

**PART I**  
**THEORETICAL DIMENSIONS**

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THE WATER DISCOURSE: TOWARDS A CONSTRUCTIVIST SYNTHESIS

#### 1. Introduction

Everyone on a daily basis uses theories<sup>6</sup>, whether they are professional water managers or just lay persons (Walt, 1998: 29). Similarly, scholars of water politics use theories to make sense of the concrete world they observe. Indeed, as new events and phenomena take form, or old ones are rediscovered, theories are employed to organise, describe, explain and predict the outcome of such events. For instance, over the last decade a new water paradigm has developed on the way humans use and manage water resources. A growing environmental conscience, promoted by interest groups, and the costs involved in building and operating WRMPs influenced the development of this paradigm (Gleick, 1998: 5-33).

Although there is no explicit link between the water discourse (the way scholars 'speak' of water politics) and International Relations theoretical perspectives, as the one changes so too does the other. These theoretical perspectives are forever evolving and new developments periodically emerge from the field of water politics. Since a reciprocal association exists between the theoretical abstraction of the world and the concrete realm of water politics, there is an implicit link between theoretical perspectives and water politics. Moreover, the specific ways in which the water discourse and certain theoretical perspectives are linked indicate the extent to which the discourse is embedded in these perspectives.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the link between the water discourse and the various theoretical perspectives of International Relations and to contextualise the different theoretical perspectives in relation to water politics. The aim is to develop a theoretical framework to systematically analyse the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in water politics. Stated differently, the real world of interest group involvement in WRMPs will be linked to abstract theoretical perspectives to produce an answer to the stated research problem. Hence, the purpose is to discuss the link between the water discourse and theoretical perspectives; to outline the development of International Relations theory in relation to the water discourse; to discuss relevant mainstream, positivist theories and their assumptions and to link these theories to water politics; to discuss so-called tributary, reflectivist theory; and to bridge the divide between mainstream and tributary theories with reference to social constructivism.

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<sup>6</sup> For a more in-depth discussion on theories, see Meehan, E.J. (1988) and Ziman, J. (1984).

## 2. The Water Discourse and International Relations Theory

Human beings have an intimate relationship with water. Historically, more particularly during the twentieth century, water was rarely the centre of attention of international relations, except in the context of so-called 'high politics'. However, since the end of the Cold War, water politics has emerged as an issue of practical and scholarly concern that involves and extends to issues other than the physical presence and use of water, such as economics, development, the environment, security and human rights. Thus, the water discourse covers a broad array of issues. Furthermore, water is also of global concern. Consequently, the 'complexities' and 'complexes' of water have become a fundamental part of world politics during the past two to three decades (Du Plessis, 2000: 9-10). Hence the questions: What is the relationship between the water discourse and International Relations theory? How does International Relations theory accommodate and deal with the water discourse?

In this respect, Du Plessis (2000: 11) observes that 'the water discourse appears to navigate an uncertain course through international relations theory, and also seems unsure about (dis)embarkation points and direction-finding beacons'. The level of this uncertainty can be clarified by contextualising theory(ies) underpinning the water discourse in the setting of competing International Relations theories (Du Plessis, 2000: 11-15). In other words, the water discourse is embedded in or linked to competing theoretical perspectives and therefore shares certain elements with International Relations.

Stated differently, various aspects of the water discourse are compatible with and relevant to International Relations. For example, the discourse itself also encompasses the environment. Because of the importance of ecology in the discourse, socio-economic development is also involved. The discourse is also linked to and concerned with the idea of security. In addition, security concerns extend to the relationship between environmental change, scarce natural resources, and conflict between international actors. It has furthermore a normative dimension and covers not only issues of value, for instance settled norms like sovereignty and autonomy, but also nascent norms like humanitarian intervention. More than that, the discourse also embraces ethical considerations, for instance the sharing, distribution of and access to scarce resources and the issue of human rights. International and domestic water law also forms part of the discourse as a foundation of order, justice, cooperation and governance. Likewise, the realities of geopolitics are also involved (Stutz & De Souza, 1998: 111; Du Plessis, 2000: 11-15; Turton *et al.*, 2003: 7-21; Turton, 2003a: 13-15; Wolf, 2003: 1). With this in mind, how do scholars contextualise the water discourse in theoretical terms?

Many scholars do not 'contextualise the water discourse in a particular theoretical mode' for example Gleick (1993), Ohlsson (1995a, 1995b), Payne (1996), Homer-Dixon (1994), Homer-Dixon (1996), Hudson (1996), McCully (1996), Solomon (1996), Okidi (1997), Percival (1997), Gleick (1998), Percival and Homer-Dixon (1998), Van Wyk (1998), Allan (1999), Fleming (1999),

Turton (1999) and Meissner (2000a; 2000b). The exception is Swatuk and Vale (2000), who 'represent a post-positivist, reflectivist mode of theorising by criticising the current water discourse' (Du Plessis, 2000: 10). Thus, only a few water discourse scholars are concerned with the importance of theoretical approaches to International Relations.

This being the case, what is the nature of theorising in the water discourse? Although few academics inside the field are knowledgeable about International Relations theory, the subject is nevertheless saturated with theory. This is contrary to the opinion of one observer of the discourse who claims that: 'Another gap being filled here [with a book on the hydro-political drivers in the Okavango River basin] is the almost lack of theory about the problematique of international water. With the exceptions of Allan and ... Turton, who continued to be a lone voice in the theoretical wilderness for years, and a small smattering of literature (especially Blatter and Ingram's *Reflections on water*), the dialogue has been almost devoid of any theoretical underpinnings' (Wolf, 2003: 1). However, theorising in the water discourse is implicit and subliminal and sheds little light on International Relations theory (Du Plessis, 2000: 10), with the exceptions of Lowi (1993), Meissner (1998) and Turton (2000a). Lowi argues her thesis from the perspective of neo-functionalism; Meissner takes a stand from a liberal-institutionalist position; while Turton, on the other hand, uses political ecology as a theoretical basis. These studies have been conducted within positivist (i.e. Lowi and Meissner) and post-positivist (i.e. Turton) contexts. This does not mean that Lowi, Meissner and Turton stand apart from other scholars in the water discourse concerning International Relations theory. Their stance is justified by the practical relevance of theory, because of the systematic manner in which the subject matter of water politics is dealt with (Du Plessis, 2000: 10-11). In spite of this, what is the theoretical position of other scholars in the water discourse?

Most scholars participating in the discourse take 'an atheoretical or deliberately non-theoretical' stance. These scholars are usually unfamiliar with international relations theory, other than the International Relations specialists. Nevertheless, they contribute meaningfully to the water discourse by importing non-political theoretical constructs (Du Plessis, 2000: 10-11). In other words, although the water discourse is characterised by the previously mentioned atheoretical or deliberate non-theoretical character, the subliminal theoretical dimension of the discourse can nevertheless be traced with reference to the development of International Relations theory.

### **3. The Development and Typology of International Relations Theory**

International Relations has always been a contested discipline that has hardly ever been fully accepted or secured. Some see it as a sub-discipline of Political Science whereas others see it as an interdisciplinary undertaking. Regardless, the subject matter of International Relations changed considerably over time. During the 1990s the most spectacular changes occurred, due mainly to the end of the Cold War. In addition, International Relations is a divided, dividing, disordered and disagreed about discipline (Du Plessis, 2000: 15). To a certain extent, this is partly due to 'real world'

occurrences in world politics that have influenced the growth and development of International Relations. Every 'traumatic' development (e.g. the First and Second World Wars and the end of the Cold War) that brought about change in world politics, also affected the theoretical outlook of International Relations scholars. Subsequently, they developed a vast array of theoretical approaches to deal with the fact that these adjustments on the international stage only compounded the confusion (Nye, 1993; Halliday, 1994: 7).

In any event, the reason for International Relations disarray is the divisive impact of manifold theoretical approaches that provide a wide range of conceptual frameworks. To some degree, International Relations relies heavily on other disciplines, from both the natural and social sciences, for intellectual advancement. Its scholars are major importers of ideas and seldom 'lead or influence public debate' (Du Plessis, 2000: 15-16). They can therefore be seen as passive participants. Moreover, they sing with many voices, many songs at the same time and propose or introduce 'new' approaches on a regular basis and meet each other in 'great debates' (Halliday, 1994: 7; Bull, 2000; Du Plessis, 2000: 15-16; Smith, 2000: 568).

### **3.1. The 'Great Debates'**

The first great debate took place from the 1920s to the 1940s. During this period, realism and idealism were pitted against each other. This debate had an ontological preoccupation with international relations (what is it that we know?) and concerned a theory 'of being'. This distinction (between idealism and realism) was based on the nature of humankind as being either altruistic or egotistical. The second great debate, between traditionalism and behaviouralism, raged from the 1950s to the 1960s. It concentrated on methodological concerns (how should we go about the business of knowing?) and introduced a theory 'of doing' based on the character of the 'classical' *versus* 'scientific' method (Nye, 1993: 36; Halliday, 1994: 10, 11; Bull, 2000: 60; Du Plessis, 2000: 16; Smith, 2000: 568; Alker & Biersteker, 2000: 105; Sanders, 2002: 46). Between the 1920s and 1960s, International Relations theory saw a remarkable degree of development. Not only had its focus moved from an ontological to a methodological dimension, but also from a more emotional to a practical *modus operandi*. This development did not terminate at the end of the 1960s, but has continued to the present.

The third great debate, from the 1970s to the 1980s, was the so-called inter-paradigm debate. It took place between the proponents of the contending perspectives of realism, liberalism (liberal-pluralism) and radicalism (Marxist and neo-Marxist structuralism/globalism); three paradigms that are seen as different versions of one world and not as three authentic alternative views of international relations. Since this debate was all about epistemology (how we know what we know?), it introduced a theory 'of knowing'. This entailed the introduction of alternative renditions of the international system, 'in response to the dominance of realism'. Being incommensurable the contending perspectives were quite tolerant of each other (Halliday, 1994: 16-19; Smith, 1999a: 38; Du Plessis, 2000: 17; Marsch & Furlong, 2002: 20).

The debate also transformed realism into neo-realism and liberalism into neo-liberal institutionalism. This transformation led to a neo-neo-synthesis, called rational institutionalism. Both perspectives underwent anti-metaphysical theoretical minimalism that made the perspectives progressively compatible in a number of ways. Firstly, these perspectives are steadfastly positivist. Secondly, they also shared a common research programme, conception of science and fundamental premises. Because of the third debate, traditional research projects and agendas returned (Du Plessis, 2000: 17). There was also 'a critical turn, with scholars preoccupied by the more fundamental implications of the metatheoretical distinctions of the third debate, engaging themselves in a re-examination of its basic assumptions' (Smith, 1999a: 38). It might have been expected that, due to the neo-neo-synthesis, International Relations theory had stopped developing. This was not the case, and at around the beginning of the 1990s, another debate in International Relations appeared.

