

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Identification of the Research Theme

Since 1648, humankind has relied on the Westphalian state, as a political entity, for a number of services including the provision of freshwater (Harsant & Duvenhage, 2000: 5). In most cases, the provision of water is made possible through water resources management projects (WRMPs) that supply bulk water to utilities, which in turn provide it to local governments and the public. Supplying water by means of this process requires public policies to ensure that the largest number of people has potable water and adequate sanitation. Through these policies states have become the custodians of water resources in, or flowing across, their territories. This custodianship is imbedded in the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Because the state, or more specifically the government<sup>1</sup> of the state, is responsible for the well-being of the population, interest groups who lobby against WRMPs, directly oppose government policy to implement these projects. This implies that, as interest groups successfully lobby against WRMPs, there might be an erosion of the state's agential power to construct these projects.

Throughout the world, a plethora of interest groups is active in the water politics of WRMPs, where they perform a very specific function. They advocate the causes of people and the environment affected by major WRMPs and they therefore oppose them. Phrased differently, in recent decades, a social and environmental conscience, creating awareness of the need to protect both the environment and humans from the adverse effects of WRMPs has developed, and interest groups are at the forefront (Gleick, 1998: 15, 81).

Clearly, interest groups are pervasive phenomena of modern political society. After all, since the attitudes of democratic governments toward interest groups tend to be reactive in nature, interest groups have become important actors in this relationship, as one of the instruments through which people can express their political desires. In short, interest groups act as conduits for citizens to communicate with government (Sadie, 1998: 280). In most domestic and international issues, interest groups have come to represent the desires of people within and beyond their constituencies. These issues range from health care to the provision of potable water. Not only do interest groups

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<sup>1</sup> The government and the state is not the same entity; government is an institution of the state. Theunissen (1998: 114) asserts that the term 'government refers to the body or bodies responsible for governing the state. In South Africa, these bodies would refer primarily to the president and his cabinet—the political executive or body of persons who together with the president are tasked with governing and managing the state. This differs from the administrative executive, which can be associated with the public sector'. The government is also present at provincial level with its manifestation in the premiers and executive councils. Theunissen (1998: 114) further remarks, 'the term government is often used to refer to any part of the state and the public administrative apparatus. An example of this would be any reference made to the legislative, executive and judicial branches of "government" and their respective components'. In this thesis, when referring to the 'state', it will mean an actor on the international stage. When speaking of 'government', it will imply an institution of the state.

represent peoples' desires, but they also play an important role in mobilising support to either change or enhance policies governing certain issues. This also applies to WRMPs. Yet, over the last three and a half centuries, the state has played a dominant role in the implementation of WRMPs through its so-called hydraulic mission. This is not the case anymore, with a global anti-dam movement engaging governments and inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) over the issue of the impact of large dams on humans and the environment.

The anti-dam debate has been raging for some years in developed countries, particularly in the United States and in those of Europe. This debate has spilled over to the developing world and has found support among sections of the public that oppose such plans. Southern African international river basins are no exception and both internally and externally to the region, there exists a transnational movement against WRMPs. Unfortunately, and in contrast to other areas of the world, there exists a scarcity of information on Southern African examples of interest groups involved in the water politics of WRMPs.

Interest groups are becoming an increasing opposition force to contend with in the construction of WRMPs on Southern Africa's international rivers. Examples are the proposed Epupa Dam in the Kunene River and the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) in the upper reaches of the Orange River. In sum, these aspects encapsulate the research theme of this study, namely the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in the water politics of selected Southern African international river basins.

## **2. Significance of the Research Theme**

The research theme is significant in a practical and theoretical context. At a practical level, firstly, as water becomes scarcer throughout the world, many states in the developing world are turning to WRMPs to solve their water deficiency problems and energy needs<sup>2</sup>. Secondly, as articulated and expressed by interest groups, there is an increasing awareness of the negative impact of WRMPs on communities and the environment. As a result, since the early 1990s, engineers, managers and political decision-makers in the water sector have been faced with increasing opposition to such plans. The opposition emanating from interest groups in particular restrict the policy choices of those entities involved in WRMPs. This has already led to increased political interaction between states and interest groups that are in all likelihood to continue in future.

