agreement. The South African government also used control techniques to further its arguments for the construction of the LHWP, i.e. appeals to shared values and 'scientific proof'. The interest groups, on the other hand, reacted through disagreement and defiance, counterforce, disputation and alternative interpretation. Throughout the mid-1980s to 2004, these control techniques were used by both sides in a manner similar to what was experienced in the Kunene River. Nevertheless, the findings of the Lesotho ombudsman tipped the scale in favour of the interest groups' arguments. In other words and as previously pointed out, a collectivity (state) elite promoted arguments of the interest groups, because of Lesotho's changed identity.

Although individuals (micro actors) and interest groups (macro actors) were responsible for initiating the lobbying process against Epupa and the LHWP respectively, both these actors were of a non-state nature. Thus individuals, acting alone or in concert, were the shapers of micro-macro inputs. In both cases, their initial feats were intentional, leading to action to be taken or avoided by government elites. In contrast, a discursive trap does not exist in the water politics of the LHWP, mainly because the LHWP's Phases 1A and 1B have been completed which is not the case of the proposed Epupa Dam.

#### **4.1.2. Organisational Explosion**

The organisational explosion of non-state actors is one of the most notable features of the water politics of the proposed Epupa Dam. Before the early 1990s, there were only two actors (Angola and Namibia) directly involved, whereas by 2004 50 actors were involved. This represents a significant increase in the population of actors over a period of just more than a decade.

This is the direct consequence of opposition to the proposed construction of the dam and the lobbying of domestic and transnational interest groups.

This growth in the interest group population afforded individuals and collectivities at the micro level, particularly the Himba community, the opportunity to introduce intentional inputs into macro processes. The Himba chiefs' overseas visit, to garner support from other macro collectivities, was a direct consequence of this organisational explosion to the extent that transnational interest groups provided financial support for it. Thus, although a loose coalition was formed, it afforded both the Himba and other domestic and transnational interest groups the opportunity to converge and participate in organisational activities. Moreover, because of the loose ties between these non-state collectivities, it gave other interest groups the opportunity to join the lobbying campaign. Stated differently, the very looseness of interest group networks was a stimulus for the organisational explosion that occurred in the Kunene River basin. In short, the sheer number of interest groups that bridged the micro and macro levels of interaction overwhelmed the few state actors.

In the Orange River basin, concerning the LHWP, a similar organisational explosion occurred although not as extensive as the one in the Kunene. In 1985, there were four state actors sharing the Orange River basin—Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa, and one non-state actor—the MCC. By 2004, there were 41 state and non-state actors. This growth, as was the case in the Kunene, empowered people because the Lesotho interest groups were no longer alone in their lobbying against the Project. Other interest groups were able to assist in direct communication between the leader of the HCAG, Moea Ramokoatsi, and the World Bank. Furthermore, interest groups were also able to join the loose coalition later during the campaign, most notably the various Canadian labour unions that threw in their weight behind the lobbying effort.

Although the scale of growth in the Orange River basin showed a smaller increase over a longer period of time than was the case in respect of the Kunene, the amplification effect was nonetheless significant. The reason for the lower growth rate was the temporal dimension or stage of history during which the LHWP was implemented. The LHWP Treaty was signed during the Cold War and the time of South Africa's isolation from the rest of the international community. Internationally, South Africa was fighting a war on the Angolan-Namibian border to keep the so-called 'red danger' (communism) at bay. Domestically there was a state of emergency and a clampdown on the activities of so-called 'illegal organisations' like the ANC and PAC. Under these circumstances, the ending of *apartheid* or the upholding thereof was an overriding concern for opposing factions in South African civil society. The protection of the environment was therefore not a main concern, with the result that environmental groups were unable to gain a foothold. It was only when the domestic situation in South Africa improved that environmental interest groups, like EMG and GEM, who eventually played a prominent role together with the IRN in the water politics of the LHWP, were formed. When

South Africa was subsequently reintegrated into the international community during the early to mid-1990s, environmental and human rights interest groups utilised the normalisation of relations and the greater opportunities this provided, to become transnationally involved in the LHWP. This was approximately the same time that interest groups became involved in the proposed Epupa Dam project. Thus, the timing of the implementation of the LHWP was a crucial factor in the proliferation of non-state entities in the water politics of the Project.

Hence, regarding the organisational explosion, there are striking similarities but also conspicuous dissimilarities between the two WRMPs. The first dissimilarity is the rate of growth, which was lower over a longer period in respect of the water politics of the LHWP and higher over a shorter time span in respect of the proposed Epupa Dam. The second dissimilarity is the composition and size of the loose coalition or network of interest groups. This is due to the salience of issues regarding each WRMP. In the case of the Epupa, the main issue is the threat the dam poses to the traditional lifestyle of the Himba and their 'unspoiled' and stable natural environment. More environmental and human rights groups of the associational (promotional) type are therefore involved. As regards the LHWP, there were fewer interest groups, but more labour unions (associational [sectional] interest groups) involved because of the labour unrest and the corruption scandal involving Acres International, the Canadian MNC.

#### **4.1.3. Bifurcation of Global Structures**

The bifurcation or the existence of two worlds within the water politics of the two WRMPs, namely the state-centric and the multi-centric or multiple actor worlds, is closely linked to the organisational explosion. In respect of the proposed Epupa Dam, which involves the two state collectivities (Angola and Namibia) on the one hand, and the plethora of national and transnational non-state actors (interest groups) on the other, interest groups are interacting with the government of Namibia which is situated in the state-centric world. Thus, whereas in the past, states and the state-centric world were prominent in the water politics of the Kunene River basin, this is no longer the case. Moreover, the Kunene River's water politics is now described in a bifurcated fashion: with states and their institutions playing a role on the one hand, and a variety of domestic and transnational interest groups interacting with these state institutions, on the other. Through this bifurcation, Namibia as state actor has been weakened in its ability to implement its policy; without the interference of non-state actors, it would have been much easier for the Namibian government to implement the hydropower project.

This bifurcation is also evident in the Orange River system as regards to the LHWP. As has been indicated earlier, the variety of interest groups involved in the water politics of the LHWP is not as extensive as those influencing the Namibian government. However, the same bifurcated situation exists concerning the LHWP. The interest groups are also interacting with the government of South Africa, the LHDA, the TCTA, and the World Bank

regarding a number of issues concerning the LHWP. Even so, this interaction has been a mixture of competition and cooperation. Thus, as is the case regarding the proposed Epupa Dam, states and their institutions are no longer the most prominent actors in the Orange River basin because of the role and involvement of interest groups since the mid-1980s. Has there been a weakening of states in the case of the LHWP? To a certain extent yes, because they are no longer alone in the implementation process of policies in the Orange River system. Yet, the fact that Phase 1A and 1B have been completed, largely in the absence of interest group involvement, is an indication of the prominence of the state in the river system.

There is therefore a noticeable similarity between the bifurcated situation within the Kunene and Orange River basins. In both these river systems, two worlds are now existing alongside each other: the state-centric world embracing states, their institutions and inter-governmental organisations, and a multi-centric world including a large variety of interest groups. There is, however, one significant difference. The interest groups involved in the Kunene are competing largely with the Namibian government, whereas there is a mixture of competition and cooperation between the interest groups on the one hand and the Lesotho and South African governments, the LHDA, the TCTA, and the World Bank on the other. The reason for this is the increasingly negative image attached to the large dam building industry, mainly because of the role and involvement of a world-wide and transnational movement against large dams. To get rid of this negative image, implementing authorities, like the LHDA and the World Bank, are more likely to cooperate with interest groups than to stand by and see their images tarnished by these non-state entities.

#### **4.1.4. Weakening of States and Territoriality**

As indicated in the previous section, the agential power of the Namibian government has been weakened to a considerable extent regarding its policy concerning Epupa. The Namibian government, together with the Angolan government, was immediately following independence the main actor negotiating the rehabilitation of the Ruacana and Calueque water projects. However, this prominence changed when the Namibian government indicated that it would prefer to construct a hydroelectric power plant downstream from the Epupa Waterfalls. Suddenly, the government's authority and legitimacy to do so was undermined, first by the Himba community, and then by other domestic and transnational interest groups. Yet, it was not only the actions of these interest groups that impeded the implementation of the proposed hydroelectric power station. Angola's insistence that a dam should be built at the Baynes Mountain site was another significant factor. Along with the actions of the interest groups, 'deterritorialisation' had set in. The Namibian government could not control the transnational flow of ideas across its borders especially those between the domestic and transnational interest groups.