Rationalism (neo-realist/neo-liberal synthesis) and reflectivism engaged each other during this fourth debate. In effect, the critical aspect of this debate is incommensurability. As a result, reflectivists and rationalists do not converse with one another much, since they do not share a common language. In addition, processes and institutions are given a behavioural conception by rationalism. These processes and institutions alter behaviour but not identities and interests. Reflectivism, on the other hand, explains identities and interests (Halliday, 1994: 37; Du Plessis, 2000: 17; Wendt, 2000: 615, 617). 'Furthermore, among rationalists and reflectivists, there is an absence of repressive tolerance in the form of a similar self-understanding of the relationship among positions. There is also a reciprocal lack of recognition about legitimate parallel enterprises, since these are believed to be linked to contending social agendas and political projects. Rationalists and reflectivists see each other as harmful, and at times, almost "evil". According to reflectivists, mainstream theories are co-responsible for upholding a repressive order' (Du Plessis, 2000: 17).

This intolerance is reinforced by the fact that International Relations scholars have defined neo-realism as 'the dominant position'. By doing this, it has emphasised its 'totalising and monological theories', and the influential position neo-realists occupy among the 'gatekeepers' of the discipline (Du Plessis, 2000: 17). Viewed in this way, and because rationalists and reflectivists see each other as harmful and even 'evil', it could be assumed that International Relations is a stagnating discipline. However, the contrary is the case.

These great debates have not subjected questions of epistemology to serious scrutiny. What was rather the case, was that International Relations had accepted a plain and an unchallenged set of positivist assumptions. What is significant about positivism is that its empiricist epistemology prescribes what can be studied for it determines what matters in international relations. The unquestioning acceptance of this positivist epistemology has suffocated debate over the characteristics of the world and how it can be explained. In this respect, positivism has been dominating International Relations theory for

the past 40 years and more and has defined the character and content of the great debates in International Relations theory (Smith, 1999a: 38). This in itself has led to the growth of the discipline over time.

Notwithstanding the temporal trend (from one great debate to another) in International Relations, the discipline has a tendency to organise itself through 'a constant oscillation between grand debates and periods in-between where the previous contestants meet' (Wæver, 1996: 175). The latter is referred to as an 'interregnum' or 'after the fourth debate' scheme. Put differently, the discipline is awaiting the 'arrival' of a leading theoretical perspective. Either way, reflectivism has been de-radicalised and rephilosophised; meaning that there is a move towards linkage principles. Reflectivism is no longer the dominant 'other' (radical) perspective going against positivism. The culmination of these associational principles is the increasingly marginalisation of extreme rationalism and anti-International Relations approaches (deconstructivists) and the appearance of a middle ground (social constructivism) where neo-institutionalists from the rationalist side come together with the constructivists from the reflectivist side (Wæver, 1997: 22-25).

In spite of its apparent stagnating character, International Relations further developed during the fourth debate. Some elements from rationalism (neo-institutionalists) started to embrace elements (constructivism) from the reflectivist side. The rise of constructivism has stimulated ongoing development of International Relations because of its bridging ability. Where is constructivism located on the spectrum of International Relations theory? Constructivism 'sits precisely at the intersection between the two sets of approaches ... that is between both rationalist and reflectivist approaches. It does this because it deals with the same features of world politics that are central to both the neo-realist and the neo-liberal components of rationalism, and yet is centrally concerned with both the meanings actors give to their actions and the identity of these actors, each of which is a central theme of reflectivist approaches' (Smith, 1997: 183). It also deals with the impact of the 'ideational' on the 'material'. Thus, constructivism can be seen as a bridge (*via media*) between rationalism and reflectivism, because it deals with normative aspects (from reflectivism) that impact on the 'real world' (as espoused by rationalism) (Smith, 1999b: 682, 683).

Where does this leave the water discourse? The water discourse is primarily implanted by and also representative of mainstream theorising (rationalism) that has a positivist, explanatory and problem-solving nature. 'Since competing conceptions are, with few exceptions, mostly underdeveloped, marginalised or even silenced, there is a need and opportunity for conciliatory, extra-paradigmatic theorising and bridge-building' (Du Plessis, 2000: 12). It is because of this need for 'extra-paradigmatic theorising and bridge building' that this chapter attempts to introduce social constructivism as a '*via media*' theoretical component to the subject matter being discussed—interest groups and water politics.

The water discourse is furthermore situated within the fourth debate and perhaps even in the 'after the fourth debate' project (Du Plessis, 2000: 18). The reason for this is that the water discourse developed during the third debate (late 1970s to mid-1980s) and its development is slowly 'catching' up with further developments within International Relations theory. In this context, Swatuk and Vale (2000) use the metaphor of 'swimming upstream' and 'down stream' to emphasise conflicting approaches to the water discourse and International Relations theorising. When 'swimming upstream' a scholar goes against the mainstream rationalism (Du Plessis, 2000: 18).

How can this stalemate, referred to by Du Plessis, be avoided? An alternative of a non-zero-sum metaphor is promoted to progress the discourse to the 'after the fourth debate' realm. Regarding this, the metaphor of 'mainstream' and 'tributary' can be used to connote the dominant and marginal theoretical discourses. 'Irrespective of their relative strengths or the course each takes, both navigate through the foggy landscape of international relations theory to replenish a common issue-field characterised by [transnational interest groups]. In addition, provision is made for "conduit" construction that merges the main and tributary flows and that may, as a *rapprochement*, open up a middle ground' (Du Plessis, 2000: 18). This *rapprochement* is shown in Figure 2.

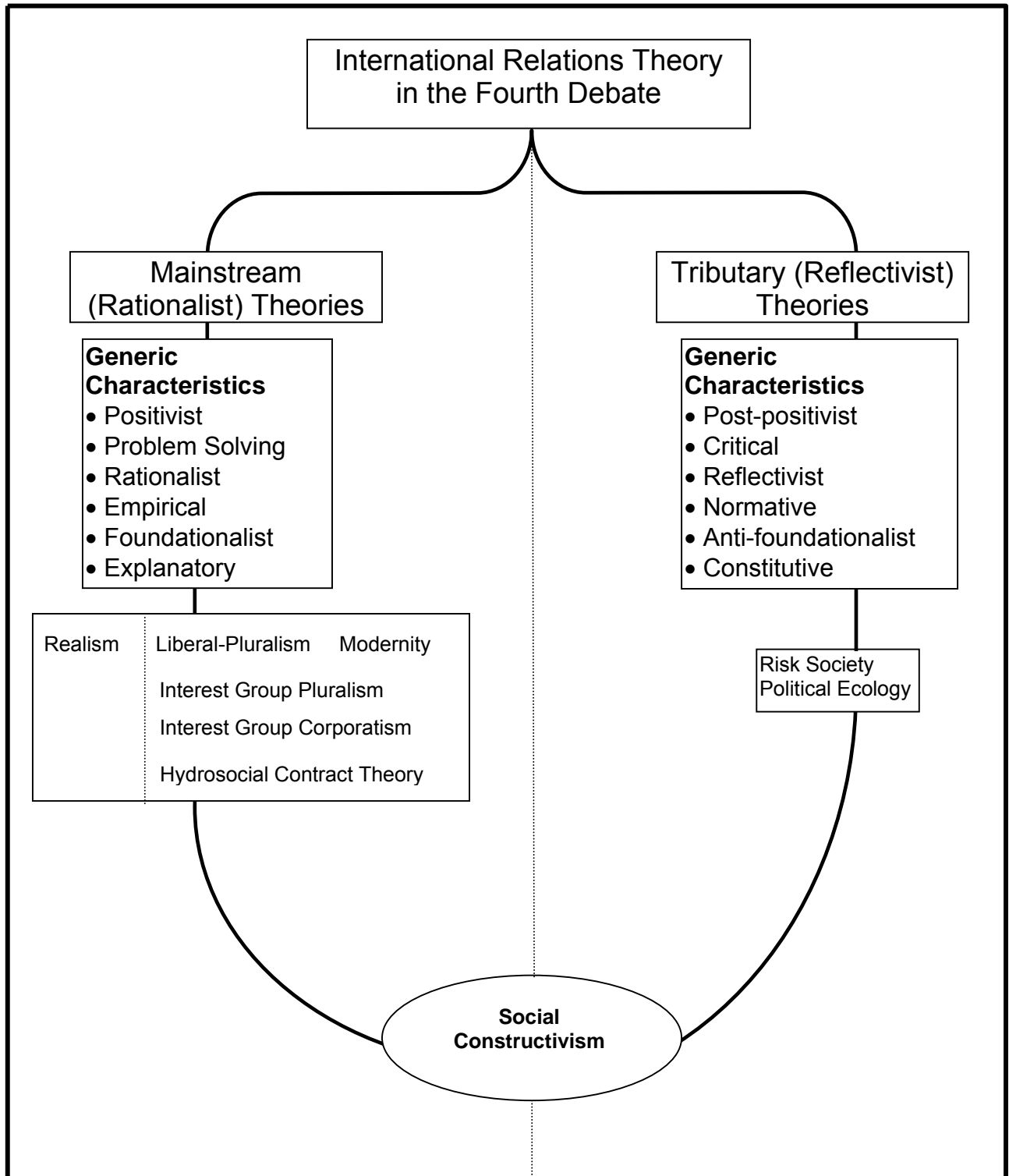
With this, Du Plessis (2000) is attempting to advance the development of the water discourse. He does this by advocating that the scholar should take a particular 'theoretical stand' and then do practical research within the framework of this theoretical approach. This can be achieved through the cross-fertilisation of both practical research within the water discourse and knowledge contained within International Relations theory, and will (or is expected to) contribute to the development of the water discourse as well as the discipline of International Relations. New thinking in and about the water discourse will be introduced by the cross-fertilisation between practical research and knowledge contained in International Relations theory.

### **3.2. Mainstream Theories**

Mainstream theories have a number of generic characteristics. They are firstly 'scientific' or positivist formulations. They offer rational and explanatory renditions of international relations (Porter, 1994: 21; Devetak, 1996: 147; Du Plessis, 2000: 18-19; Du Plessis, 2001: 16). Explanatory theories are those that view the world as something external to the theories that explain the phenomena contained within world politics (Smith, 1997: 167). These mainstream theories are also foundationalist. 'They represent an epistemological position which assumes that all claims about some feature of the world can be judged true or false' (Du Plessis, 2000: 19) and view the world independently of knowledge about this world. Moreover, because they are positivist, rational, foundational and explanatory, mainstream theories are also problem-solving theories.



Figure 2. International Relations theory in the fourth debate.