Thirdly, within the water discourse, the transnational role and involvement of interest groups are not sufficiently dealt with by academics, researchers or consultants. It has been covered to some extent, either explicitly or implicitly, by a number of researchers such as Payne (1996), McCully (1996), Gleick (1998)<sup>3</sup>, Meissner (1998<sup>4</sup>; 2000a; 2000b) and Turton and Meissner (2002). In

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<sup>2</sup> WRMPs can also supply energy, for instance in the case of hydroelectric schemes.

<sup>3</sup> Payne examines the campaigning of interest groups against large dams in that they do not only target states, but also other international governmental bodies in the international political realm, e.g. the World Bank; McCully looks at the political and ecological impact of

addition, some of these research endeavours adopt a state centric approach<sup>5</sup>, for example those of Teclaff (1967), Naff and Matson (1984), Lowi (1993), Gleick (1993), Kliot (1994), Hillel (1994), Meissner (1998), Ashton (2000a), Turton (2000a) and Jägerskog (2002), which underplay interest groups, but do have important theoretical implications.

At a theoretical level, firstly, water politics is seemingly devoid of theory. As has been indicated, the 'statist' approach is characterised by a secondary 'focal point' on the role and involvement of interest groups and other non-state entities in water politics. Stated differently, these studies do not explicitly examine the way in which interest groups erode 'agential state power', or are involved in the interactive processes of an international river basin. In addition, there has also been a tendency to analyse the water discourse from an international law perspective, for instance McCaffrey (1993) and Benvenisti (1996).

Secondly, the study is important in that the theoretical analysis of water politics in the past had not been sufficiently separated from other dominant topics of domestic politics or international relations. For instance, during and even after the Cold War era, the study of water politics had a distinctive character: it focused on conflict and cooperation between states over water resources and adapted a state centric approach in the process. This provided hydropolitics with a specific research agenda that was analysed in a security context. With this in mind, what is lacking from a theoretical perspective is the absence of a suitable framework for analysing the transnational role and involvement of interest groups.

Thirdly, interest groups are not studied as main actors in the water discourse. What is furthermore not considered is how, where and when they might reduce 'agential state power' in respect of WRMP policies. Interest groups are rather studied as actors that are part of a broad array of entities involved in water politics and not as separate agents. In other words, the fact that they are not always the central focus of research in the field of water politics is a matter of theoretical concern. Hence, the need, in a theoretical context, to focus on the role and involvement of interest groups in water politics.

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large dams on the environment and people, with the last chapter of his book devoted to the role of interest groups in various countries in lobbying against these structures; and within a global context Gleick examines the role and activities of interest groups with respect to their lobbying against large dams.

<sup>4</sup> Meissner analyses a number of cases where interest groups campaigned against WRMPs in the Southern African context, e.g. Namibia's so-called Okavango Water Pipeline.

<sup>5</sup> These studies look at various aspects of water politics, especially where the state has played a prominent role. For instance, Teclaff studied the international river basin from an historical and international law perspective, where the state has been at least one of the parties to bilateral and multilateral agreements concerning the use of national and international rivers. The other studies looked at international rivers, in various regions like the Middle East, Southern Africa and South East Asia, from the perspective of conflict and cooperation. In other words, these studies had, as their central focus, the state as the main actor in the water politics of the different regions.

### **3. Identification of the Research Problem**

The research problem is identified with reference to the research question, the explanatory propositions, and the aims and objectives of the study.

#### **3.1. Research Question**

Considering the aforesaid context of the role and involvement of interest groups in water politics, 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? Or, to phrase it differently: To what extent does 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?

From this basic research question, two secondary questions arise: To what extent do the aforesaid interest groups, as transnational actors, bridge the traditional boundary (distinction) between the domestic and international domains? 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 level?

#### **3.2. Propositions**

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 the traditional distinction between the two spheres is difficult to maintain. 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 undoubtedly affected and limited, but not significantly eroded by the transnational role and involvement of interest groups.

#### **3.3. Aim and Objectives of the Study**

##### **3.3.1. Aim**

Considering the problem statements (research questions) and propositions, the main aim of this study therefore is to develop an understanding of the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in Southern African water politics. The research question is addressed by using the concept of agential power. Hobson (2000) defines domestic agential power as the *'ability of the state to make domestic or foreign policy as well as shape the domestic realm, free of domestic social structural requirements or the interests of non-state actors'*. International agential power is defined as the *'ability of the state to make foreign policy and shape the international realm free of international*

*structural requirements or the interests of international non-state actors'* (Hobson, 2000: 5, 7). These definitions focus on the state's freedom of decision-making and action (policies) to secure the well-being of its citizens and focus on the different actors that play a role in the formulation and implementation of such policies. Two distinct actors are involved: the interest group as a non-state actor and the state.