That being the case, the electronic media and other communication channels have facilitated the flow of ideas and lobbying across state borders. Thus,

interest groups have capitalised on the microelectronic revolution to convey their message, and to influence the Namibian government through a loose network. No longer is the Namibian government able to shape events in the Kunene River basin as it sees fit, but it also has to contend with the views of interest groups. There has therefore been effectively an erosion of Namibia's sovereignty. Its government does not speak for the entire population abroad: the Himba chiefs have also done so on their overseas visit. It could do so, but it is highly unlikely that the Namibian government will use force as a last resort to implement Epupa, since it would tarnish its international image.

Where the South African government had been the sole actor in WRMPs on the Orange River from the late 1800s to 1986, this is no longer the case. Similar to the Namibian government, the South African government also played an important part in the negotiation of numerous treaties regarding the governing and sharing of the Orange River with its neighbours, for instance the LHWP Treaty. Yet, its legitimacy and authority has been eroded because of the role and involvement of interest groups.

Subsequently, and in comparison to the 'deterritorialisation' of Namibia, a similar situation occurred within both South Africa and Lesotho. Although a Treaty governed the implementation of the LHWP, it was the criticism from interest groups levelled against the Project that has transcended the territorial borders of both countries. The visit by Christian Aid and Oxfam in 1994 and 1996 is an indication of this process. Moea Ramokoatsi's visit to the World Bank is another example, indicating that not only do project authorities and government officials speak for both countries, but private citizens as well. This process was facilitated by air transport and the personal computer. As is the case in the Kunene River basin, the process of 'deterritorialisation' is posing a challenge to the 'myth of states as sovereign actors' within the Orange River basin, largely due to the interest groups' challenge to state sovereignty.

A new order has therefore emerged in both the Kunene and Orange River basins, with heterogeneous units interacting in the water politics of these river systems. No longer are states the main actors; interest groups have also raised their voices in the governing of these international river basins. The reason for this similarity in both river basins is that the states sharing them are part of the international community, and are therefore, just like any other state, not immune to 'deterritorialisation' and a diminished sovereignty and policy implementation capacity. Moreover, because these processes occur to a similar degree in both the Kunene and Orange River systems, it is an indication of a global trend in the role and involvement of interest groups in the water politics of WRMPs.

#### **4.1.5. Authority Crises**

The authority crises experienced by the affected states followed closely on the weakening of state sovereignty and 'deterritorialisation'. As regards the proposed Epupa Dam this authority crisis is visible because of the decision

paralysis affecting the implementation of the scheme. This situation has enhanced the image of the interest groups, although the difference of opinion between Angola and Namibia on the issue where to construct the intended dam in fact had the greater impact. Even so, at this stage no authority vacuum exists in the Kunene River basin, to be filled by interest groups, although it could be heading that way.

In comparison, the authority crisis regarding the LHWP is not as acute and visible as that in the Kunene River and is at most a partial crisis. None of the necessary elements of an authority crisis is evident in this case, i.e. bureaucratic disarray, executive-legislative stalemate, and most importantly, decision paralysis. What is noticeable regarding the LHWP is contestation between the interest groups and the South African government, the project authorities and the World Bank. At times, this authority was challenged, but subsequently restored, with the result that there was no decision paralysis. The authority crisis in the Kunene River thus differs from that in the Orange River basin, where it is noticeably absent.

#### **4.1.6. Subgroupism**

With respect to subgroupism, there is a high degree of similarity in both cases. Within the Kunene River basin, the Himba community exemplifies subgroupism. This subgroupism within the Kunene River is a product of the Himba's long-standing historical roots, reinforced by the lore of the community having survived South African efforts to integrate them into Southern Africa's political economy. Furthermore, the fact that there is a dispute between the Himba and the Namibian government, has led to increasing disappointment on the part of the interest groups with the governmental apparatus. The Himba's alienation, brought about by the apparent disregard of their minority rights and claims to the land, has thus led effectively to politics of identity.

To a similar extent, subgroupism is also evident in the Orange River. The Highland communities and the Lesotho interest groups' activities serve as examples. The Highland communities have historical links with each other as well as with the interest groups, because of the role the church played in some instances. Thus, they are like-minded and exist in a close-at-hand environment. Furthermore, because the interest groups were disappointed by the exclusion of the Highland communities from the decision-making process, an alienation from the governmental apparatus concerning the LHWP occurred. Due to the HCAG's establishment by the church organisations, during the 1988 workshop, there is clear evidence that subgroupism begets further subgroupism. This has led to the emergence of politics of identity among the communities and the Lesotho interest groups. The nature of these community-based politics of identity revolves around the fact that communities are under siege from a foreign government and a project authority that are collaborating in an attempt to destroy the livelihoods of community's members. These politics of identity have weakened both the South African government's and the project authority's consensus around the shared goal of the LHWP. However, the Lesotho government reacted favourably to this

politics of identity when it ordered the ombudsman enquiry. Hence, Lesotho regained some of its lost authority and legitimacy through the ombudsman process.

The significance of the similarity of the process of subgroupism lies within the traditional communities that are involved, their plight leading to more subgroupism, and the politics of identity that came about because of their disappointment with and alienation from the governmental system's performance. Even so, the only difference between the two cases regarding subgroupism is that Lesotho was the only state not to be weakened because it reacted to its citizens' criticism towards the LHDA's compensation policy in a favourable manner—that is, by referring to the ombudsman process.

## **4.2. Institutions**

In this section, the institutions contained in the comparative map, namely the states and the interest groups involved in the water politics of the WRMPs, are compared.

### **4.2.1. States**

As regards the structures of authority of the states, consideration is given to Namibia in the case of the Kunene River basin, and in the case of the Orange River system, Lesotho and South Africa.

#### **4.2.1.1. Structures of Authority**

Namibia's authority is based on and stipulated in its constitution, bylaws, legislative enactments and judicial decisions. In other words, the Namibian state's authority rests on the foundation of a democratic political system. Also important in this regard is that its authority is endowed in a steep tradition that grew out of SWAPO's independence struggle. It is this tradition that is partly responsible for the fact that the majority of Namibia's citizens habitually comply with government directives. The exception being the 1998 secessionist movement in the Kavango region. Nevertheless, the fact that the Himba was always an autonomous community and not part of the independence struggle explains to an extent why they are unwilling to let the government construct a dam in the territory they occupy.

In the case of Lesotho, the country has been independent since 1966, much longer than Namibia. Yet, since independence until 2002 Lesotho's political climate was characterised by political instability. However, in 2002 stability was ensured through a revision of the electoral system. Lesotho's authority is also endowed in a steep tradition, dating back to the 1840's when Moshesh united the Basotho nation. This tradition has led to the Basotho nation adopting an independent identity from that of South Africa, as has been exemplified by the refusal of Lesotho to be incorporated into the Republic (and its predecessors). The monarchy in Lesotho is also part of this tradition.

South Africa, like Lesotho and Namibia, also has a democratic political system, following the reforms initiated by former President De Klerk. In contrast, its traditional authority basis differs fundamentally from that of Lesotho, and to a certain extent Namibia. The struggle against *apartheid*, led by the ANC and PAC, is the tradition that informs citizens' willingness to comply habitually with the ANC-led government's directions. The only indication to the contrary was the purported planned *coup d'état* by right-wingers (the so called Boeremag) whose plans never came to fruition. Nevertheless, the struggle against *apartheid* by the ANC and PAC, gave the ANC in particular a high degree of traditional authority that assisted the organisation in winning the 1994 and subsequent elections. Thus, the South African government's authority structure is greatly enhanced by this tradition.

The democracies of Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa came about under different circumstances. In the case of Namibia it was the struggle for Namibia's independence, led by SWAPO, that brought about a new set of domestic micro-macro interactions leading to the specification of the state's authority in its constitution and laws. Lesotho's unstable political system since independence produced a different electoral system that dictates future micro-macro interactions. It also has a much longer democratic tradition than that of Namibia. In South Africa, the struggle against inequality and disenfranchisement (a direct consequence of *apartheid*) gave way to a new dispensation and the election of the ANC-led government. It is these occurrences that had an influence on the identity of the three states' governments, which, in turn, had an impact on the conduct of the micro-macro interactions regarding the water politics of the proposed Epupa Dam and the LHWP.

#### 4.2.1.2. Types of Authority

As regards the types of authority of the states, consideration is given to the following types of authority namely, moral, knowledge, reputational, issue-specific and affiliative authority.

**(a) Moral Authority:** Has there been a reduction in the moral authority of the Namibian government regarding its plans to construct another dam on the Kunene River? To a certain extent, yes. Factors that contributed to this are the 'scientific proof' the interest groups used to criticize the feasibility study, Nujoma's disapproval of the involvement of foreign interest groups in the debate, and the Himba being portrayed by interest groups as the victims of human rights abuse. These factors led to the tarnishing of the Namibian government's reputation, in the face of the interest groups, as a moral entity that took the interests of *all* its citizens to heart. Another element in the equation is the fact that Mbeki did not attempt to influence Nujoma not to construct the dam. This could have been seen as tantamount to discrimination for South Africa was involved in implementing the LHWP. However, the fact that the Himba were allowed to present their views at hearings in Windhoek, prevented the total loss of the government's moral authority.