After Smith, 1999c and Du Plessis, 2000.

They embrace the world as they find it, which includes the predominant social and power relationships and institutions, and make use of them as a framework for action (Du Plessis, 2000: 19; Marsch & Furlong, 2002: 22).

These theories therefore build on an existing world where social and power relationships and institutions, with their various actors, are at the order of the day. Based on this foundation, they attempt to solve the problems of the world inherent therein, and due to these social and power relationships and institutions.

### 3.3. Tributary Theories

Tributary theories are reflectivist theories of international relations. Generically they are the opposites of positivist theories. They have a self-reflective nature (Wæver, 1997: 20; Du Plessis, 2000: 22), meaning that they are an assemblage of post-positivist theories. These include normative theory, feminist theory, critical theory, postmodernism and historical sociology (Smith, 1997: 168; Linklater, 2000a: 15; Keohane, 1988). 'As critical conceptions, they reflect on the origins and conditions of different perspectives, and view theory as irreducibly related to social and political life' (Du Plessis, 2000: 22). Their critical disposition is based on the assumption that 'theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose' and that there is 'no such thing as theory in itself, divorced from a standpoint in time and space' (Cox & Sinclair, 1996: 87). In other words, reflectivist theories contend that theory rationalises, reifies and legitimises the present order of international affairs (Burchill, 1996a: 1-2; Du Plessis, 2000: 22). Within the context of reflectivist theories, a direct link is made between what is happening in the real world and how this is theorised about.

Following from this, reflectivist theories question the purported apolitical nature of positivist theorising and therefore reject the assumptions of positivism. Thus, critical, reflectivist theories challenge this 'use' of rational, mainstream theories (Smith, 1999a: 39; Du Plessis, 2000: 22-23). By questioning the apolitical nature of positivist theories, reflectivist theories are or become more 'political'. This means that reflectivist theories do not develop from occurrences in world politics, like many mainstream theories (e.g. realism), but help to bring them about and to shape them (and ultimately the world). Therefore, reflectivist theories attempt to proactively influence world politics and the actors operating within it.

Reflectivist theories are, therefore, constitutive (not explanatory), implying theory constitutes reality. Phrased in another way, human reflection plays an important role in the development of the nature and character of world politics. Thus, reflectivists believe that theories help to construct the world (Burchill, 1996a: 15; Smith, 1997: 167; Du Plessis, 2000: 23). Reflectivist theories are therefore more politically 'active' than positivist theories and because of this, become self-confirming, to the extent that the concepts about the world shape the world to what it is.

Reflectivist theories are also anti-foundationalist. They represent an epistemological position that assumes that assertions about some phenomena of the world cannot be judged as either true or false. The reason for this is that there are no neutral grounds on which to do so (Smith, 1997: 167-169; Du Plessis, 2000: 23). If these theories would have been neutral, their political

active nature would be neutralised and they would become mere mirror images of world politics. In addition, of importance is that they are post-modern and therefore reject modernity. 'They demonstrate an incredulity towards meta-narratives by focussing on "power-knowledge" relationships and textual strategies, which include deconstruction' (Du Plessis, 2000: 23).

In this last instance, theories of international relations sustain and educate international practice. As one observer puts it: 'Once established as common sense, theories become incredibly powerful since they delineate not simply what can be known but also what it is sensible to talk about or suggest ... Theories do not simply explain or predict, they tell us what possibilities exist for human action and intervention; they define not merely our explanatory possibilities but also our ethical and practical horizons' (Smith, 1999a: 39-40). This is one of the main characteristics of reflectivist, if not all theories of international relations.

### **3.4. Reflectivist and Rationalist Theories and the Water Discourse**

How do these reflectivist and rationalist theories relate to the water discourse? The water discourse has been predominantly situated within the mainstream of International Relations theory that explained elements associated with the physical presence and use of water from a positivist perspective. Because the theories delineate what is acceptable to talk about, many scholars, writing from a positivist perspective, have thereby subliminally defined what can and cannot be talked (researched) about in the water discourse. Thus, they produced a discursive elite and hegemonic (dominant) theories or perspectives. This has influenced the subject matter (state *versus* state, state *and* state) that is researched. Any break with this trend will have a profound impact on the water discourse and the broadening of knowledge about state and interest group relations.

On rare occasions, has the water discourse ventured into the realm of tributary, reflectivist theorising, as attested by Swatuk and Vale's (2000) writing. The challenge is to go beyond the mainstream and tributary theories. This does not mean that these (mainstream and tributary) theoretical perspectives should be rejected. What needs to be done is to search for a middle ground where the two approaches meet; to develop the water discourse from there; and also to assist the development of the discipline and theory of International Relations.

In the following section, a selection of theories will be discussed. These theories are placed on a spectrum indicating the extent to which they are state-centric or not. These theories are realism, liberal-pluralism, interest group pluralism, interest group corporatism, modernity, risk society theory, the hydrosocial contract theory (HSCT) and political ecology. Following the discussion of their basic assumptions and relevance to the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in water politics, social constructivism will be outlined as a possible middle ground perspective.

## **4. Theories and Water Politics**

### **4.1 The Realist Perspective**

Realism is the most dominant theoretical perspective in International Relations. Because of this, it is seen as the orthodoxy and the classical practice of thinking about world politics (Nye, 1993: 3; Halliday, 1994: 11; Buzan, 1996: 47). Realism is also described as 'a broad research program that contains a host of competing theories', exemplified by the fact that realists disagree about a number of key beliefs (Walt, 1997: 932). Thus, realism is not a single, unified theory (Lynn-Jones, 1999: 54), although all realists embrace statism, self-help and survival (Gabriel, 1994: 157-165; Dunne, 1997a: 114). The assumptions of realism are built around and linked to these core themes. It is in this regard that realism is distinguished from liberal-pluralism (its main theoretical rival), and all other theoretical perspectives of International Relations (Buzan, 1996: 47).

#### **4.1.1. Basic Assumptions**

Realists subscribe to a number of basic assumptions about international relations, based on statism, self-help and survival. First, realists argue that the state is the most important actor and a permanent institution in international and domestic politics (Dunne, 1997a: 114; Kegley & Wittkopf, 1997: 22; Du Plessis, 2000: 19). In effect, the decision-makers of the state are also perceived as important actors although not a permanent feature like the state (Mansbach & Vasquez, 1981: 5). Moreover, states are unitary and rational actors when confronted with and solving problems (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 6). Methodologically, the state is the most important unit of analysis and inter-state relations the most important level of analysis (De Senarclens, 1991: 6; Dunne, 1997a: 114). Non-state entities have a status of lesser importance, because governments representing states are the only institutions that can formulate, implement and enforce laws (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 6). Realists therefore focus on explaining the behaviour of states and tend to pay less attention to individuals and transnational actors (Lynn-Jones, 1999: 55).

Second, realists assume that sovereignty must first be established before civil society can start operating. Power flows from the state to civil society and not the other way around. The state must first establish sovereignty in the domestic realm before projecting it onto the international domain (Dunne, 1997a: 114). However, realists divorce the domestic sphere from the international realm.

Third, they agree that power is employed by states to pursue national interests and achieve goals (Brown, 1997: 34; Gilbert, 1992: 14). Fourth, realists are of the opinion that states need individual power because of the anarchical international system (the absence of any overarching sovereignty) to guarantee their survival. Anarchy is the distinguishing feature of the international system (Mastanduno, Lake & Ikenberry, 1989: 462; Lebow, 1994: 250; Brown, 1997: 34; Lynn-Jones, 1999: 55). As a result of which, states seek to maximise their power to provide security within the international realm

(Lynn-Jones, 1999: 55). Stated more strongly, state survival must always be the minimum aim of foreign policy. Every state is obliged to protect 'the physical, political, and cultural identity against encroachments by other nations' (Morgenthau, 1978: 4; Dougherty & Pfalzgraff, 1990: 96).

Fifth, realists assume that if a state wishes to survive, moral principles should not influence decisions. More specifically, morality can induce excessive caution into policies, thereby jeopardising its national interest (Dunne, 1997a: 116). In the words of one observer, 'a nation's survival is its first responsibility; it cannot be compromised or put to risk' (Kissinger, 1977: 204). Sixth, in an anarchical system, realists regard self-help as one of the most important principles in world affairs because other entities cannot guarantee or accomplish the state's national interests (Burchill, 1996b; Brown, 1997: 47; Kegley & Wittkopf, 1997: 22; Lynn-Jones, 1999: 55).

Lastly, realists agree that state policies are prioritised according to a fixed hierarchy of national interests. Accordingly, the state's security considerations, involving unilateral action and orthodox power politics, come first (Berejikian & Dryzek, 2000: 194). Notwithstanding these basic assumptions, what is realism's relation to water politics?

#### **4.1.2. Realism and Water Politics**

Because of realism's state centric approach to international relations, the theoretical perspective is too narrow to explain the phenomena of transnational interest groups in water politics. Although, aspects of realist assumptions explain some elements of transnational interest group involvement in international river basins, these elements would mostly be hidden and implicit. For instance, it is not obvious whether states are implementing WRMPs to serve the national interest, or for survival. A realist analysis of security issues might lead to a securitisation of water politics. In a similar manner, realism does not elaborate much on the low political issue of WRMPs, because securitised high politics come first.

Likewise, issues of morality and ethics, contained in interest group lobbying activities, are also not adequately explained by realism. Because of the hierarchical relationship between domestic and international relations, with interest groups from civil society playing a lesser role, realism is too 'exclusive' an approach to the subject matter. It does not explain, adequately the transnationality of interest groups in water politics because of its separation of domestic and international affairs. Transnational interest groups do play a role in water politics, not only because of their existence and actions in world affairs, but because they matter. Realism therefore does not adequately incorporate interest groups, giving them inconsequential status in world affairs, subject to the dominant role of states and state agential power.

## 4.2. Liberal-pluralist Perspectives

Five liberal-pluralist perspectives are of note, namely conventional liberal-pluralism, interest group pluralism, interest group corporatism, modernity and the hydrosocial contract theory.

### 4.2.1. Conventional Liberal-pluralism

Liberal-pluralism is an approach to international relations that is distinguishable from and theoretically contrasted to realism (Stone, 1994: 459; Nel, 1999: 58). Theoretically, it opposes realism, but liberal-pluralism is not a tenacious 'school of thought'. It embraces a number of theoretical perspectives, namely complex interdependence; regime theory; liberal internationalism; idealism; liberal institutionalism; neo-liberal internationalism; neo-idealism; neo-liberal institutionalism; interest group liberalism; transnationalism; functionalism; neo-functionalism; integration theory; multilateralism and sociological liberalism. These different perspectives give liberal-pluralism the characteristics of a paradigm (Kegley & Wittkopf, 1997: 31-35, 132-133; Dunne, 1997b: 147, 150-159; Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 203-204, 210-219).