Furthermore and because water politics is a 'young' field of inquiry, it is understandable that new phenomena will emerge as research topics. This is the case of interest groups in the developing world that lobby against WRMPs. Hence, the study will depart from the assumption that the state is the most important actor as advanced by the realist paradigm. As one observer puts it: 'This [the state as the paramount actor] is especially the case ... where research agendas are still rooted deeply in the premise that the world is crisscrossed by boundaries that divide the international from the domestic and that accord to nation-states the role of presiding over these boundaries. Such a conception of world affairs is ... profoundly flawed' (Rosenau, 2003: 273). Accordingly, the aim of this study is to focus on interest groups, along with states, as important and prominent actors. To succeed in this, four objectives are outlined.

### **3.3.2. Objectives**

The first objective is to assess the extent to which international relations theory recognises and accommodates the role and involvement of interest groups in water politics. Emphasis is placed on their status and position *vis-à-vis* the state, the issues they articulate and the processes through which this is done.

The second objective is to define the concept interest group, to describe the influence of interest groups on governments and other actors; and to identify their transnational role and involvement in world politics. The third objective is to construct a framework for analysis to compare and assess the agential power of interest groups and states in respect of water politics.

The final objective is to analyse the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in selected Southern African international river systems by employing the said framework for analysis to selected case studies namely, the proposed Epupa Dam and the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) on the Kunene and Orange Rivers respectively.

## **4. Demarcation of the Study**

The research topic is demarcated according to conceptual, geographical and temporal criteria. Conceptually the study is differentiated with reference to three central concepts—transnational relations, interest groups and water politics.

**(a) Transnational Relations:** According to Rosenau (1980: 1) transnationalism is 'the processes whereby international relations conducted by governments have been supplemented by relations among private

individuals, groups, and societies that can and do have important consequences for the course of events'. In short, transnationalism refers to the transnational relations between actors where at least one is a non-state entity. Firstly, this suggests that states are not the only prominent actors in world politics. Secondly, contact between actors in the international arena does not only take place between states—non-state entities are also involved in world affairs. Thirdly, transnational actors make an impact on political affairs (Risse-Kappen, 1995; Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 211-215). Following this, 'the impact of transnational actors and coalitions on state policies in particular issue areas will vary in accordance with differences in domestic structures and degrees of international institutionalisation (e.g., multilateral regimes and both international and nongovernmental organizations)' (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 219). This implies that there is a link between the domestic and international political domains, with transnational actors (interest groups included) playing a central role in influencing the policy preferences of states. These interest groups are the 'linkage actors', connecting the national and international realms in a meaningful way (Mingst, 1995).

**(b) Interest Groups:** Interest groups (sometimes also known as pressure groups, lobbies and non-governmental organisations [NGOs]) are associations that aim to influence the policies or actions of government. They differ from political parties in that they exert influence from outside the parliamentary system, rather than by attempting to win or exercise government power. They particularly focus on a narrow set of issues, which is not the case with political parties. Interest groups are usually concerned with a specific cause or the interests of a particular group in society. They often display the broader programmatic attributes or have ideological features that characterise political parties. Interest groups are therefore non-state entities that encounter governments, both within the domestic political sphere and transnationally. International relations is a progression of domestic politics, with the transnational role and involvement of interest groups as an important element (Heywood, 1997: 254; Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 203).

**(c) Water Politics:** In one of the earliest definitions of water politics, Elhance (1997: 218) noted that water politics is the systematic analysis of interstate conflict and cooperation over international water resources. This definition is extremely narrow since it excludes international governmental and non-governmental actors from the international dimension of water politics (Meissner, 1998: 4).

Humanity is living in an ever-increasing globalised society, where different actors and dimensions interact on a broader scale than envisaged by Elhance. A more comprehensive definition of water politics is therefore required. Accordingly, water politics is seen as the systematic investigation of the interaction between states, non-state actors and a host of other participants, within and outside the state, regarding the authoritative allocation or use of international and national water resources. These national and international water resources include rivers, wetlands, glaciers, aquifers and lakes (Meissner, 1998: 4-5). This definition, having an empirical scope, focuses mainly, but not exclusively, on the interaction between actors within both the



international and domestic political spheres, and emphasises the geographical scope of the interaction between different actors in international and domestic river systems. It also has a normative dimension in that it alludes to the value-based authoritative allocation or use of water resources. More than that, a number of normative principles are implied by the definition, such as (sovereign) control over water resources, reciprocity among actors, justice, norms and rules and ideology (Turton, 2002a: 16).