There was also a reduction in the moral authority of the South African government, the project authorities (the LHDA especially), and to a certain extent the World Bank. Factors that contributed to this were the interest groups' continuous criticism of the Project, their use of 'scientific proof', the corruption scandal that rocked the Project, and the ombudsman's investigation. This led to the creation of an image that the implementing authorities were dishonest and that they did not perform their task properly. However, meetings with members of the Alexandra community, the failed MOU, the direct contact between the HCAG and the World Bank, and the World Bank's investigation into the labour unrest prevented a total loss of moral authority.

There is therefore a high degree of similarity between the loss of moral authority of the Namibian and South African governments and the implementing authorities of the LHWP. In both cases, habitual compliance on the part of local communities to policy was not readily forthcoming. The only government not to lose a great deal of moral authority was the Lesotho government through the ombudsman investigation. Different factors led to the loss of moral authority in respect of each case study, namely the different sets of actors involved. In the case of Epupa, the World Bank is not involved whereas it was in the case of the LHWP. In the case of the proposed Epupa Dam, there are also no implementing authorities, like the LHDA and TCTA.

**(b) Knowledge Authority:** The fact that the Namibian government changed the feasibility study team, led to the Himba community dismissing the team as untrustworthy. Trust had already been established between the original feasibility study team and the Himba, and when the one from the University of Namibia replaced this team, habitual compliance of the Himba towards the proposed dam was irrevocably damaged. The loose coalition of interest groups that developed since the early 1990s and the use of the Internet to get their message across led to the decreasing reputation of this type of authority. For instance, the IRN runs a website continuously, regularly updated on the issues related to the proposed project. This availability of alternative information has created a measure of cynicism towards the arguments of the Namibian government and NamPower for the future construction of the dam.

The IRN's website on the LHWP is similar to that of the proposed Epupa Dam. On it, articles, press releases and statements are published and regularly updated. This also gives a view of the Project that differs from the one communicated by the implementing authorities, especially the LHDA and TCTA and which in turn similarly induced a certain degree of cynicism towards the arguments of the implementing authorities.

Thus, in both cases, the IRN's use of microelectronic technology has produced distrust towards the views of the Namibian government on the one hand and the LHWP's on the other. Yet, in the case of the intended Epupa Dam, the Himba's reluctance to accept the University of Namibia's feasibility

team has led to even more pronounced cynicism regarding, and suspicion of Namibia's suggested policy. In other words, in both cases the governments and implementing authorities' practices and rendition of events have been the object of suspicion and at times ridicule. In contrast, the knowledge authority of the interest groups has increased.

**(c) Reputational Authority:** Declining reputational authority is closely related to the erosion of the knowledge and moral authority of the governments and implementing authorities. Because of the latter, their reputations have been damaged considerably. If the Namibian and South African governments should attempt to implement larger dam projects in future, they will most probably also lose reputational authority. In contrast, the only government that has gained in reputation is again Lesotho, because of its crackdown on corrupt MNCs and the ombudsman investigation.

**(d) Issue-specific Authority:** In the case of the envisaged Epupa Dam, the Namibian government has lost much of its issue-specific authority to provide electricity on account of two factors. Firstly, it has difficulty in implementing the project because compliance towards the intended project is not forthcoming from the Himba community. Secondly, there is also the issue of Angola wanting to rehabilitate the Gové Dam and for this purpose it is propounding the construction of a dam at the Baynes site. This was not the case with the Lesotho and South African governments' issue-specific authority. The fact that Phase 1A and B had been completed is an indication of this, despite the interest groups' criticism of the project. Thus, regarding water affairs, the South African government's issue-specific authority is still intact. There is therefore a difference between the two governments' issue-specific authority. Whereas Namibia cannot readily even begin to implement its policy regarding the intended hydroelectric power plant, Lesotho and South Africa were able to do so during the first two phases of the LHWP.

**(e) Affiliative Authority:** There is a significant difference between Namibia, on the one hand and Lesotho and South Africa on the other, in producing habitual compliance to implement Epupa and the LHWP, respectively. In the case of Namibia, the loyalty of the Himba towards their own kin is one of the most debilitating factors. This was not the case within Lesotho. Although the Lesotho Highlanders were critical of the Project, their loyalty towards the Basotho nation was unmoving. South Africa also does not have the same problem Namibia has, except where the Alexandra community indicated their unwillingness towards habitual compliance regarding Phase 1A and B of the Project. As was the case with the Lesotho Highlanders, the Alexandra community is still loyal towards the South African state and government. Thus, the Himba, their independence, and traditional lifestyle are the gist of the reason for the significant difference between the degree of affiliative authority between Namibia, Lesotho, and South Africa. The Himba factor is therefore expected to be the 'Achilles' heel' of the proposed dam in the long run.

#### **4.2.1.3. Nature of Transnationalism**

In both cases, there is a stark difference between the nature of transnationalism in respect of Namibia on the one hand, and of Lesotho and South Africa on the other. The reason for this is the fact that different states are either implementing or want to implement the WRMP. This has led to different actors, apart from interest groups, being active in the planning and implementation process of both WRMPs. For instance, Namibia has at this stage only contact with Angola, because the Kunene River is shared by these two countries. In addition, there is no consensus on the dam site since Angola favours the Baynes site and Namibia the Epupa site.

During 1986, South Africa and Lesotho had reconciled differences and overcome a tumultuous relationship to jointly implement the LHWP. The financing and construction of the Project forced Lesotho and South Africa to develop intergovernmental relations, most notably with the World Bank and a variety of MNCs that were mainly responsible for the physical construction of the infrastructure of Phases 1A and 1B. Moreover, the more severe confrontational relationship between the Namibian government and the interest groups is not evident in the case of Lesotho's and South Africa's interaction with the interest groups. There is therefore a greater mixture of conflict and cooperation in the case of the LHWP than in the case of Epupa.

The significance of these differences lies in the differing geographical locations of the two river systems within SADC. In short, these two factors gave rise to different sets of actors being involved in the respective WRMPs, with consequent differences in the nature of transnationalism.

#### **4.2.2. Interest Groups**

This section explores and assesses structures of authority, types of authority and the nature of transnationalism of the interest groups.

##### **4.2.2.1. Structures of Authority**

There is a great deal of similarity in the authority structures of the interest groups involved in the Kunene and Orange River basins. In both cases, none of the communal interest groups, namely the Himba and Lesotho Highlanders, resorted to coercion or the threat of the use of force to mobilise their members to campaign against the WRMPs. The reason for this is that whereas most interest groups rely on voluntary membership, the Himba and most of the Lesotho Highland communities are the exception since their membership is derived from kinship. There is thus a high degree of habitual compliance within all the interest groups, since they are based either on voluntary association or on kinship ties. The interest groups' authority is founded on informal as well as formal sources of legitimacy, strengthened by a horizontal or lateral network between them and vertical tribal hierarchies in the case of the Himba and Lesotho Highlands communities. The lateral network is also an important element in the establishment of loose coalitions.

#### 4.2.2.2. Types of Authority

As regards the types of authority of the interest groups, consideration is given to the following types of authority namely, moral, knowledge, reputational, issue-specific and affiliative authority.

**(a) Moral Authority:** It is evident that there is a high degree of similarity of the interest groups' moral authority. In the case of the Kunene River basin, the LAC and the NSHR with their record of protecting the human rights of people are pivotal. These two interest groups found an ally in the Himba community because of their ability to garner the support of those in need of human rights protection. The LAC and NSHR are therefore backed by moral authority, which attaches a high value to the human dignity, freedom, and well-being of the Himba. In comparison, the variety of interest groups with an environmental agenda, are also supported by this moral authority although they do not focus exclusively on the Himba. They are therefore 'fighting' for the rights of the environment, supported by an ecocentric moral authority.

In the case of the LHWP, the various ecumenical interest groups are similarly endowed with moral authority, for example Christian Aid, the HCAG, the MCC and Oxfam. For these organisations, their ecclesiastical calling for the well-being of their fellow human beings is the basis of their moral authority and of the habitual compliance of their members and other like-minded interest groups. The historical relationship between Lesotho society and the Christian church is an important factor in this moral authority. Moshesh had already established a close and strong relationship with French Protestant missionaries in the 1840s, a relationship that was strengthened when Dr John Philip, the British missionary leader, visited Moshesh in 1842 (Keegan, 1996: 248-249). The direct involvement of the churches and their watchdog role are further elements of this relationship. These factors have also contributed to the establishment of a loose coalition between the ecumenical and environmental interest groups. Since the latter focus on the environmental consequences of the LHWP, they also exhibit an ecocentric moral authority.