As with realism, the liberal-pluralist perspective does not constitute a unified theoretical approach to international relations. The liberal-pluralist perspective of world politics rests on the foundation of liberal ideas and values, with emphasis on individuals and universal principles (Hutchings, 1999: 12, 144). These liberal ideas are contained in the basic assumptions of liberal-pluralism.

#### 4.2.1.1. Basic Assumptions

Liberal-pluralists hold a number of basic assumptions about world affairs. First, they argue that states are not the most important actors in international relations. Other actors, like interest groups and individuals, can also exhibit autonomous preferences (Stone, 1994: 460; Nel, 1999: 61). Non-state entities play important and increasing roles in world politics, and influence states (or the governments of states) on the determination of national interests (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 199). Second, they reject the 'billiard ball image' that realists have about world affairs in favour of a 'cobweb perspective' of diverse linkages between actors, based on highly complex and multiple interdependent relations (Heywood, 1997: 144; Stern, 2000: 28-29).

Third, liberal-pluralists replace sovereignty with autonomy, as a settled norm, to recognise an array of non-state entities. Fourth, they assume that states are not as 'solid' as realists see them, but more permeable<sup>7</sup> (Heywood, 1997: 144). Fifth, they argue that states are not 'like units'. They are composed differently with not all possessing the same type of government (Stone, 1994: 59). States consist of citizens, interest groups, local authorities and

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<sup>7</sup> The reason for this is that modern technology, especially communication and military and industrial expansion, brought about the reduction of government control over the actions of their citizens and those actors who operate or function outside the territory of the state (Stern, 2000: 29).

government departments, in continuous competition with each other. If the state is seen as a unitary actor, there can be no variety of subnational and transnational actors exerting influence on the state (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 200).

Sixth, liberal-pluralists assume that there is no clear distinction between domestic and international politics, as is the case with realism<sup>8</sup>. The realms are interdependent. What happens in the one will affect the other. States or any other political institution represent some subset of domestic society<sup>9</sup> (Moravcsik, 1997: 249). Lastly, they assume that cooperation, within the international system, between liberal-democratic states is quite normal. This is because the present international order is perceived as liberal (Stone, 1994: 459; Barnett, 1997: 529).

#### **4.2.1.2. Liberal-pluralism and Water Politics**

Liberal-pluralism offers a more realistic explanation of the subject matter than realism. The reason for this is that it not only focuses on states but on a plurality of non-state actors, including interest groups. It also sees international relations as a cobweb, wherein interest groups play an important function. Because states are composed of a number of distinct units (e.g. interest groups and individuals) liberal-pluralists not only recognise the existence of these entities but also their role in world affairs. Whereas realists believe that international institutions cannot affect the behaviour of states, liberal-pluralists think these institutions can. Moreover, liberal-pluralism sees the identities and interests of actors as given. In effect, institutions affect the behaviour of actors, but not their identities and interests (Smith, 1997: 171, 184). Because of this stance on the identities and interests of actors, liberal-pluralism is still too narrow to explain the subject matter. It assumes that interest groups will stand in either a conflictual or a cooperative relationship with the state. More than that, interest groups can impose morality onto state behaviour when lobbying against WRMPs. The liberal-pluralist perspective ignores this aspect of interest group behaviour.

#### **4.2.2. Interest Group Pluralism**

Interest group pluralism falls under the rubric of liberal-pluralism, although it is a separate, predominantly Political Science perspective. The basis of the liberal-pluralist view of International Relations lies in the image exemplified by many scholars of the domestic political domain, namely that '[i]nternational political processes are not all that different from, and may even be considered an extension of, those conducted within the boundaries of a given state' (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 203). Pluralists see international politics as an extension of the domestic political order (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 203). Being located under liberal-pluralism, interest group pluralism is a mainstream, rationalist theory.

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<sup>8</sup> For instance, Henry Kissinger (1966: 503), a staunch realist remarks: '[T]he domestic structure is taken as given; foreign policy begins where domestic politics ends'.

<sup>9</sup> Rosenau (1967: 4), a liberal-pluralist, is of the opinion that 'domestic factors may be of considerable significance even if they are not primary sources of foreign policy, and on some issues they may well be dominant'.

The theory explains government and interest group relations within the domestic political domain. Interest group pluralism is one of the most dominant theories that analyses interest group and state relations (Smith, 1993: 15).

#### **4.2.2.1. Basic Assumptions**

Interest group pluralism has a number of basic assumptions. First, interest group pluralists assume that interest groups are important actors in broadening the representation of citizens in domestic political systems (Huggins & Turner, 1997: 390). Second, they argue that political power is widely dispersed among interest groups in liberal democracies (Ball, 1988: 30). The reason for this is that a variety of interest groups exerts influence over government that is amenable or responsive to their views, opinions and stances. Interest groups are therefore successful in influencing policy outcomes because they all have insider status to the governmental process (Smith, 1993: 15-16; Moore & Roberts, 1992: 223). Third, interest group pluralists argue that not a single elite group dominates each political sector of society (Hague, Harropp & Breslin, 1998: 125). There is a balance of power between various interest groups and between those groups and the ruling elite. Fourth, they postulate that interest groups establish themselves around common interests and mutual threats (Davies, 1996: 343). Any threat to society will produce interest groups that respond or counteract it.

Fifth, interest group pluralists surmise that individuals belong to different interest groups and represent and may advance a number of interests at the same time (Cummings & Wise, 1971: 212). Sixth, they argue that the state possesses disproportionate amounts of resources, relative to the rest of society, which it transforms into political power. Interest groups counter the use of state political power. Government officials react to the inputs of miscellaneous interest groups concerning different issues and interests and attempt to strengthen their own power base accordingly. Interest groups can force elites more effectively to respond to a wide range of constituencies than a small group of influential individuals (Smith, 1993: 16; Berry, 1997: 11). Stated differently, political power is diluted throughout the domestic political system by interest groups. Seventh, interest group pluralists assume that society dominates the state. The state is a mere domain or arena of competition between various interest groups. Thus, interest groups compete with one another on a level political 'playing field' (Moore & Roberts, 1992: 223; Hague, Harropp & Breslin, 1998: 124-125). Lastly, interest groups determine and establish policy agendas and public interests, relative to society's organised interests (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 204).

#### **4.2.2.2. Interest Group Pluralism and Water Politics**

Interest group pluralism is useful in explaining certain issues and phenomena of interest groups and their involvement in water politics, such as the variety of governmental and non-governmental actors so engaged. It also informs scholars about the establishment of interest groups around common interests and mutual threats, for instance communities threatened by displacement due



to the construction of large dams. However, the theory is too narrowly focussed to explain the subject matter. It concentrates too much on the importance of interest groups in society. Interest group pluralism does not have a transnational focus and tends to generalise about interest group politics within liberal democracies. Accordingly, government plays a lesser role, since it is dominated by society. In the field of water politics, such a situation might not necessarily apply. It is therefore ontologically flawed. The theory also does not provide explanations on how interest groups influence the identity, interests and morality of government.

### **4.2.3. Interest Group Corporatism**

The corporatist model of interest group politics juxtaposes the interest group pluralist view (Richardson, 1993a: 13). Like pluralism, corporatism places a high premium on the role of interest groups in society (Huggins & Turner, 1997: 390). However, interest group corporatists differ on how government interact with interest groups. Like interest group pluralism, interest group corporatism also reports on the relationship between government and interest groups, but in a distinctive manner.

#### **4.2.3.1. Basic Assumptions**

Interest group corporatism supports a number of basic assumptions. First, interest group corporatists, like interest group pluralists, assume that interest groups as such are a central element in the understanding of politics and the related processes of group and government behaviour (Huggins & Turner, 1997: 390). Second, they emphasise the need for the integration of particular interest groups into the decision making process. Economic and functional (e.g. labour) interest groups are emphasised as important and are seen to have insider status in the governmental process. More often than not, government benefits from the services and expertise of these interest groups. Third, interest group corporatists assume that political power is concentrated in the hands of a few interest groups (Smith, 1993: 1, 28). Fourth, because certain groups have an insider status, there exists a tripartite arrangement within society, organised between labour, capital (business) and government (Heywood, 1997:257; Sellars, 1997:3). Within such a system the policy-making process will be determined by consultation and bargaining between these three groups (Huggins & Turner, 1997: 390).

Fifth, interest group corporatists argue that because of tripartitism, there exists a hierarchy of interest groups in society (Heywood, 1997: 258). Economic and functional interest groups top this hierarchy. Sixth, they assume that government is not a neutral moderator and actor when interacting with interest groups. It chooses which groups will be consulted and how and for what reason public policy should be implemented. No levelled political playing field exists on which interest groups compete (Huggins & Turner, 1997: 390). Government decisions are therefore made and implemented after close consultation with major interest groups (Wilson, 1990: 35; Sadie, 1998: 283).

Seventh, interest group corporatists argue that government sanctions interest groups that are characterised by a top-down decision making process, with government at the crest of the hierarchy. Lastly, interest groups do not lobby government as such. They rather negotiate with government, which means that they exert influence from a relatively autonomous position in society (Sellars, 1997: 3, 4).

#### **4.2.3.2. Interest Group Corporatism and Water Politics**

Interest group corporatism, like its rival interest group pluralism, is useful in explaining interest groups and their involvement in the politics of WRMPs. It clarifies why environmental and human rights interest groups are not successful in their endeavours to influence action against WRMPs—they are not part of the tripartite political arrangement. Yet, based on the assumptions of interest group corporatism, the theory is too narrow to explain the transnational role and involvement of interest groups lobbying against WRMPs for a number of reasons. Firstly, it concentrates exclusively on associational and economic interest groups. These groups will in rare cases lobby against a WRMP. Secondly, and because it assumes that interest groups do not lobby but negotiate with government, it is uninformative about the lobbying process. Thirdly, it does not focus on the transnational role and involvement of interest groups. It explains mainly their domestic operation. Lastly, and similar to interest group pluralism, it does not shed light on how interest groups influence the identities, interests and moral character of society and government.

#### **4.2.4. Modernity**

Modernity is a sociological perspective, but it is relevant to international relations because it focuses on a number of aspects like the state, non-state actors and processes and systems contained within world affairs, like capitalism. The theory takes the state and societal relations as given. Empirically it deals with what is—the state and interest group relations within the domain of modern society (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 5). This is especially relevant when considering how the theory explains the rise of modernity. Modernity arose from a number of revolutions that swept the world a few centuries ago. Most notable of these is the Industrial Revolution that caused the final collapse of the medieval world with its characteristic rigid feudal system and guilds, a revolution that gave people more economic freedom and that led to the early growth of capitalism (Adams, 1993: 26).