Geographically the study is limited to two international river systems in the Southern African region, namely: the Kunene River and Orange River. The Kunene River basin is shared by Namibia and Angola, and the Orange River basin by Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa. Within these river systems, the focus of the study is a specific WRMP that is either proposed or completed, namely in the case of the Kunene River, the planned Epupa Dam, and in the case of the Orange River, Phase 1A and 1B of the LHWP.

The study is also circumscribed in temporal terms. The study covers the period since the start of the planning of WRMPs in the international river basins to 2004. The commencement of WRMPs differs from basin to basin. For instance, in the Kunene River basin plans to develop the river date back to the 1920s. In the Orange River basin, on the other hand, plans to implement WRMPs date back to the 1860s. In both cases, the historical trajectories are therefore different, with dissimilar actors playing a role in the implementation of WRMPs in the rivers over time. However, the development of both rivers are closely related to the socio-economic and politico-historical development of South Africa, especially considering that Namibia became a mandated territory of South Africa after the First World War.

## **5. Literature Survey**

The literature survey is divided into an overview of previous and related research and of various data sources pertaining to the study.

### **5.1. Previous and Related Research**

To date, a number of research projects have been undertaken on the role of interest groups in water politics, such as Payne (1996), McCully (1996) and Neme (1997). Neme (1997), for instance, analysed the processes behind their respective lobbying campaigns. These previous and related research projects explain the role and involvement of interest groups in water politics, but do not allude to the nature of their role and involvement and agential power. These studies therefore do not classify interest groups' transnational role and involvement, their agential power or the prospects of their role and involvement in water politics.

In addition, a number of studies on Southern African water politics have also been conducted. These include the following, namely: Turton, Meissner, and Stols' (2003) *Towards a Set of Guidelines for Best Practices: An Assessment of Forced Removals for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project in Light of the World Commission on Dams*; Meissner's (2003), *Interaction and Existing*

*Constraints in International River Basins: The Case of the Kunene River Basin*; and Turton, Nicol, Allan, Earle, Meissner, Mendelson, and Quaison's (2003), *Policy Options in Water-stressed States: Emerging Lessons from the Middle East and Southern Africa*.

## **5.2. Data Sources**

This study is based on documentary and, to a certain extent, field sources.

### **5.2.1. Documentary Sources**

Documentary sources, i.e. literature on the topic, are divided into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include publications, documents, press releases, scientific research reports and speeches from interest groups and their leaders and governments. Most of these data sources are available on the International Rivers Network's (IRN) website.

Secondary sources consist of literature that pertains to the theory and practice of the case studies. In this case, it is possible to distinguish between core and peripheral secondary data sources. Core theoretical sources include Hobson's (2000), *The State and International Relations*; Mingst's (1995), *Uncovering the Missing Links: Linkage Actors and their Strategies in Foreign Policy Analysis*; Rosenau's (1990), *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*; Rosenau's (2003), *Distant proximities: Dynamics beyond globalization*; Risse-Kappen's (1995), *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-state Actors, Domestic Structures and International Institutions*; Turton and Ohlsson's (1999), *Water Scarcity and Social Adaptive Capacity: Towards an Understanding of the Social Dynamics of Managing Water Scarcity in Developing Countries*; and Du Plessis's (2000), *Charting the Course of the Water Discourse through the Fog of International Relations Theory*. Core sources on interest groups include Truman's (1951), *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*; Vose's (1958), *Litigation as a Form of Pressure Group Politics*; Berry's (1977), *Lobbying for the People: The Political Behaviour of Public Interest Groups*, and his (1997), *The Interest Group Society*; Blaisdell's (1958), *Pressure Groups, Foreign Policies, and International Relations*; Chase's (1945), *Democracy Under Pressure: Special Interests vs. Public Welfare*; Petracca's (1992), *The Politics of Interests: Interest Groups Transformed*; Richardson, Maloney and Rüdiger's (2000), *The Dynamics of Policy Change: Lobbying and Water Privatization*; and Wilson's (1990), *Interest Groups*.