Hence, there is a high degree of similarity between the moral authority of the interest groups respectively involved in the water politics of the proposed Epupa Dam and the LHWP. The only difference lies in the types of interest groups. In the case of Epupa, interest groups with a human rights agenda cooperate with environmental interest groups. In the case of the LHWP, ecumenical interest groups cooperate with environmental interest groups. In both cases, the moral authority of the interest groups has increased substantially, irrespective of the fact that different types of interest groups are involved, who derive their moral authority from different issues.

**(b) Knowledge Authority:** Although not as visible as the moral authority, the knowledge authority of the interest groups in both cases is to a great extent similar. As has been mentioned earlier, in the case of the planned Epupa Dam, interest groups themselves made use of the epistemic community and

their own in-house research teams. This in-house research was used by the IRN and other interest groups to investigate and recommend alternatives to the planned hydroelectric power station. This was also the case with the LHWP, where Christian Aid, the IRN, the MCC, and Oxfam used field workers in the affected area to research the potential effect of the Project on the Highlanders. This was done in cooperation with the Lesotho interest groups, most notably the TRC and the HCAG.

Although the research produced limited results in both cases, it nevertheless represented an alternative to the knowledge the governments (more specifically engineers and other scientists) had produced and disseminated to advance the projects. In both cases, a large degree of similarity therefore exists regarding the content of the knowledge. In the case of Epupa it was the potential impact of the dam on the social integrity of the Himba community and the environment, and in the case of the LHWP, it was the social integrity and the environment sustaining this social cohesion that defined the content of knowledge.

**(c) Reputational Authority:** Although a high degree of similarity exists in the moral and knowledge authority of the interest groups, their reputational authority is dissimilar in each case. In the case of the proposed Epupa Dam, the interest groups were unable to use their reputation in the international community to produce habitual compliance from the Namibian government. This was not entirely the case with the interest groups' role and involvement during the construction of the LHWP. The reputation and ability of the interest groups to influence the policy process was not lost on the World Bank. This reputation was reinforced by the past experience of the World Bank, considering that interest groups had previously been able to prevent it from assisting in the construction of other large dam projects such as the Sardar Sarovar Dam in India. In other words, the reputation of interest groups based on their ability to emphasize the negative effects of dam building projects, is a source of reputational authority.

Thus, the fundamental difference in both cases is again the fact that one WRMP was constructed and the other only being planned, with subsequent different types of actors involved in both. In particular, the intergovernmental relationship between South Africa and the World Bank, made it possible for the interest groups to influence the World Bank personally.

**(d) Issue-specific Authority:** Many of the interest groups involved in both cases have become experts on the issue of WRMPs, and the effect they have on the environment and human beings. This is exemplified by the fact that these interest groups, most notably the IRN, occupy a central position in the establishment of the WCD. Yet, in both cases the interest groups were to a certain extent ridiculed by Namibian and South African government officials, for not being knowledgeable regarding the issues of large dam construction, and the benefits derived from these structures. This was especially the case with foreign interest groups. Thus, it was not so much their knowledge of a specific issue that was ridiculed, but rather their interventionist type of

approach to the issues at hand. What is noticeable in both cases as well is that interest groups with a certain type of issue-specific knowledge are involved. These range from interest groups with an environmental agenda, to those, such as the IRN, that campaign specifically against large dams and those with a human rights and labour agenda.

**(e) Affiliative Authority:** In both cases, another striking similarity between the interest groups is their affiliative authority. In the Kunene River basin, this is especially the case with the Himba community and its authority inherent to the shared affiliation through common cultural, ethnic and religious roots. The Himba depend largely on affiliative authority to foster habitual compliance among its members and to induce protest against the construction of the proposed Epupa Dam. Similarly, in 1988 when the churches in Lesotho convened their workshop to discuss the likely impact of the LHWP on the Highland communities, their shared Christian affiliations led to the establishment of the HCAG, and the rallying of other ecumenical interest groups to the cause of the Lesotho interest groups. Affiliative authority also sustains the loose coalition that exists between the ecumenical interest groups. In both cases, the perception that the Himba and Highland communities were beleaguered by their respective governments' intentions to construct WRMPs therefore contributed to the strengthening of affiliative authority.

#### 4.2.2.3. Nature of Transnationalism

Because of the high degree of similarity between the types of authority inherent to the interest groups active in the Kunene and Orange River basins, a similar degree of transnationalism is prevalent. In both cases, like-minded, but different sets of actors are coalescing in their campaign against the WRMPs. The amicable and cooperative relations that exist between the various interest groups in both cases are not only noticeable, but also serve to bridge and link the two cases. The linkage is made possible since the same interest groups are involved, such as EMG, FIVAS and the IRN. Moreover, the bridging effect makes it possible for the loose coalition to extend their influence to the domain of the other WRMPs as well. The linkage manifests in the complementarities of the transnational roles of the interest groups. They do not see each other as 'others', but as like-minded actors who are arguing for the worthy cause of upholding democratic principles and the well-being of other human beings. Thus, the nature of the transnationalism of the interest groups has made it possible for communal and associational (promotional) interest groups to have contact with institutional and associational (sectional) interest groups, and *vice versa*. The significance of this is that, unlike states with different ideological mind-sets and identities, interest groups readily form loose coalitions despite their ideological and identity differences. In other words, conflict among different interest groups, articulating the same cause, is highly unlikely where transnational bonds exist.

## **5. Conclusion**

In this chapter, a comparative analysis was made using a dynamic comparative map. The purpose of the map was to indicate the degree of similarities and dissimilarities between the two case studies and therefore presented a 'snapshot' comparison of the intended Epupa Dam and the completed LHWP, based on the specific criteria used.

**Table 21. A comparative map of the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in the Kunene and Orange River basins.**

		<b>Case Studies</b>	
		<b>Kunene River (Proposed Epupa Dam)</b>	<b>Orange River (LHWP)</b>
<b>Processes</b>	<b>Criteria</b>		
	Micro-Macro Interactions	Interest groups and states are interacting with one another. Individuals are prominent actors especially representing the Himba community	Interest groups and states are interacting with one another. Individuals are prominent in the LHWP especially representing the Lesotho Highlanders.
	Organisational Explosion	Huge organisational explosion from the early 1990s to the present. Forty-nine actors are involved in the water politics of the proposed Epupa Dam.	Huge organisational explosion from the mid-1980s to the present. Forty-one actors are involved in the LHWP's water politics.
	Bifurcation of Global Structures	Two 'worlds' exist in the Kunene River basin: the state-centric world made up of states, their institutions and IGOs, and the multi-centric world comprising of the interest groups.	Two 'worlds' exist in the Orange River basin: the one is made up of states, their institutions and IGOs, the other consists of interest groups.
	Weakening of States and Territoriality	The Namibian government's authority and legitimacy have decreased considerably.	The South African government and LHDA's authority and legitimacy have decreased to a certain extent, while Lesotho's has increased.
	Authority Crises	Decision paralysis is endemic to the Kunene River because the Namibian and Angolan governments cannot agree on a dam site.	Less of an authority crisis than in the Kunene River basin, because the South African and Lesotho governments have already implemented Phases 1A and 1B of the LHWP.
	Subgroupism	Interest groups seek like-minded others in their struggle against Epupa, which led to a transnational pattern of interaction between domestic and international interest groups (see Appendix 3 for map).	Interest groups sought like-minded others in their struggle against the LHWP, which led to a transnational pattern of interaction between domestic and international interest groups (see Appendix 6 for map).
<b>Institutions</b>	<b>States</b>		
	<b>Structures of authority</b>	Angola and Namibia are involved. Angola is in a state of transition from a Marxist-Leninist political system to a potentially democratic one, while Namibia is already a fledgling democracy.	Lesotho, South Africa and project authorities are involved. Lesotho has changed from an unstable democratic society to a stable one. South Africa is a fledgling democracy.
	<b>Types of authority</b>		
	Moral	A significant reduction of Namibia's moral authority.	A limited reduction of South Africa's moral authority, and an increase in Lesotho's.