##### **4.2.4.1. Basic Assumptions**

Modernity is based on a number of assumptions. First, it contends that modernity and the progression of human society through the modern modes of economic production go hand-in-hand. For Simmel<sup>10</sup> the nucleus of modernity is the city and the capitalist (money) economy. Within the capitalist system, Giddens (1990) describes the contemporary era 'as a juggernaut' (Ritzer,

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<sup>10</sup> In Sociology, Simmel is seen as the first sociologist to give attention to modernity (Ritzer, 2000: 556).

2000: 557). On this point, the juggernaut of modernity is seen as 'a runaway engine of enormous power which, collectively as human beings, we can drive to some extent but which also threatens to rush out of control and which could rend itself asunder' (Giddens, 1990: 139). In short, this juggernaut has more power than those who are controlling it.

Second, modernity theorists assume that modernity manifests itself in four institutions. The first is capitalism, characterised by commodity production, private ownership of capital, propertyless wage labour, and a class system derived from these characteristics. Capitalist modernity is also intrinsically productivist, for it creates fresh needs for its own survival. This is done by using all means at its disposal, from the satisfaction of basic human needs to development assistance. The second is industrialism involving the use of power resources to produce commodities (Ritzer, 2000: 558; Haralambos & Holborn, 2000: 646; Comeliu, 2002: 57). Industrialism is embedded in all spheres of society like transport systems, communication and domestic life. The third is surveillance capabilities that concern the observation of the movements and activities of citizens of a state within, but not always, the political domain (Giddens, 1990: 56, 58). Hence, modernists argue that the state is largely concerned with surveillance capabilities. Military power or the 'control of the means of violence' is the fourth element, with the state playing a central role in this element as well (Ritzer, 2000: 558).

Third, modernity theorists assume that social movements developed in correspondence with these four institutional dimensions of modernity (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000: 646-647). Labour movements, and trade unions developed alongside capitalism. Democratic or free speech movements evolved parallel to the surveillance dimension of modernity. Peace and ecological movements respectively, developed laterally with the military and industrial dimensions (Ritzer, 2000: 562, 560, 556, 558).

Fourth, modernity can bring about both positive and negative change. For instance, industrialisation can lead to better living standards and yet, at the same time create risks such as water pollution. These risks are global in severity, like the global environmental crisis. Fifth, modernity is not static but dynamic. Three factors describe this dynamism namely distanciation, disembedding and reflexivity (Ritzer, 2000: 562, 560, 556, 558). Only reflexivity is relevant to this study and will be discussed in more detail. It is described as those 'social practices [that] are constantly examined and reformed in light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character' (Giddens, 1990: 38). This examination of social practices produces constant change and a permanent state of uncertainty. Indeed, security can be guaranteed in a number of areas such as the provision of water and hydroelectricity, but it can also create risks. In a reflexive environment, all knowledge is constantly reviewed and is always likely to be revised giving it a reflexive character, and thus involves the reflective monitoring of actions (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000: 1076).

In short, every aspect of the contemporary world can be reflected upon. Lastly, interest groups can play an important role in the reflexive dynamism of

modernity. They can deal with some of the risks and point to a society in which risks can be improved (Ritzer, 2000: 560). They are symptomatic of the growing inability of the state—and wealth creators—to appear authoritative and hence legitimate (Pettman, 1991: 160).

#### **4.2.4.2. Modernity and Water Politics**

To a certain extent, modernity as a theoretical perspective is useful and relevant research into water politics. It explains trends in public perceptions on the environment and the hazards relating to the environment during the phase of industrial modernity. These shifts in public perception are attributed to the reflexivity of social movements, comprising a number of special interest groups. Modernity is also useful for analysing the social and political approaches to the environment and the manner in which water resource utilisation has been perceived since the 1970s<sup>11</sup> (Allan, 1999: 3). Since the 1970s, interest groups have rejected the hydraulic mission as a practice that impacts negatively on the environment and humans. On the other hand, modernity is too narrow a perspective to explain the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in water politics, due to its domestic societal focus. It also does not inform the scholar about the dynamics of interests and identities of the state and interest groups. States and interest groups feature in the modernity perspective, but their relationship is not adequately probed.

#### **4.2.5. The Hydrosocial Contract Theory**

The hydrosocial contract theory (HSCT) of Turton and Ohlsson (1999) is a composite theory that includes elements of a number of theories from International Relations, Political Science and Sociology. It is important in the context of this study because it focuses exclusively on water resources management and explains 'how' water resources management processes originated (Meissner & Turton, 2003: 116). Several themes relevant to HSCT have already been discussed previously, such as the state and interest groups questioning state policies. Nonetheless, the synthesis of these perspectives in HSCT is of such a nature that it brings some themes discussed earlier closer to the subject matter. Since HSCT has an empirical character, it reports on the development of water resources management in a society in such a way that it can be verified or falsified. HSCT does not attempt to construct the world and sees the world as outside theory. In this respect, it is self explanatory.

##### **4.2.5.1. Basic Assumptions**

The theory outlines assumptions of the development of water resources management in societies in an attempt to make it more understandable. The following points of HSCT are not so much assumptions (as is the case with the previous theories), but more processes through which water scarcities are managed. First, research about water politics, done from a HSCT perspective, is based on the inability of the state to cope with increasing political demands

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<sup>11</sup> The duration of the second phase of modernity is from the 1970s to the present, and that of the first phase from the late nineteenth century to the 1970s.

caused by water scarcity. Second, it is assumed that a hydrosocial contract is entered into between government and the public when individuals are no longer capable of mobilising sufficient volumes of water for their personal survival. In this respect, the hydrosocial contract gives government a mandate to ultimately assume and execute this responsibility, and acts as a basis for institutional development. The hydrosocial contract is furthermore a medium that indicates to the public what fair and legitimate practices are, for example the sustainable use of water resources, and to which issues/challenges politicians are supposed to react (Turton & Ohlsson, 1999; Turton, 2002a).

Third, HSCT postulates that progressive transitions of human use of water took place at different historical phases. Social instability can result from decreasing water resources within a society, which can be mitigated by using second order resources (institutional development, capacity building, etc.) (Ohlsson, 1999; Turton & Ohlsson, 1999: 1-20). The origin of the first transition is increasing levels of water scarcity<sup>12</sup>, leading to a number of adaptive behaviours<sup>13</sup> and subsequent coping strategies<sup>14</sup>. WRMPs, part of the hydraulic mission, are examples of such strategies. The result of the first transition is a Hobbesian form of the hydrosocial contract that closely resembles elements of Thomas Hobbes' (1651) philosophical writing about social contract theory (Turton & Meissner, 2002: 38). This Hobbesian hydrosocial contract is characterised by a bipolar configuration between government and the water-consuming public.

Fourth, the state and engineers step in to supply society with water during the first phase. Social instability can arise when the state does not deliver on its side of the hydrosocial contract, for instance when it supplies only a particular section of the population with water. This causes the marginalisation of some members of society, which could delegitimise a government. It could lead to a revolution or internal conflict along class, ethnic or racial lines. Fifth, engineers become the discursive elite and apply a sanctioned discourse concerning the management of water resources. The engineer therefore dominates the first transition, with government as the custodian and overseer of water resources (Turton & Ohlsson, 1999: 3, 5-9).

Sixth, a second transition takes place where water deficits<sup>15</sup> start to occur. At this stage, a society can also become unstable. The result of the second transition is a Lockean form of the hydrosocial contract that closely resembles the elements of John Locke's (1690) philosophical writing (Turton & Meissner,

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<sup>12</sup> Water scarcity is defined as a reduction in the volume of water available to a population of people over a certain period (Turton & Ohlsson, 1999: 3).

<sup>13</sup> Adaptive behaviour is defined as the answer to the altering level of water scarcity that manifests itself in a number of appearances, like water restrictions imposed during times of drought, cloud seeding, changes in water policies, rain harvesting, etc. (Turton & Ohlsson, 1999: 3).

<sup>14</sup> Coping strategies are those state incentives, either in the form of a formal policy or a set of strategies, like water demand management, that ensure the management of water scarcity (Turton & Ohlsson, 1999: 3).

<sup>15</sup> Turton and Ohlsson (1999: 7) describe a water deficit as 'the prevailing condition that exists when the consumption of freshwater within a social entity exceeds the level of sustainable supply'.

2002: 38). This Lockean hydrosocial contract is characterised by a triangular configuration between government, the water consuming public and interest groups. Apart from this triangular configuration, two events are important within the context of adaptive behaviour and the second transition. Firstly, there is an increase in the costs of WRMPs. Local authorities and government departments are no longer able to finance WRMPs or there is no other source of water. Secondly, a social conscience surfaces. This psyche is usually in the form of environmentalism. It highlights the notion that supply-sided solutions, through WRMPs, are highly unbecoming the state. Such solutions are environmentally damaging. If this transition is not handled in a sound manner by the state, it can cause a number of social instabilities like migration, political opposition and unrest, low level civil disobedience, etc. (Turton & Ohlsson, 1999: 3, 5-9).

Seventh, through lobbying activities against WRMPs, interest groups are major actors in this transition (Turton & Meissner, 2002: 38). These non-state actors mobilise support against WRMPs and question the state's interpretation of the hydrosocial contract. Lastly, interest groups increasingly demand that water resources management becomes more sustainable. Following this, and because they challenge the sanctioned discourse and demand alternatives to WRMPs, interest groups become new members of the discursive elite. As an underlying principle, the sanctioned discourse also changes to embrace the sustainable utilisation of water (Turton & Ohlsson, 1999: 3, 5-9).

#### **4.2.5.2. The Hydrosocial Contract Theory and Water Politics**

The link between HSCT and water politics, especially regarding WRMPs and interest groups, is obvious. Nonetheless, the theory is still too narrow for the purposes of the subject matter. Firstly, it deals mainly with social instability. It does not say much about instances where social stability accompanies the lobbying activities of interest groups. Secondly, it deals mainly with the internal political dimension and is silent about the transnational dimension of water politics. Thirdly, it places a high premium on the role of the state. Individuals like farmers and the epistemic community (excluding engineers) are ignored, especially concerning their role in the first transition. Fourthly, although interest groups feature in the second transition, the theory is too narrow to explain how they go about their lobbying activities. In other words, the political process, involving norms and rules, and whether interest groups are successful or not in their lobbying endeavours are not adequately discussed. Fifthly, it assumes that interest groups can implement changes in the hydraulic mission, because of their progressive strengthening abilities. However, interest groups do not always have the ability to implement changes. In this regard, the theory is also too narrow. Lastly, the theory has nothing to say about norms and rules governing the hydraulic mission and how non-state entities can affect the identities of the state and engineers through these.