In addition, peripheral theoretical sources include Yalem's (1978), *Transnational Politics versus International Politics*; Holsti's (1995), *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*; Soroos's (1986), *Beyond Sovereignty: The Challenge of Global Politics*; Vincent's (1999), *Non-state Actors in International Relations*; Viotti and Kauppi's (1999), *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond*; Hjelmar's (1996), *The Political Practice of Environmental Organizations*; and Baylis and Smith's (1999), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*.



Secondary data sources on the case studies can similarly be divided into core (water politics) and peripheral (international relations) categories. Core data sources include information obtained from numerous newspaper articles in *Beeld*, *Business Day*, *The Citizen*, *Mail & Guardian*, *The Namibian* and *The Star*. Meissner's (1998), *Water as 'n bron van politieke konflik en samewerking: 'n Vergelykende studie van die situasie in die Midde-Ooste en Suider-Afrika*, was also utilised.

Peripheral data sources include Payne's (1996), *Non-profit Environmental Organizations in World Politics: Domestic Structure and Transnational Relations*; McCully's (1996), *Silenced Rivers: The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams*; Gleick's (1998), *The World's Water 1998-1999: The Biennial Report on Freshwater Resources*; Neme's (1997), *The Power of a Few: Bureaucratic Decision-making in the Okavango Delta*; and Meissner's (2000c), *Hydropolitical Hotspots in Southern Africa: Will there be a Water War? The Case of the Kunene River*.

### **5.2.2. Field Sources**

Field data sources consist mainly of unstructured interviews, of a personal, e-mail and telephonic nature. A number of these interviews, pertaining to the case studies, have been conducted with leaders of interest groups. These include the Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM), the Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG), International Rivers Network (IRN) and interest groups in Namibia and Lesotho like the Transformation Resource Centre (TRC). Interviews were also conducted with officials of the various government departments and other parastatal institutions, involved in the selected WRMPs. These institutions include the South African Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAFF), Namibia's Department of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development, the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) and the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA). Likewise, scholars were also interviewed. They included academics from the University of Pretoria (UP), the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) and the African Water Issues Research Unit (AWIRU) at UP.

## **6. Methodological Aspects**

The methodological aspects concern the approach to, the methods used in and the levels of analysis of the study.

### **6.1. Approach**

The descriptive-analytical approach is applied to the underlying phenomenon of transnationalism. Transnational politics note that state boundaries are no longer a mirror image of the new realities of international relations (Yalem, 1978: 241). These 'new realities' are the relations between states and non-state actors that led to a 'break down' of traditional cross-border relationships. As a result, the approach is based on the perspective of social constructivism, and not on the traditional paradigms of international politics, particularly state-

centric realism and liberal-pluralism. Social constructivism focuses, *inter alia*, on norms and norm construction by non-state entities in world politics. This suggests that domestic political affairs and international relations are mutually interdependent due to the permeability of state borders by non-state entities, with norm construction playing a central part in the blurring of this distinction.

## 6.2. Method

The comparative method is used, namely the process of identifying similarities and differences between various units of analysis. Above all, the logic of comparison infers causal deductions and allows for stronger hypotheses. It also allows for the comparison of dissimilar theoretical viewpoints across different situations involving more than one case study. Two distinct types of objects for analysis—the characteristics of individuals and the attributes of whole systems—give rise to the unique role of the comparative method in building explanatory theory (Van Dyke, 1960: 184-185; Mayer, 1989: 42; Rose, 1991: 446; Fourie, 1992: 11; Theen & Wilson, 1996: 2; Mouton, 2001: 154).

What then are the advantages of the comparative method? Comparison brings a sense of perspective to a well-known environment and discourages narrow-minded responses to political issues. This takes place when the researcher is made aware of unexpected differences, or similarities, between cases. More than that, observation of the ways in which political problems are confronted in different circumstances provides valuable opportunities for policy learning and exposure to new ideas and perspectives. Undeniably, the comparative method enables the researcher to assess whether a certain political phenomenon is merely a local issue or a previously unobserved 'general trend'. An important function thereof is, indeed, the development, testing and refinement of theories. Related to theory refinement, it also improves the researcher's ability to explain and predict political events. Importantly, the comparative method permits the empirical determination of the effect of different contexts on any explanatory generalisation. As one observer puts it: 'Comparative politics is central to the development of political theory. For most sciences, experimentation is the way to test theory, but for political science, comparison is the principal method' (Peters, 1998: 1). In short, if the Political Sciences are to generate general propositions about politics or world affairs, there is no alternative to comparison. Stated differently, it is necessary to assess the validity of interpretations of specific or even unique political phenomena through comparison (Mayer, 1989:43; Almond & Powell, 1992: 3; King, Keohane and Verba, 1994; Manheim & Rich, 1995: 245; Hopkin, 2002: 249).