		Knowledge	Changing of original feasibility team led to a diminution of knowledge authority.	Alternative view of the Project given by interest groups led to a reduction of knowledge authority on the part of the Project authorities and the governments.
		Reputational	Loss of moral and knowledge authority led to a reduction of reputational authority on the part of the Namibian government.	Loss of moral and knowledge authority led to a diminishing of reputational authority of the South African government, the LHDA, TCTA and World Bank.
		Issue-specific	Loss of issue-specific authority regarding the supply of electricity.	Increase in issue-specific authority regarding the supply of water to the Vaal River system.
		Affiliative	The Himba do not comply with the Namibian policy on Epupa.	Lesotho Highlanders are still loyal to the Basotho nation and in South Africa only a few inhabitants of the Alexandra township did not readily comply with the LHWP policy.
		<b>Nature of transnationalism</b>	Different states, IGOs and interest groups are transnationally involved.	Different states, IGOs and interest groups are transnationally involved.
	<b>Interest Groups</b>	<b>Structures of authority</b>	None of the interest groups resorted to coercion or threatened to use force to mobilise members against Epupa.	None of the interest groups resorted to coercion or threatened to use force to mobilise members against the LHWP.
		<b>Types of authority</b>		
		Moral	Human rights interest groups were backed by moral authority.	Ecumenical interest groups were backed by moral authority.
		Knowledge	Epistemic community and in-house research teams were used.	Epistemic community and in-house research teams were used.
		Reputational	Interest groups were unable to use reputational authority to produce habitual compliance.	The reputation of the interest groups to influence the policy process was not lost on the World Bank.
		Issue-specific	The interest groups have become 'experts' in the implementation of large dam projects.	The interest groups have become 'experts' in the implementation of large dam projects.
		Affiliative	Himba community exhibits a high degree of affiliative authority.	Various interest groups in Lesotho have a shared affiliation towards the Christian religion.
		<b>Nature of transnationalism</b>	Like-minded interest groups coalesced in their campaigns against Epupa.	Like-minded interest groups coalesced in their campaigns against the LHWP.

Table 22. A comparative map indicating the degree of dissimilarities and similarities of the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in the Kunene and Orange River basins.

Criteria		Case Studies	
		Degree of Dissimilarities	Degree of Similarities
<b>Processes</b>	Micro-Macro Interactions		□
	Organisational Explosion		□
	Bifurcation of Global Structures		□
	Weakening of States and Territoriality		□
	Authority Crises	□	
	Subgroupism		□
<b>Institutions</b>	<b>States</b>	<b>Structures of authority</b>	□
		<b>Types of authority</b>	
		Moral	□
		Knowledge	
		Reputational	
		Issue-specific	□
		Affiliative	□
	<b>Interest Groups</b>	<b>Nature of transnationalism</b>	□
		<b>Structures of authority</b>	□
		<b>Types of authority</b>	□
		Moral	
		Knowledge	□
		Reputational	□
		Issue-specific	□
Affiliative	□		
<b>Nature of transnationalism</b>	□		

## CHAPTER 8

### EVALUATION

#### 1. Introduction

As an evaluation, this chapter concludes the study by answering the research question and by addressing the problem statement. This is done with reference to a summary of the problem statement and propositions, the study itself and the findings of the study. The resulting critique is levelled towards the transnational role and involvement of interest groups, followed by recommendations concerning both the theory and the practice of the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in the water politics of the Kunene and Orange River basins. A conclusion is drawn in the last part of the chapter.

#### 2. The Problem Statements

As has been mentioned in chapter one, the primary research question is: To what extent do the transnational activities of interest groups, concerning the implementation of WRMPs in selected Southern African international river basins, undermine the acceptance of policies and actions authorised at the state level of world politics? Phrased in another way, to what extent do the transnational role and involvement of interest groups challenge and erode state agential power (at a national and international level) in respect of water politics?

Two secondary questions arise from this main problem statement. The first asks to what extent do interest groups, as transnational actors, bridge the traditional boundary (distinction) between the domestic and international domains. The second subsidiary research question enquires to what extent do interest groups, as non-state actors, influence and change the existing relationships between state and society (government and citizen) at both the domestic and international levels.

Consequently, the first subsidiary proposition is that in respect of water politics, interest groups are bridging the boundaries between the domestic and international domains to such an extent that a distinction between the two spheres can no longer be maintained. The second subsidiary proposition is that interest groups are influencing and changing the traditional relationship between state and society or government and citizen to such an extent that the citizen is empowered to influence governmental policies at an international level. Based on these sub-propositions, it is the primary proposition that in respect of the water politics of international river basins in Southern Africa, state agential power is not significantly eroded by the transnational role and involvement of interest groups.

### 3. Findings

In both case studies, there was a substantial challenge to and erosion of the national and international agential power of the states. In a temporal context, previous involvement of interest groups in both Epupa and the LHWP was limited to the involvement of international consulting engineering companies, in other words MNCs. Interest group involvement was nearly non-existent, especially in the case of the Orange River basin. In this system, there was no opposition to the implementation of WRMPs before construction on the LHWP began. Nevertheless, in the Kunene River basin some opposition from interest groups, especially the church, did exist before Epupa was actively mooted by the Namibian government in the early 1990s. Yet, this opposition of the church was not of a collective and transnational nature; it was of a domestic and individual type. Moreover, this limited opposition was mainly concerned with the construction of the Calueque Scheme and the Ruacana hydropower complex. The church was also not so much against the WRMPs, as against South Africa's occupation of Namibian territory, and the disregard of human rights, especially in the context of the border war at that time. Thus, the development of the water resources of the Kunene River basin was a subordinate issue in the context of the wider regional politics where South Africa took centre stage.

The number of interest groups involved in the water politics of both WRMPs changed significantly during the period from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s. This was consistent with the phasing out of hostilities between South Africa and the rest of the countries in Southern Africa. This development was conducive to the establishment of associational promotional interest groups, such as EMG, ELA and GEM focusing on the environment and human rights issues.

Hence, in the Kunene and Orange River basins, there was a phenomenal increase in transnational interest group activity that undermined the acceptance of the actions and policies authorised at the state level. This undermining was at first subnational and national, but gradually became transnational as more interest groups from the periphery and outer-periphery became involved in the water politics of the WRMPs. What is also of importance, in both Epupa and the LHWP, are the issues that were accepted and rejected by the interest groups.

In the Kunene River basin, the Himba are totally against the intended Epupa Dam, which is not the case regarding the LHWP. In the latter case, it was the compensation and relocation policies of the LHDA that was the proverbial thorn in the Lesotho Highlanders' side. There is therefore a difference in degree of the challenge and erosion of the policies initiated at the state level in both cases. This is indicated by the agential power of both the interest groups and states that share the international river basins.

In the Kunene River basin, the interest groups have moderate international agential power, and moderate to high domestic agential power. Namibia's

international and domestic agential power is substantially lower than that of the interest groups. One important factor that explains this, is the fact that Angola is also resisting, to some extent, Namibia's plans to construct a dam downstream from the Epupa Waterfalls. Although Angola is not collaborating with the interest groups, the country still has an impact on the agential power of the interest groups. Had Angola supported Epupa, the interest groups' agential power would have been substantially lower. Another factor is the high profile achieved by the Himba community by refusing to accept the policy concerning Epupa as legitimate. To elaborate, the Himba are a fiercely independent and 'rich' people, with a traditional lifestyle matched by few other tribes on the African continent. These aspects explain their appeal to environmental interest groups, who propagate sustainability at all levels of society. The Himba are undeniably the epitome (to the environmental interest groups) of a sustainable community, who live in harmony with their natural environment by not degrading it through a capitalist system of wealth accumulation. They are also seen as a minority people, by the human rights interest groups, under siege from the Namibian government. To protect their minority rights, these interest groups are assisting them in their 'fight' against Epupa.

The opposite is the case in the Orange River basin. Regarding the LHWP, South Africa's international and domestic agential power is much higher than that of the interest groups. Yet, the interest groups have high domestic agential power, especially those based in Lesotho, and moderate international agential power.

South Africa's international and domestic agential power relative to the LHWP is higher than that of the interest groups for a number of reasons. Firstly, the South African government had been contemplating the idea of transferring water from Lesotho to the Vaal River system for 30 years before the signing of the LHWP Treaty in 1986. The seriousness of the South African government's plans is contained in the following aspects: a consulting engineer (Ninham Shand) first looked into the project and drew up plans for the project (these plans were later revised during discussions between the two countries' respective departments of water affairs); the Project was used by both Lesotho and South Africa for political leverage as the Vaal River system gradually became inadequate in providing water to South Africa's economic heartland—Gauteng. Thus, South Africa, from 1956 to 1986, invested huge amounts of technical and political resources into the Project. These technical and political commitments culminated in the signing of the Treaty, outlining how the Project would be implemented (the technical or functional aspect) and who would be involved (the political side of the negotiations). Secondly, during the planning phases of the Project, from 1956 to 1986, there was no interest group involvement except for the MCC that became involved only in 1985. Eventually, when work on the project started in 1986, there was only a limited number of interest groups active in the debate. There was therefore no substantial challenge to and subsequent erosion of the South African government's intention regarding the LHWP dating back to 1956. This put the interest groups at a disadvantage, and also explains why they mainly

contested the compensation and resettlement policies of the LHDA and mounted criticism against the South African government on these and other issues.