### 4.3. Risk Theories

Two risk theories are discussed, namely risk society and political ecology. These theories are called risk theories because of their propensity to highlight the risks involved in human society.

#### 4.3.1. Risk Society

Risk society theory, like modernity, is a sociological perspective with risks<sup>16</sup> being deemed a concern of society since the 1960s (Sjöberg, 1987: 1). Giddens's modernity perspective is compatible with Beck's risk society perspective (Ritzer, 2000: 563). Giddens (1991: 3-4) notes that: 'Modernity is a risk culture'. Beck (1992: 47) agrees with Giddens (1991) and airs the view that human beings are living in a modern world, although it is a new form of modernity, distinguishable from the classical period of modernity. Thus, the concept of a risk society rests upon the idea that the logic underlying modern industrial societies is changing from one based on the distribution of 'goods', in the form of material products, to one based on the distribution of 'bads' in the form of risks.

##### 4.3.1.1. Basic Assumptions

Risk society theory is characterised by a number of basic assumptions. First, it argues that classical modernity was accompanied by an industrial society. The Industrial Revolution and its aftermath was the main characteristic of classical modernity. In contrast, 'the new emerging modernity and its technologies are associated with the risk society' (Ritzer, 2000: 563). Second, people are living in both an industrial society and a risk society. Phrased in another manner, human beings are therefore living in a transitional period between these two civilisations with the society in which people live having elements of both these worlds (Ritzer, 2000: 563).

Third, industrial society is modernising. This 'modernization of *industrial society*' is called reflexive modernity (Beck, 1992: 10, 11). Because of this modernity, individuals or citizens in the political system are operating increasingly independently as society becomes more classless. Fourth, risks, and how they can be ameliorated, reduced or redirected, stand central to the new modernity. Safety is of essence, in which citizens are looking 'for the largely negative and defensive goal of being spared from danger'. Fifth, wealth, and the creation and accumulation thereof, is producing risks in modern society (Ritzer, 2000: 565). This fosters a culture of increased economic wealth, the disregard of natural resources as economic assets and the negative impact on the environment (Selin, 1987: 156-157). Stated more precisely, industrialism and the incessant accumulation of wealth produced by industrial processes are seen as the main concomitants of risks in modern society.

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<sup>16</sup> A risk is defined as a large negative impact on various systems (environmental and societal) with a small probability of occurrence (Björkman, 1987: 15).

Sixth, risks and class are connected (Ritzer, 2000: 565). Beck (1992:35) points out that 'risks adhere to the class pattern, only inversely: wealth accumulates at the top, risks at the bottom ... Poverty attracts an unfortunate abundance of risks. By contrast the wealthy (in income, power or education) can *purchase* safety and freedom from risk'.

Seventh, two types of risks can be identified, namely individual and collective risks. An individual risk is defined as the risk of being hurt by or even dying from what an individual faces. A collective risk is a risk that affects more than one individual, even large communities or states and ultimately the entire human race (Selin, 1987: 151, 152). Eighth, the source for alleviating risks is found within modernity itself. The risks that are produced by modernisation also breed the reflexivity that is needed to reflect upon modernity and the risks it creates. People are the main reflexive agents, and especially those who are afflicted by risks. They observe their surroundings and gather information on risks and the affects of risk upon them. Through this observation process citizens gradually become experts on risks. They start to critically look at the pace at which modernity is advancing and the associated danger it holds for society as a whole (Ritzer, 2000: 566).

Ninth, the political domains of the state, including its institutions (government and bureaucracy), and its main power base have been eroded. The reason is that risks are originating from sub-political institutions like multinational corporations (MNCs) and scientific laboratories (Ritzer, 2000: 566). Lastly, the advancement of knowledge is taking place outside the governmental system, not in opposition to it, but by ignoring it (Beck, 1992: 223). This is called the 'unbinding of politics'. Politics is no longer only the government's responsibility: interest groups play an increasingly larger role. In other words, interest groups have the power to effect change.

#### **4.3.1.2. Risk Society and Water Politics**

Risk society theory is relevant to water policies and the implementation of WRMPs through government policies. In the words of one observer, water policy formulation 'is driven by perceptions and in the "risk society" ... [a]wareness of a "new" risk is informed by science ... which influence[s] water resource use and policy' (Allan, 1999: 2). Water policies are therefore both the creators and alleviators of risks concerning water resources management. They create risks by threatening the existence and livelihoods of a community, or affect the ecology in an adverse manner. At the same time, water policies alleviate the risks of water shortages and foster socio-economic development. Furthermore, politicians are increasingly faced with the intense anxiety of a large number of individuals and groups about potential risks affecting the environment. These dangers are often associated with the implementation of modern and complex innovative forms of technology—WRMPs are examples (Sjöberg, 1987: 1). However, the risk society perspective is still too narrow a theoretical approach to the subject matter under consideration. The theory does not focus much on the state. It focuses more on risks, individuals, interest groups, and the reasons why these actors can act autonomously to ameliorate the sources and consequences of risks, rather than on



governmental processes which also play a role. Government, as an apparatus of the state, will always be an important actor in political interactions, although not necessarily the most significant actor. As far as Allan (2002: 33) is concerned: 'Environmentalists [in developed countries] have been very successful in persuading civil society, as well as governments of the disadvantages of environmental interventions [risks] such as dams'. In other words, environmental interest groups have a lot of power over the governmental process. This may be the case in the developed world, but in the developing world this assumption may not hold true.

### **4.3.2. Political Ecology**

Normatively, political ecology theory is an alternative to Political Science neo-liberalism (Toke, 2000: 1-2) and International Relations liberal-institutionalism. Normative issues, for example those concerning the environment, have recently re-emerged in the field of International Relations theory (Linklater, 2000b: 1819). Environmental degradation has led to the blossoming of specific normative issues of the physical environment. These issues include, among others, justice to non-human beings and an environmental ethic. Political ecology has, moreover, a distinctive philosophical character with strong normative features (Turton, 2000a: 132). For example, Barry (1999: 42, 369) declares that '[t]he evocation of emotions such as sympathy are a surer basis for humans agreeing to set aside inessential interests in order to avoid harm to non-human beings than metaphysical ethics.' To summarise, as a normative approach, political ecology looks at what *ought* to be and not so much as what is (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 5). The theoretical perspective is therefore evaluative and prescriptive in nature.

#### **4.3.2.1. Basic Assumptions**

Political ecology has a number of basic assumptions that distinguishes it from mainstream, positivist theories. First, political ecology theorists renounce the notion that only the states-system, and other global political structures, can respond effectively to environmental problems. Taken a step further, they focus 'on the need for global-scale political transformation rather than institutional tinkering', like the establishment of regimes (Paterson, 2001: 277, 278). Second, they assume that increased economic development through industrialisation damages the natural environment (Heywood, 1997: 59). During the production process of material goods, external costs are inflicted on society and the environment through environmental degradation (Toke, 2000: 86).

Third, the theory states that 'limits to growth' goes hand-in-hand with rapid economic and population expansion. These aspects are straining the earth's resources and carrying capacity that will soon reach its limits. Society can therefore only grow to a limited extent (Hayward, 1998: 1, 3; Pepper, 1984: 19; Eckersley, 1992: 8; Paterson, 2001: 282). Fourth, political ecologists state that development is essentially anti-ecological because it undermines sustainable

practices. These practices create inequality through enclosure<sup>17</sup>. Environmentalists argue that enclosure is a central feature of development worldwide. Fifth, political ecologist theorists reject sustainable development. They believe that sustainable development is just another way for the 'ruling elite to co-opt environmentalism' (Paterson, 2001: 282-285). Sixth, humans have been alienated from nature, through economic processes and a division of labour (Turton, 2000a: 132-133). Accordingly, political ecologists argue that far-reaching changes to political and social institutions are needed to reverse this alienation (Atkinson, 1991: 171).

Seventh, political ecology theorists are anti-anthropocentric<sup>18</sup>. They see humans as part of nature, in that they are elements of a world that is made up of various mutual and related living and non-living beings. This assumption is both ethically correct and crucial for human survival (Baradat, 2000: 301, 302). Eighth, ecocentrism has been advanced to counteract the anthropocentrism of state action. It acknowledges human and non-human interests (Naess, 1973: 96; Toke, 2000: 86, 87). That being the case, it assumes a holistic<sup>19</sup> approach, instead of a theory that all entities consist of smaller elements (atomism). Ninth, political power should be decentralised within the state and centralised at the regional and global levels. To achieve this, human communities should be downscaled. Political ecology challenges globalisation because it is only by way of 'diversity that it will be possible to create spaces for ecocentric ethics to emerge' (Paterson, 1996: 254, 256). This decentralisation of state power initiative is captured in the slogan 'think global act local' (Goodin, 1992: 5). Lastly, political ecology theorists focus not only on the state as an important actor. They also give weight to the role of non-state entities (e.g. interest groups) in affecting a reversal of the ecological crisis facing humanity (Turton, 2000a: 137).

#### **4.3.2.2. Political Ecology and Water Politics**

What is the relationship between political ecology theory and water politics and is it relevant to the subject matter? Political ecology theory asserts that humans create more self-regulating societies. To achieve this, society must become less complicated in its functions and the relationship of humans with nature more transparent (Atkinson, 1991: 180-181). There is a desire by the citizens of a state to challenge the decisions of policymakers in order to achieve a less demanding society and a more transparent relationship with nature. The role of interest groups with an environmental agenda becomes

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<sup>17</sup> This means that common spaces are turned into private property (Paterson, 2001: 284).

<sup>18</sup> Anthropocentrism is the body of thought that contends that the well-being and requirements of humans have precedence over nature's interests and needs. It is the opposite of ecocentrism, which places nature first in ethical and philosophical considerations of human activity (Heywood, 1997: 59).

<sup>19</sup> Jan Smuts, a former Prime Minister of South Africa, developed the concept of holism in 1926. As outlined by Smuts the theory of holism sets out to explain the natural environment as a whole and not as separate entities. Smuts furthermore believed that science is guilty of reductionism, in that it studies everything separately and thereby understanding it in itself. Holism, on the other hand, is the belief that the whole is more important than the individual parts of which it consists. In this regard, every part of the whole has only meaning when seen together with other elements and subsequently in relation to the whole (Heywood, 1992: 249).

relevant in this regard. In future, environmental impact assessments (EIAs) of WRMPs will become more politicised, as these interest groups become increasingly part of the EIA process (Internet: Turton, 2000b: 2). Political ecology appeals to the research problem under consideration but only in a practical sense. The theory is still too narrow as an explanatory tool. It does not say much on how interest groups should go about their lobbying and other related activities. In short, the theory does not explain to an adequate extent the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in environmental issues. It does not propose an alternative to the state system it renounces. However, it is, as a tributary, post-positivist theory, closer to the subject matter than many of the mainstream, positivist theories like realism and liberal-pluralism.