Accordingly, the comparison of elements of the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in Southern African water politics requires the identification of differences and similarities between the case studies. If differences and similarities are not identified, it will lead to a false analogy. A false analogy occurs when a comparison is made based on a few similarities and then to conclude that they are similar in other respects as well. Often, the dissimilarities outweigh the similarities, meaning that all relevant characteristics of the cases have to be taken into account. Hence, criteria for

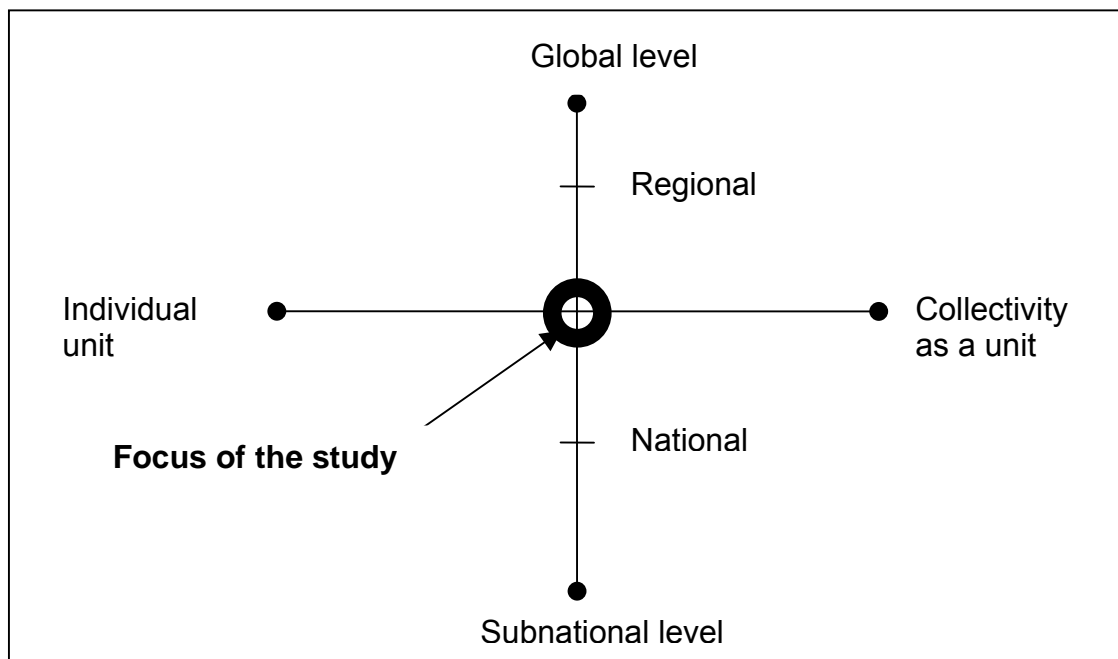
comparing elements must be selected systematically, and not automatically (Mouton, 2001: 119).

More than that, the comparative method is qualitative because of the complexity of the subject matter. It is, furthermore, inductive due to the empirical observation of reality. Induction will advance the prospect of adding to the existing knowledge. The method is, moreover, scientific, for the study takes as its object of enquiry a matter that can be highlighted by empirical evidence. The reporting of the procedures and findings will give other observers the chance to judge whether the evidence supports the conclusion of the research or not (Van Dyke, 1960: 184, 186-187). It is for this reason as well that the criteria should be as broad as possible to include as many similarities as dissimilarities.