Thirdly, the interest groups could not effectively challenge the economic power of South Africa concerning the financing of the project. Put differently, because the World Bank only financed four per cent of the project, the interest groups could not follow a route whereby they could lobby the Bank, and other financiers to withdraw funding from the Project. The fact that South Africa borrowed money from the domestic money market gave it an advantage in this matter. Fourthly, SWAPO gave Lesotho its consent towards the construction of the LHWP. This meant that Namibia was in principle supporting the Project, which is not the case with Angola and Epupa. Hence, there is no undermining of the project from one of the core state actors active in the Orange River basin. The interest groups were therefore unable to use such an issue to their advantage in their debate on the LHWP.

In the fifth place, the ANC changed its stance from being anti-LHWP to pro-LHWP, when it became the ruling party. This meant that the Project was backed by the ruling party's ideological power. Related to this is the fact that during the ANC's anti-LHWP stance, there was no substantial transnational and domestic interest group involvement in the debate. This transnational role and involvement of interest groups occurred only later, after the ANC's changed stance. In the sixth place, international river basin commissions (like ORACOM) can confer a high level of agential power to the basin states of an international river. These river regimes are like a club to which only the riparian states, but not interest groups, have access. Decisions regarding policy actions within the river basin are made by the states and are discussed in these regimes (these commissions are therefore exclusive state fora). Interest groups will only have outsider status, unless the governments of the riparian states should decide to allow them representation on the Commission, or if governments are pressured to include interest groups.

The reason for the interest groups' moderate agential power, concerning the LHWP has to do with Lesotho's changed identity over the past few years. Because the Lesotho government adopted a tough stance against corrupt MNCs and changed its electoral system, it became more responsive (reflexive) to the wishes of the Lesotho interest groups (seen in the case of the ombudsman inquiry) than in the past (especially regarding the labour unrest). Regardless, South Africa's involvement in the Project had a balancing effect on the interest groups' international agential power. South Africa's high agential power made it difficult for the transnational network to erode South Africa's policies on the LHWP. However, in their attempt to oppose South Africa's policy, the interest groups mounted a significant challenge towards the South African government's stance on the Project.

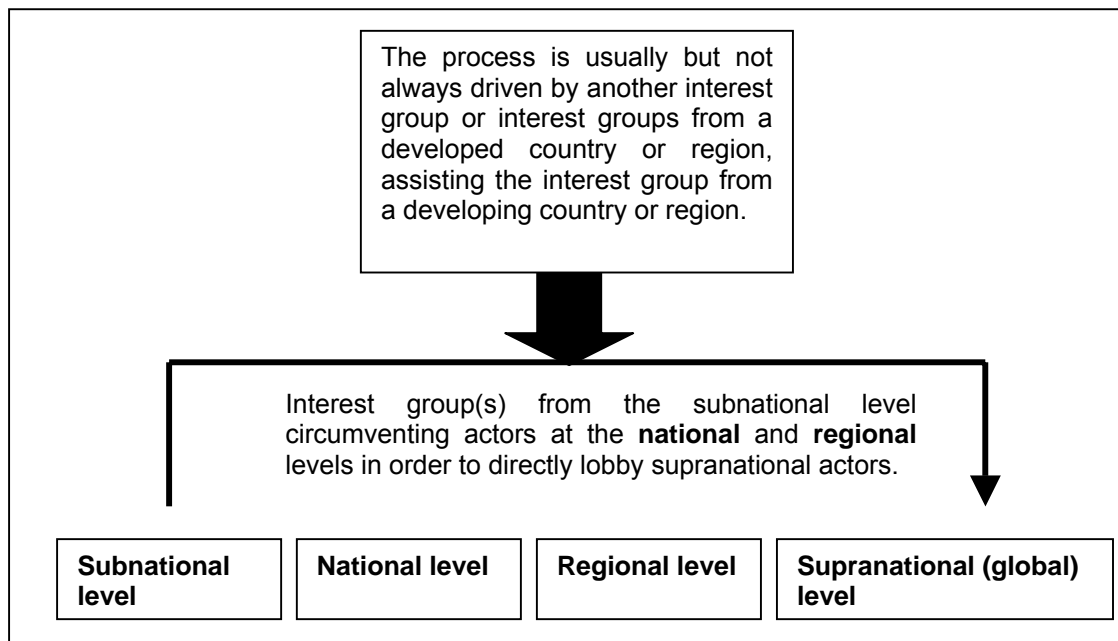
Regarding the extent to which interest groups as transnational actors are influencing and bridging the traditional boundary (distinction) between the domestic and international domains, they are able to do so through the variety

of roles they play. Although the domestic and international agential power of the interest groups is questionable, especially regarding the LHWP, they are *the* actors who bridged the divide between the domestic and international domains. Not even the riparian states were able to do so and in such an innovative and cost-effective manner. Regarding the proposed Epupa Dam, interest groups were able to establish a loose coalition or network that spanned the entire globe within a matter of years. This is an indication of the effective manner in which the interest groups made contact with like-minded others. Even so, it must be remembered that it was an individual who started the whole process of the transnational involvement of the interest groups regarding Epupa. This was also the case with the LHWP; even before the signing of the LHWP Treaty in 1986, the MCC had already been transnationally committed to the Project. To sum up, individuals (micro actors) and interest groups (macro actors) are, like states or any other actor in international affairs, important initiators and influencers of and bridges between the international and domestic domains.

That being the case, to what extent then can interest groups influence and bridge the divide between these two domains? To answer the question it will be necessary to determine at which system levels can interest groups operate simultaneously. With respect to the water politics of the WRMPs, the interest groups have simultaneously been operating in the subnational, national, regional, and supranational (global) domains. On the subnational level, the interest groups at the core interacted with each other on a continuous basis. This was the case in respect of the Lesotho Highlanders and the Lesotho interest groups. Regarding the Himba, they deliberated among one another and formed themselves into a communal interest group—the EAC, indicating the extent to which their kinship ties had evolved to provide a basis for the interest group. Nationally, the interest groups interacted with other like-minded groups as well as with government. The same situation developed on the regional level. On the supranational (global) level, the actors with whom the interest groups interacted were somewhat different to those at the subnational, national and regional levels. On the supranational (global) level, intergovernmental organisations, like the World Bank, and other governments became targets of the interest groups' lobbying endeavours. In the case of Epupa, the Himba chiefs' visit to Europe is particularly indicative of this situation. The same applies to the LHWP, where Ramokoatsi's meeting with World Bank officials and the Alexandra Three's lobbying of the World Bank, serve as examples. Hence, interest groups, as transnational actors, are able to influence and bridge the traditional boundary (distinction) between the domestic and international domains at the subnational, national, regional and supranational (global) levels. Moreover, leaders from collectivities (Kapika and Tjavara and Ramokoatsi), at the subnational level are able, through the assistance of other like-minded interest groups, to circumvent the national and regional levels and to interact with other actors directly (e.g. the World Bank, European Parliamentarians and US officials) on the supranational (global) level. This also holds true for individuals who are not leaders of collectivities, for example the Alexandra Three. In addition, an important variable in this process is the involvement of interest groups, usually but not always from

developed countries, to assist those interest groups from the developing country financially, to circumvent the national and regional levels. This process is called circumvention: the deliberate circumvention of the national and regional levels to lobby actors directly on the supranational (global) level (see Figure 26).

**Figure 26. The process of circumvention.**



Circumvention is an important element in the relationship between interest groups and governments regarding the implementation of policies or programmes. Interest groups are willing to circumvent a state's sovereignty, by lobbying other governments or IGOs to get them involved in an internal matter on the interest group's behalf. In this way, there is not a distinction between the boundaries of the domestic and international domains; it is completely eroded. This means that the territorial integrity of the state has also been compromised. Thus, interest groups are active and unfeeling when it comes to the sacrifice of a state's sovereignty and territorial integrity when bridging the boundary, and to influence states and other actors beyond a country's borders. What this also means is that interest groups will do anything in their power to articulate an issue, even if such an action compromises state sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Following this, norms are also drivers (independent variables) of the interactive process between interest groups and governments or other actors. This interaction is linked to the process of normative commensalism. Normative commensalism assists interest groups to learn what is happening in the hydropolitical environment and to influence governments, IGOs and other non-state entities. Because influence is a component of power relationships, norms and norm creation act as facilitators within the interactive process. Thus, when considering the circumventionist process and normative



commensalism, interest groups and norms are active in the realm of world politics to bring about different interactive approaches. Stated differently, interest groups as actors, and norms as abstract shared values, are independent variables in the political process of international river basins.