#### **4.4. Social Constructivism**

Based on the discussion of the basic assumptions of the selection of mainstream and tributary theoretical perspective(s), criticisms have been levelled at the applicability of these perspectives to water politics. If one considers that the transnational role and involvement of interest groups lobbying against WRMPs is complex, since it involves both state and non-state actors, domestic and international political phenomena, and a number of empirical and normative aspects, it is obvious that no single theoretical perspective adequately accommodates the subject matter. Phrased differently, certain theoretical perspectives have highlighted some of the aspects, but inadequately. As a result, in order to bridge the divide between these mainstream and tributary perspectives, and to accommodate the complexities of interest groups involved in the water politics of WRMPs, social constructivism is discussed. To reiterate, since water politics does not fit neatly into domestic or international relations and since it has normative and empirical elements, the aforesaid theoretical perspectives do not sufficiently address the role and involvement of interest groups.

In spite of these shortcomings, social constructivism tries 'to make sense of social relations by explaining the construction of the socio-political world by human practice'. In this way, it forms a bridge between mainstream, positivist and tributary, post-positivist theoretical perspectives. Although, it shares many post-positivist premises and attacks mainstream theory (Du Plessis, 2000: 25) it, nevertheless 'rejects the "slash-and-burn" extremism of some post-modern thinkers who leave nothing behind them, nowhere to stand, nothing even for themselves to say' (Kubálková, Onuf & Kowert, 1998: 20). In short, social constructivism emphasises the importance of normative and material structures, the role of identity in shaping political action, and the complementary constitutive relationship between agents and structures (Reus-Smit, 2001: 209).

In effect, the theory is an outgrowth of critical international theory. It explicitly seeks to employ the insights of that theory to highlight diverse aspects of world politics. In the words of one observer: 'Where first wave critical theorists had rejected the rationalist depiction of humans as atomistic egoists and society as a strategic domain ... constructivists have used this alternative ontology to

explain and interpret aspects of world politics that were anomalous to neo-realism and neoliberalism' (Reus-Smit, 2001: 215). Thus, social constructivism takes the ontology about individuals and society not contained in neo-realism and neo-liberalism, a step further, and builds upon this knowledge.

Despite this development, three forms of social constructivism are defined: systemic, unit-level and holistic constructivism (Reus-Smit, 2001: 219). Systemic constructivism follows neo-realism. It adopts a 'third image' perspective, which focuses entirely on interactions between unitary state actors. Unit-level constructivism, on the other hand, is the inverse of the systemic type. It does not focus on the external, international domain. It concentrates on the relationship 'between domestic social and legal norms and the identities and interests of states'. Hence, systemic and unit-level constructivism represents the traditional dichotomy between the domestic and international domains. Holistic constructivism aims to bridge the two realms (Reus-Smit, 2001: 220-221). Because of holistic constructivism's 'bridging ability', this form of social constructivism will be employed as an explanatory tool, which is more suitable for the purpose of explaining, analysing and predicting the transnational role and involvement of interest groups.

#### **4.4.1. Basic Assumptions**

Holistic constructivism contains a number of basic assumptions that highlight the construction of the socio-political world by human practices. First, it argues that positivist theories have been exceedingly materialist and agent-centric. Positivists assume that International Relations is a product of agents (usually states), 'which are imbued with "instrumental rationality"'. This means that states seek their power or utility-maximising choices or interests. Holistic constructivism nevertheless rejects this by stating that '[h]uman relations, including international relations, consist of thoughts and ideas and not of material conditions or forces' (Jackson & Sørensen, 2003: 254). Second, holistic constructivism assumes that states are constrained by social normative structures (Hobson, 2000: 145, 146). Simple as the concept may seem, norms are defined 'as shared (thus social) understandings of standards of behaviour' (Klotz, 1995: 14). In this regard, constructivism focuses on the core ideational element of intersubjective beliefs (ideas, conceptions, assumptions, etc.) that are widely shared by people (Jackson & Sørensen, 2003: 254).

To elaborate further, a basic 'given' of positivist theory is that states always know what their interests are, and that they know how to realise them. Yet, according to holistic constructivism, norms construct the identities of states and individuals. These identities in turn define their interests. Identities and interests are the ways in which people perceive of themselves in their relations with others. The ways in which those relationships are formed and expressed (e.g. by means of collective social institutions) are major focuses of constructivists. Norms have therefore an important function in that interests change as norms reconstruct identities leading to changes in state policy. In short, norms channel states and individuals along certain socially dictated conduits of appropriate behaviour, which means that norms are autonomous.

Contrariwise, positivism sees norms as intervening variables situated between the basic causal variable (power actors) and international results (Smith, 1997; Price, 1998: 615; Du Plessis, 2000: 26; Hobson, 2000: 146, 147; Jackson & Sørensen, 2003: 254).

In the third place, holistic constructivism treats the domestic and international spheres as two facets of a single social and political order. Fourth, it is concerned with the dynamics of global change, especially the rise and possible decline of the state. Because of this, it focuses on the mutually constitutive relationship between the global order and the state (Reus-Smit, 2001: 221). Fifth, transnational state actors, like interest groups, are believed to exist as a community of political engagement in international affairs. They have a meaningful impact through networks that inform governments what is appropriate to pursue in politics (Price, 1998: 639). Sixth, norms create agents from individuals. Individuals do this by getting an opportunity to act upon world events. Agents use all means at their disposal to achieve their goals. Onuf (1984: 4) comments on this by saying that '[t]hese means include material features of the world. Because the world is a social place ... rules make the world's material features into *resources* available for agents' use'. Lastly, intersubjective social contexts make meaningful action or behaviour possible. The medium of norms and practices develops relations and understandings between actors. If norms were absent, power and action exercises would be meaningless. From this, an identity is defined by constitutive norms. This is done by specifying the actions that will lead other actors to realise that identity and respond to it appropriately (Hopf, 2000: 1757-1758).

#### **4.4.2. Social Constructivism and Water Politics**

What is the relevance of social constructivism to water politics? First, because social constructivism is not overly agent-centric it does not focus only on states as actors in international politics. This implies that interest groups are also seen as relevant actors. They are so, especially when they demonstrate to states appropriate behaviour within the international context. This infers that interest groups are not only relevant, but also major actors in situations where they are juxtaposed with states, for example lobbying against WRMPs in international river basins.

Second, interest groups can constrain state action concerning WRMP implementation by advancing normative social structures, and thereby changing state identities that leads to changes in policy preferences. Third, holistic constructivism does not make a distinction between the domestic and international political domains. It lumps these domains together as a single social and political order, and therefore explain the occurrence of transnational actors and their activities. This is important, because many interest groups do so both from within the state (that implement such a project) and from outside the state. Fourth, normative issues explain the rise of interest groups influencing state policy about WRMPs, because norms create agents from individuals. In the last instance, social constructivism describes new issues on the global agenda because of its concern with the dynamics of global change. It is therefore relevant and applicable because it is concerned with the rise and

decline of the state, which is appropriate, for the reason that interest groups seem to be more relevant within the political dynamics of international river basins than states.

## 5. Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter was to contextualise the link between the water discourse and a selection of theoretical perspectives. The linkage between the water discourse and the theoretical perspectives is of such a nature that the water discourse is influenced by these perspectives, and not *vice-versa*.

The theoretical development of the water discourse was outlined, and it was concluded that the water discourse and International Relations theoretical perspectives are closely related. From its emergence in the early 1980s<sup>20</sup>, the discourse has followed International Relations theoretical developments. It is not clear whether this was by default or implication. Obviously, in many cases scholars, who were doing research from either a realist or liberal-pluralist perspective, explicitly or implicitly contributed knowledge to the field of water politics. Whatever the reasons, the water discourse has close ties with mainstream, positivist theories, with tributary post-positivist theories being applied only on rare occasions. Viewed in this way, the water discourse has great difficulty divorcing itself from mainstream theorising. A possible explanation for this is the large number of scholars from different disciplines partaking in the discourse. Many of these scholars are not International Relations specialists. Yet, because of the water discourse's international relations character, many use International Relations theories unknowingly and more often than not only the most well known theories like realism and liberal-pluralism.

In this chapter, a number of theories were outlined that could be relevant to the subject matter and the main problem statement. Many of these theories have been used in the past to inform the subject matter contained in the water discourse. This was especially the case in the analysis of conflict and cooperation between states over international water resources (e.g. Lowi's 1993 study on the Jordan River basin is informative in this regard).

The theoretical perspectives discussed focus on a number of aspects concerning the interaction between humans in political societies and the natural environment. Realism regards the state and the relationship among state actors as being pivotal in world affairs. Liberal-pluralism, as the antithesis of realism, looks at the importance of individuals and non-state entities and places particular emphasis on the interaction between these

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<sup>20</sup> During the early 1980s, a number of articles and books were written on water politics in the Middle East and elsewhere. This was at a time when there were little or no academic knowledge on the subject matter. Examples of articles and books include Naff and Matson, *Water in the Middle East: Conflict or Cooperation?* (1984), Falkenmark, *Fresh Water as a Factor in Strategic Policy and Action* (1986), and Mumme, *State Influence in Foreign Policy Making: Water Related Environmental Disputes along the United States-Mexico Border* (1985).

actors and the state. Modernity and risk society theory consider the manner in which modern societies developed and the outcomes of these developments concerning the interaction of individuals within society. Because of the limitations of these theoretical perspectives of relations within human society and between humans and the natural environment, these perspectives are too narrow to form the theoretical backbone of the study of interest groups involved in water politics.

Interest group pluralism and corporatism are two theories that place emphasis exclusively on interest groups and their relationship with government. They do so within the context of domestic politics, but oppose each other in the process. Interest group pluralism notes that power is distributed throughout society with government being neutral. Interest group corporatism maintains that power is concentrated in the hands of a few interest groups with government being an arbitrator. While interest group pluralism and corporatism focus on interest group and government relations, HSCT is entirely devoted to water resources and the management thereof. The main gist of HSCT is that water resources development has occurred over a number of transitions each with its distinctive set of principles and actors. In contrast, political ecology's focal point lies within the relationship humans have with nature. This perspective also looks critically at this relationship, and suggests a number of alternative practices to bring about a better association between humans and the environment.

It is concluded that these theoretical perspectives are too narrow, particularistic and exclusive to adequately explain the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in water politics, as well as their own and the state's agential power. The theories only 'fit' the subject matter to a certain extent. Social constructivism, on the other hand, as a 'bridge' between mainstream and tributary theories, is more pertinent to the subject matter since it places a high premium on normative issues and on the role of norms in agent creation and development. This is a crucial aspect in gaining clarification on the research question, especially regarding interest groups' impact on state agential power. Similarly, interest groups act as normative agents to bring about a change in the practices of states. Hence, the subsequent discussion of interest groups as distinct transnational actors in domestic and international politics.