Despite the application, purposes and characteristics, a number of types of comparative methods are identified: the method of difference, the method of agreement, the method of concomitant variables, most similar and most different, large case study numbers combined with quantitative comparative strategies, small case study numbers combined with the qualitative comparative strategy, single country studies, process and institution studies, typology formation, regional statistical analyses and global statistical analyses. For this study, the 'process and institution study' type will be used. This type of comparative study involves the selection of a small number of examples of a process or an institution that appear similar in some important ways. These instances are then used to indicate the nature of either the process or the institution, or the politics of the countries within which it occurs. As Peters (1998: 13) puts it: 'In practice, these case studies are often capable of saying a good deal about the process, as well as a great deal about the countries. Further, time becomes an important element of the analysis, pointing to additional possibilities of comparisons across time as well as across political systems' (see also Hopkin, 2002). Just as there are multiple criteria for comparison and types of comparison, there are different levels of analyses.

### **6.3. Levels of Analysis**

A single level of analysis does not confine the study. Traditionally the study of interest groups is usually linked to the sub-national level because it involves their role in the governmental or policy process. In contrast, their transnational role and involvement blur the traditional distinction between subnational, national, regional and the supranational (global) levels of analysis. There is furthermore an obscurity between units of analysis. Rosenau (1990: 119) distinguishes between micro actors (individuals, that is: citizens, official leaders and private actors) and macro actors (collectivities, like states, sub-groups, transnational organisations, leaderless publics and movements). For instance, interest group activities are usually confined to the interaction between the subnational and national levels. Nonetheless, because their actions are not limited to domestic politics they are also involved in politics at the global level. An approach will therefore be followed that concentrates on the synthesis between the micro and macro actors and the subnational, national, regional and global levels (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. The focus of the study.**

## 7. Structure of the Study

The study is structured along conventional lines and includes an introduction, a main body and a concluding evaluation. Chapter 1 is the introduction that outlines the methodological aspects. Following this, the study is divided into three parts concerning the theoretical aspects, the case studies and the comparative analysis respectively. Part one clarifies the theoretical foundations of the study with reference to theoretical developments in the water discourse, interest groups as transnational agents and the construction of a framework for analysing the role and involvement of interest groups in the water politics of selected international river basins. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the extent to which contending theoretical perspectives accommodate the water discourse. This is to indicate the attention these theories pay to water politics, interest groups, domestic and international political processes and the relevance of interest groups to water politics. Chapter 3 deals with interest groups as transnational agents. In this chapter, the concept interest group is defined; the transnational character of interest groups explained; the roles of interest groups described; and the success of interest groups in lobbying assessed. Chapter 4 provides a framework for analysing of the transnational role and involvement and agential power of interest groups and the state.

Part two of the study deals with the selected case studies. Chapter 5 analyses the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in the water politics of the Kunene River basin with reference to the proposed Epupa Dam. Chapter 6 analyses the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in the water politics of the Orange River basin with reference to Phases 1 A and 1B

of the LHWP. In respect of both case studies the framework for analysis developed in Part One is applied for comparative purposes.

Part Three contains a concluding assessment based on the amalgamation and comparative analysis of the key findings of the two case studies dealt with in a parallel manner in Part Two. Chapter 7 provides a comparative map of and an interpretation of the significance of the two case studies. Chapter 8 is an evaluation that concludes the study with particular reference to the extent to which the research questions have been addressed.

## **8. Conclusion**

It is important to take note of the transnational role and involvement of interest groups and of their political behaviour concerning the policy issue of WRMPs in the developing world. Consequently, knowledge of the activities and actions of these non-state entities will contribute to an understanding of how interest groups interact with government over the planning and execution of WRMPs. In Southern Africa, governments now more frequently than in the past have to deal with the phenomenon of interest groups opposing WRMPs. Historically, WRMPs were implemented with little or no opposition from interest groups. Until the late 1970s and early 1980s, water planners and management in the developed world rarely took the environmental consequences of major water projects or the water resources required to maintain natural environmental assets and values into account. This was also the case in the developing world, when during the 1990s interest groups came to play a more prominent role. Interest groups can influence governments, in a transnational manner, to implement changes affecting the construction of WRMPs. The likely response from project planners may be fear and anger towards these entities. In other words, what is not known is mistrusted.

Apart from this mistrust and opposition, there is already a change in the thinking behind the planning and implementation of WRMPs in developed countries. This transformation is attributed in part to the role and involvement of interest groups. It may be expected that there will be differences in the *modus operandi* of interest groups in the South and the reaction of developing states as opposed to those of states from the North. In spite of this, just as there are new developments concerning the construction of WRMPs, developments in disciplinary theory are also occurring. Hence, the need to consider the theoretical context and dimensions of the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in the water politics of the selected international river basins in Southern Africa.