With the disappearance of the divide between the domestic and international political domains, the traditional hierarchical relationship between state and society (government and the citizen)—at both the domestic and international levels—also changes. Interest groups have mainly done this through the erosion of habitual compliance with policies. To be more precise, the different roles interest groups play cause this changed hierarchical relationship between state and society. Through their three generic roles, namely discursive, participation and philanthropic, interest groups have come to fill the void left by governments. This void is constantly recreated, as governments are unable to fulfil their responsibilities towards their citizens, like the provision of wholesome freshwater and a healthy and safe environment to live in. From the Epupa and LHWP issues it is clear that the governments of the main riparian states intending to, or actually implementing, the WRMPs, and the project authorities in the case of the LHWP, have reneged on their duty to 'look out' for the needs of the affected communities and the natural environment. Interest groups readily stepped in to take up the issues of the safeguarding of the Himba's minority rights and the Kunene's aquatic ecosystem, as well as lobbying for the improvement of the Lesotho Highlanders' living conditions.

Through the articulation of such salient issues, and the roles played by the interest groups in both the Epupa Project and LHWP, the interest groups have influenced and irrevocably changed the traditional hierarchical relationship between the state and society. In the past, this relationship was strictly hierarchical, with governmental decisions being implemented from the top down onto society. What has happened in the water sector over the past ten years in Southern Africa is that the hierarchy has in many instances fallen away or been inverted. Where it has disintegrated is where interest groups are communicating with governmental officials and project authorities on an equal footing. Where it has turned upside-down is where interest groups have been able to get their message across, and where government officials or project authorities have reacted to this. A clear example of this is the Lesotho parliamentary visit to the LHWP area, organised by the TRC. Thus, in a situation where interest groups lobby against a WRMP, there will most probably be a mixture of three 'hierarchical' situations: top-down, levelled and bottom-up. The prevalence of one situation will depend on the type of government system and the agential power of the states and interest groups. In the case of the proposed Epupa Dam, a mixture of a levelled and bottom-up relationship exists. Regarding the LHWP, top-down, levelled and bottom-up relationships characterised the entire history of interest group involvement. In all three hierarchical situations, the citizen is empowered to influence governmental policies, even if it is top-down with no consultations at the onset of the policy process. As the policy is implemented, interest groups will articulate issues concerning the policy or the policy process. Thus, policy

implementation is not an exclusively governmental endeavour; the citizen, through the interest group, also stakes his/her claim to the policy process.

#### **4. Critique**

Having answered the research question, a critique of the transnational role and involvement of interest groups is necessary. One of the most profound critical issues to be raised in this regard is to what extent interest groups are contributing to the democratic process. Closely related to the democratic process is the representation of interest groups of broader society, especially when democracy is defined as rule by the people. For instance, does the Alexandra Three represent the entire Alexandra community, or more specifically, who gave Ramokoatsi the mandate to meet with the World Bank? Moreover, when interest groups lobby from the outer- and inner-periphery, does it constitute intervention or is it foreign political engagement in the interest of minority groups and the environment? These are questions that are closely related to the issue of global governance, where governance is seen as the effective management and allocation of scarce resources within society, while non-state actors hold governments accountable for their actions when doing so. Interest groups should fulfil this role but should also be kept accountable by their constituents for their actions when lobbying transnationally.

#### **5. Recommendations**

Based on these findings, a number of recommendations are offered. These are grouped under three generic categories, namely, critical theoretical gaps, recommendations for a future research agenda and policy recommendations.

##### **5.1. Theoretical Challenges**

A number of critical theoretical gaps exist in the HSCT exclusively devoted to water politics. The identification of these gaps assists in the development of an alternative theory that is also exclusively devoted to water politics. Moreover, the theory of social constructivism assists in the development of this new theory, called hydro-normative commensalism, and explores the interaction between actors internal and external to the river basin, norms and normative commensalism.

The first major challenge within the HSCT is that it omits any explanation of the role of norms in politics. This has serious implications for the development of hydro-normative commensalism, because norms play such an important part in the transnational role and involvement of groups in the water politics of international river basins. Firstly, if the relationship between norms and actor behaviour are not explored, water politics itself is not adequately explained. Secondly, the HSCT deals mainly with social instability but it does not say too much about social stability regarding interest group lobbying, since its emphasis is on the internal dimension of water politics. Therefore, the HSCT does not bridge the divide between the domestic and external realms of water

politics. Thirdly, the HSCT emphasises the role of the state in the different transitions when water scarcities are encountered. Individuals are completely ignored, i.e. the theory does not explain how individuals, as part of collectivities, set about producing change in the water sector. The HSCT therefore does not shed much light on the role of interest groups in this regard. What it actually does, fourthly, is to place a too high premium on the ability of interest groups to bring about changes in the hydraulic mission. In other words, it concentrates too much on one role of interest groups—their influencing role. Having said this, a more comprehensive theory—hydro-normative commensalism—is proposed (see Figure 27).

Hydro-normative commensalism has a number of basic assumptions. The first assumption is that individuals are the initiators of change in the water politics of international river basins. In other words, individuals cause ‘tipping points’ or trigger events that reconfigure the composition of actors actively involved in the water politics of domestic and international river basins. These individuals are not only governmental, IGO or project authority officials, but also individuals who are not part of the governmental system and who are not leaders of state and non-state organisations. The individuals do not contract with the state to bring about change regarding water policies, but do so voluntarily and in an *ad hoc* manner. An individual, whenever he or she feels the need to act to bring about change in a domestic or international river basin, will do so without the consent of the state or any other collectivity. The reason why individuals act in this way is an overall change in the norm that governed the situation in the past, namely the norm relating to national loyalty towards the state. The individual no longer has a strong attachment towards the state or ruling government, as has been the case in the past. He or she is therefore quite able to shift his or her loyalty towards a non-state entity, or to ‘blow the whistle’ on governmental action that is expected to negatively affect other individuals or collectivities. Thus, altruism towards entities other than the state has taken shape and is informing individual’s attitudes and actions towards water politics. Moreover, human relations, including international relations, are no longer made up only of material conditions or forces, but of the thoughts and ideas about the human condition.

The second assumption, closely linked to the first, is that interest groups are together with states, the key drivers of water politics. Admittedly, interest groups consist of individuals who have a shared loyalty to each other, to the interest group and other like-minded interest groups. Their prominence does not only derive from the involvement of individuals, but also from the fact that the hydropolitical environment and the domestic and international system allow them to function as the main drivers. The nature of the domestic and international system and the hydropolitical environment is dynamic, allowing new actors and issues to appear on the global and domestic stage and agenda respectively. This environment is also predominantly democratic, which allows the voluntary association of interest groups to form loose coalitions, and to freely express and exchange ideas and influence the governmental policy process. Thus, norms are also drivers of water politics—the democratic norm is in this case a prime example.

The third assumption is that individuals, interest groups and states, create norms in order to direct water politics in domestic and international river basins. The identity and ideology of the particular actor play an important part in this regard with the shared beliefs composing and expressing the interests and identities of the actors. It is through an identity-informed ideology that an actor will create a certain norm that will in turn be used to establish the actor's reaction towards a particular issue and relationship with another actor. Discourses also play a part, but more in respect of the action-side of the equation than the identity, ideology and norm side. Thus, an identity informs an actor's ideology, which influences its norm creating ability, and discourses are produced. In other words, discourses on policies and issues are only invoked at a later stage of the policy process when the interest groups are interacting with the state, governmental officials, IGOs, project authorities and MNCs. The compilation of types of actors will of course differ when different issues are articulated within the domestic and international river basin, but the roles played by the interest groups will remain largely the same. Thus, another role that individuals, interest groups and states can play is that of norm creators, which falls under the discursive generic role. There is therefore a strong ideational element, based on the shared intersubjective beliefs among people, present in the water politics of WRMPs. This element is found within the coalition of interest groups and the states implementing the water project.

The fourth assumption is that the propensity for conflict between like-minded interest groups is very low because of the nature of the coalition between them. Within a loose coalition, it is easier to break away from the group if conflict arises, rather than to waste valuable resources to dominate the debate. In addition, the real focus is on influencing policies that are implemented by government. This implies that interest groups will rather concentrate on lobbying government than to 'fight' among themselves. Moreover, because interest groups cluster around certain norms, the norm acts as an inhibitor of conflict and sustains the relationship between them. Thus, by focusing on the norm, little time and energy is available for conflict within the coalition. Interest groups are therefore rational actors in the domestic and international political systems when campaigning against WRMPs.

The fifth assumption states that the hydropolitical environment acts like a 'laboratory' for interest groups and states. This means that interest groups and states observe the hydropolitical environment. This observation is then translated to create different norms, which in turn are used by interest groups and states for purposes of learning and influence. States will also use opposing or alternative norms to persuade interest groups not to lobby against a policy. In this case, the norm of WRMPs being vehicles of socio-economic development is propagated as part of the state's influencing endeavour. Another norm, that translates opposition to government policy or programmes into an act of disloyalty, is also invoked by the state.

The sixth assumption is that interest groups use the international system as a resource pool in their efforts to lobby government. Circumvention is the process used by interest groups to gain access to this resource pool. This process is therefore one of the ways through which relations are formed and expressed. The resource pool not only contains other state actors willing to lend support to interest groups in their lobbying endeavours, but also particular norms that interest groups will use in the debate on a policy matter. This resource pool also comprises the international river basin itself. The natural and geographical environment of the river basin, namely the hydro-political environment, therefore also serves as a resource pool from which interest groups and states receive clues on how to develop an argument for or against a WRMP. These clues will be translated into norms.

To conclude this section on hydro-normative commensalism it is necessary to develop a new definition of water (hydro-) politics. Three definitions are currently available, namely those of Elhance (1997), Meissner (1998) and Turton (2003a). Elhance (1997: 218) declares that 'water politics is the systematic analysis of interstate conflict and cooperation regarding international water resources'. Meissner (1998: 4-5) provides a more elaborate definition that states that 'water politics is the systemic investigation of the interaction between states, non-state actors and a host of other participants, like individuals within and outside the state, regarding the authoritative allocation and/or use of international and national water resources—rivers, aquifers, lakes, wetlands and glaciers'. Turton (2003a: 16-17), in his criticism of the latter two definitions of water politics, is of the opinion that 'hydropolitics is the authoritative allocation of values in society with respect to water.' He furthermore notes that: 'This definition builds on the time-proven fundamental principles of politics that were developed by [David] Easton in 1965 and makes them relevant to water.' However, the definition that Turton (2003a) provides is in essence the same as Meissner's definition. Moreover, while Turton's definition of hydropolitics is based on Easton's (1965: 21) definition of politics as the 'authoritative allocation of values in society', the latter has little to say about norms as values, how norms as values are created, who is responsible for creating norms as values and where norms as values originate.

Although, the definitions of Elhance (1997), Meissner (1998) and Turton (2003a), indicate the nature of water politics, none of them elaborate on the role of norms and normative commensalism in water politics. Because of the centrality of norms in water politics, a new definition of water politics should read as follows: water (hydro-) politics is the transnational interaction, through norm creation and utilisation, between a plethora of non-state and state actors, varying from individuals to collectivities, regarding the allocation and use of, and perception of domestic and international water resources. This definition is neither exhaustive nor definitive but may assist in the development of future research agendas concerning the interaction between different actors in domestic and international river basins.

## **5.2. Towards a Research Agenda**

The different chapters in this thesis have dealt with a number of related topics. In addition, the focus of the study was on the intersection of a number of units and levels of analyses i.e. the individual and collectivity as units, on the one hand, and the subnational, national, regional and supranational (global) levels of analyses on the other hand. This study, however, is not intended as the final word on water politics in international river basins. To get closer to a research agenda, the focus of the study is used to group aspects together that form part of the research agenda. These aspects are the units and levels of analysis, as previously indicated. It is important to take these different units and levels of analyses into consideration, because water politics does not occur in isolation or at a particular level of society. Because water is a resource that is used by both individuals and collectivities, and utilised by human beings and the natural environment at the subnational, national, regional and supranational (global) levels, any future research agenda should encompass these elements. The research agenda thus needs to take the form of research questions, grouped under the different levels of analyses.

### **(a) The individual unit**

- How are people from rural communities interacting with government regarding policies on water resources?
- Does the individual possess agential power when it comes to influencing governmental water policies?
- If an individual possesses agential power, what is the nature of this agential power?
- Is the individual able to play different agential roles when interacting with government officials on matters pertaining to water resources?
- Is poverty an inhibiting factor in the individual's ability to interact with government on water policy issues?

### **(b) The subnational level**

- To what extent are interest groups within a state able to influence the government of that state not to import virtual water?
- What is the likely relationship between interest groups and catchment management agencies (CMAs)?
- To what extent are interest groups expected to get involved in CMAs so as to influence government policies in domestic and international river basins?
- Does the same situation, regarding the interaction of interest groups, governments and other state and non-state actors that exists in respect of the Kunene and Orange River basins also prevail in other Southern African international river basins, particularly the Okavango River basin?

**(c) The national level**

- How does the internal political milieu of a basin state impact on the water politics of an international river basin?
- Is there a place for political risk analysis (PRA) in the international water politics of international river basins?
- What is the likelihood that the Namibian government will be able to implement either the Baynes or Epupa Dams, considering that interest group activity is expected to increase rather than to decrease in the future?

**(d) The regional level**

- What is the level of public participation in Southern African international river basins?
- How will public participation affect the future interaction of the basin states of international river basins?
- Is there a difference in the way interest groups operate at the regional level as opposed to the national and global levels?
- Is the transnational role and involvement of interest groups endemic to other Southern African international river basins?
- Does this transnationalism differ from that of the Kunene and Orange River basins?

**(e) The supranational (global) level**

- To what extent are interest group roles facilitating the formation of subgroupism at the global level regarding water policies?
- Are global water fora, like the Global Water Partnership and the World Water Council, acting as interest groups to influence governmental policy regarding domestic water resources?
- To what extent are interest groups, involved in water policy matters, contributing to the epistemic community's understanding of integrated water resources management (IWRM)?

**5.3. Policy Recommendations**

Apart from recommendations towards a research agenda policy recommendations are also outlined. The first consideration to keep in mind is the overall nature of the international political system and the processes occurring within this system. The international political system is a system that is occupied by a larger variety of actors. In this regard, it is a mirror of the domestic system. One of the most important processes within this system is that people are communicating with each other more frequently, and across ever increasing geographical and cultural distances.

It is recommended that any policy within an international river basin should reflect this plurality and the increasing communication between the different actors having an interest in such a river system. This implies that whenever a

WRMP is planned, a bottom-up approach should be followed before the technical plans are prepared for the infrastructure. All interested parties and especially non-state actors should be involved, not only those from the core and periphery but also those from the outer-periphery. Interest groups can assist governments in the identification of these stakeholders.

In addition, government officials should become more acquainted with the hydropolitical (domestic and international) and foreign affairs environment. By this, it is meant that government officials should gain more knowledge about the myriad of interest groups. Foreign affairs training of government officials active in water affairs will promote the effective interaction between officials from neighbouring states as well as between government officials and those representing transnational non-state entities. Knowledgeable experts in the field of hydropolitics should be used to assist in such endeavours. Admittedly, there is a tendency on the part of the South African government to make more use of hydrologists and engineers, with experience in water matters, as researchers and consultants in policy and political matters, than international relations' experts and political scientists. Making more use of the latter will lead to a more informed water policy environment, because these experts' expertise in water matters are extremely scarce.

It is highly likely that the number of interest groups active in transnational water politics will increase substantially in the near to medium future. To keep track of this increase it is recommended that the relevant government departments, in the riparian countries, should develop an open database of those interest groups that are involved in transnational and domestic water issues.

Such a database will not only assist researchers and government officials in generating knowledge about interest groups such as: their base country, their likely identity and the norms they are likely to generate during a lobbying campaign but will also assist in the strategising of a bottom-up approach. Thus, such a database will facilitate in the strengthening of the state's reflexive agential power, and consequently its governability.

## **6. Conclusion**

To summarise, the research findings indicate that in both the Epupa and LHWP cases, there was a substantial challenge and erosion of the domestic and international agential power of the state. The erosion was particularly acute in the case of Namibia, but less so regarding Lesotho and South Africa. In fact, Lesotho exhibited a higher degree of reflexive agential power than Namibia and South Africa. The interest groups involved in the Epupa debate had moderate international agential power and moderate to high domestic agential power. In the Orange River basin the interest groups involved in the LHWP, had less agential power than South Africa, but high domestic agential power in Lesotho and moderate international agential power overall. Through the process of circumvention, interest groups are able to influence and bridge the divide between the international political domains, to such an extent that



this distinction disintegrates. Also of importance is the fact that interest groups, through the roles they play, influence and change the traditional hierarchical relationship between the state and society to such an extent that it is no longer a top-down interaction, but a mixture of bottom-up, levelled and top-down relationships between governments and society. This relationship between the state and interest groups is increasingly transnational because of a diminishing capacity of the state to insulate itself from the influences of non-state actors regarding the implementation of policies.

A number of recommendations, in the form of the identification of critical theoretical gaps, a recommended research agenda and policy recommendations followed the findings. A theory exclusively devoted towards water politics was developed—hydro-normative commensalism. The research agenda was developed using differing plains regarding the focus of the study. The policy recommendations focused mainly on providing knowledge to governmental officials to better understand the international political system and the nature and behaviour of interest groups.

The findings and recommendations contained in this chapter by no means conclude research on the transnational interaction between interest groups, states and other actors about the implementation of WRMPs in international river basins. Because of the absence of a fieldwork component, many aspects of the lobbying campaigns of interest groups and the reaction of government officials provide scope for future research. The final conclusion is that interest groups play an important role and have a significant influence on the water politics of WRMPs in Southern African international river basins.

Figure 27. Hydro-normative commensalism.