## CHAPTER 3

### INTEREST GROUPS AS TRANSNATIONAL AGENTS

#### 1. Introduction

Interest groups have been political features of human society for millennia. Simple as the premise may be, these non-state entities are still relevant today. This being the case, the purpose of this chapter is, firstly, to outline the fundamental characteristics of interest groups and secondly, to discuss the nature and extent of their transnational activities. In short, the chapter will outline the characteristics of interest groups as domestic actors, merged with their transnational behaviour. This is done by defining the concept interest group and related entities; providing a typology of interest groups; discussing interest groups as transnational actors; highlighting their agential roles; and lastly, drawing a conclusion.

#### 2. Conceptualisation of Interest Groups

Various common definitions of the concept interest group exist, also considering that this political entity is denoted by a number of different terms. Within the Political Sciences, these concepts are used in a confusing manner and defined differently.

Throughout the twentieth century studies on interest group politics were frequently conducted and different terms were consequently developed to describe interest groups. In generic terms, an interest group is a non-state entity that endeavours to influence government policy. In this respect, the notion of 'interest' is used to connote the pursuit of causes or the advancement and defence of particular interests, positions and people in society (Grant, 2000: 9). Nevertheless, related concepts other than *interest group* include *pressure group*, *lobby*, *non-governmental organisation (NGO)*, and the variant of the latter *international non-governmental organisation (INGO)*. How have scholars defined these entities? In this thesis, it is accepted that *interest groups*, *pressure groups*, *NGOs/INGOs*, and *lobbies* are not identical. All interest groups are per definition NGOs, but not all NGOs are interest groups. NGOs only present the interests of their members, but may not necessarily act to influence government policies. It is only when an NGO starts to influence governmental policies, that it becomes an interest group. For instance, the Automobile Association (AA) is an NGO that provides a service to its members. However, when it starts to make statements on how the death toll on South African roads can be lowered, through 'better' governmental policies, it becomes an interest group. Similarly, all pressure groups and lobbies are interest groups, but not all interest groups are pressure groups and lobbies. Pressure groups and lobbies focus their activities mainly on governmental policies or the governmental process. Interest groups, on the other hand, attempt to influence governmental policies, the governmental process, and other organisations in society through various means. For instance, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) is an interest group, influencing the South African government to change its policies on HIV/AIDS infected persons. At



the same time, it also influences pharmaceutical companies to lower their prices on anti-retroviral drugs.

## 2.1. Preference for a Particular Concept

As indicated, different scholars use the concepts *interest group*, *lobby* and *pressure group* in different ways. The representative definitions of *pressure groups*, *interest groups* and *lobbies* are summarised with reference to their main features, namely the scholar, (who used the concept), the actor(s) (the types of actors that are classified as *interest groups*, *lobby* and *pressure groups*), and action (what role these groups play in politics) (see Table 1, 2, and 3 respectively).

**Table 1. Preference for the concept 'pressure group'.**

Scholar(s)	Actor(s)	Action
Mackenzie (1955: 137)	Organised groups with formal structures and real common interests.	Influence decisions of public policies.
Stewart (1958: 1, 10)	Organised groups with formal structures and real common interests.	Influence the governmental process.
Freeman (1958), Stewart (1958: 10)	Public administrative agencies.	Influence public opinion and legislative action.
Key (1961: 500)	Private organisations.	Influence the content of public policy.
Castles (1967: 1)	Any group that is not a political party.	Brings about political change through government activity.
Kimber and Richardson (1974: 2)	Any group.	Articulates a demand that the authorities should make an authoritative allocation on.
Coxall (1980: 10)	A pressure group.	Through political action implements changes that are desirable and prevent changes that are undesirable.
Ball and Millard (1986: 33-34)	Social aggregates with some level of cohesion and shared aims.	Attempt to influence the political decision making process.
Richardson (1993b: 1)	Any group.	Articulates a demand that the authorities should make an authoritative allocation on.

**Table 2. Preference for the concept 'interest group'.**

Scholar(s)	Actor(s)	Action
Truman (1951: 33)	Any group with shared attitudes.	Makes claims on any group in society to establish, maintain, or enhance forms of behaviour implied by shared attitudes.
De Grazia (1958: 114)	Privately organised aggregation.	Attempts to influence public policy.
Meehan, Roche, and Stedman (1966)	Associations.	Systematically influence legislation and administration, particularly on a national scale.
Harris (1968: 2)	Consists of persons of like-	Make claims on government

	mind, not political parties.	for concessions which rebound their own benefit.
Silvera (1970: 19)	Any group in society.	Influences government policy.
Cummings and Wise (1971: 213)	Any group with shared attitudes.	Makes claims on any group in society to establish, maintain, or enhance forms of behaviour implied by shared attitudes.
Presthus (1974a: 61)	Collectivities organised around an explicit aggregate value.	Make political claims <i>vis-à-vis</i> government, other interest groups, and the public.
Berry (1977: 5)	A group that is an intermediary between citizens and government.	Converts the desires of its constituents into specific policies or goals.
Moulder, Scott and Van Der Merwe (1982: 39)	Any combination of persons bound together by shared goals and attitudes.	Attempts to obtain decisions favourable to their preferred values at their disposal especially by gaining access to the governmental process.
Ogene (1983: 8)	A group whose members accept a parallel or joint reward from a possible course of events.	Acts in common regarding what they perceive to be their common aim.
Skilling (1983: 3)	Any group in society.	Makes certain claims upon other groups for the establishment, maintenance, or enhancement of forms of behaviour implied by shared attitudes.
Wilson (1990: 1)	Organisations separate from government but often in close partnership with government.	Influence public policy.
Bashevkin (1996: 135)	Collectivities with shared outlooks, identities, or frames of references.	Not specified
Hjelmar (1996: 8)	They have no stable membership or well-defined goals, identity not built on material advantage for their members.	Not specified.
Wright (1996: 22)	A collection of individuals, linked together by professional circumstances, or common political, economic, or social interests, that is not a political party but organised externally to government.	Influences decisions made by the legislative, executive, or judicial branches of national, regional, or local governments.
Baumgartner and Leech (1998: xxii)	Any organisation in society.	An institution that makes policy-related appeals to government.
Grant (2000: 7)	An entity.	Influences public policy, which central government, local government, a regional organisation, or quasi-governmental organisations formulate.

**Table 3. Preference for the concept 'lobby'.**

Scholar	Actor	Action
Finer (1958: 3)	Not political parties.	Tries to influence the policy of public bodies in their own chosen direction.

## 2.2. Combination of Concepts

Several scholars, such as White, Blaisdell, and Bone, use the concepts interchangeably. This is done by using combinations of the concepts *interest group*, *pressure group*, *lobby* and *NGO/INGO*. The different entities are also classified and separated as distinct actors (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Combination of the concepts.**

Scholar(s)	Combination	Actor(s)	Action
White (1951: 10)	INGO and Pressure Group	By implication INGO.	Function as agents of international understanding, and as moulders of public opinion.
Blaisdell (1958)	NGO, Interest Group, and Pressure Group.	By implication NGO.	Not specified.
Bone (1958)	Interest Group and Pressure Group.	Groups other than political parties.	Influence political parties.
Gable (1958: 85)	Interest Group and Pressure Group	Group of people with a shared identity that promote or defend their interests.	Shape public policy.
Childs (1965: 237, 240-241)	Pressure Group, Interest Group, Idea Group	Broad array of groups in society.	Exert pressure on public opinion and public policy.
Latham (1965: 161)	Interest Group and Pressure Group.	Organised groups.	Influence the course of political action by putting favourable statutes into law or by persuading officeholders to exercise their authority for the benefit of the group.
Roberts (1970: 8)	Pressure Group, Lobby, and Interest Group.	Organised groups.	Influence policy in a relative limited number of areas.
Bekker (1996: 29-31)	Interest Group and Pressure Group, depending on the relationship with a local authority.	Groups in society.	Promote the interests of their members.
Baumgartner and Leech (1998: xxii)	Interest group (but do not make a distinction between different phrases; they will use any concept).	See Table 3.2.	See Table 3.2.
Hague, Harrop and	Interest Group and	Organisations	Influence

Breslin (1998)	Pressure Group, not political parties.	autonomous from government.	government and public policy.
Vincent (1999: 125)	INGOs and Interest Group.	Non-profit, service-orientated.	Operate across national borders.

Of these concepts, *interest group* is the most popular and widely used in Political Science and *NGO* and/or *INGO* in International Relations. For instance, many scholars in International Relations prefer the terms *NGO* and *INGO* over interest group because these organisations have consultative representation in the United Nations (UN) (Willets, 1997: 299). In contrast, Political Science scholars are more familiar with the term interest group. Concerning the concepts used, scholars are divided into two categories: those who prefer one concept to the other and those who employ them in combination. The preference for one concept over another is not only based on practical considerations, but also because of the negative association some of these concepts have.

### 2.3. The Concept Interest Group

All these concepts, except *NGO/INGO*, have at times been treated as something of a profanity in the scholarly discourse, because of negativity associated with the concepts pressure groups, lobbies and interest groups. Even so, many scholars, members of interest groups and government officials prefer one concept to the other. As far as Truman (1951: 38) is concerned, the concept pressure group invokes a sense of 'selfishness' and that 'special rights and privileges' are sought by these groups from other political actors. Similarly, Moulder, Scott and Van Der Merwe (1982: 39) prefer to use interest group because pressure group implies negativity toward these latter non-state entities. One of the reasons for this negative image of pressure groups, as Mackenzie (1955: 135) declares, is that pressure always invokes power politics. In contrast, within diplomatic circles, diplomats and government officials prefer to use the concept *NGO*. The reason for this is that ambassadorial representatives and politicians often claim that they seek to represent the national interest of a united society. Furthermore, they will not concede that they find themselves standing in a particular relationship with interest groups (Willets, 1997: 298). Even so, over the years the concept 'interest group' has been used with carelessly, causing unnecessary uncertainty about its actual meaning (Geldenhuys, 1998: 5).

Despite differences, 'influence on governmental/public policies' is a common denominator that is employed in almost all definitions. Traditionally, influence is a component of power (Holsti, 1995: 118); it is a functioning of the actions of interest groups in relation to government or any other entity such as an international organisation or financial institution. Various scholars have defined interest groups in terms of the notion of influence either very narrowly or in a broader context. Petracca (1992: 6) observes that academics are more likely to use concepts that are pertinent to their own research endeavours. The narrow to broad use of these concepts range from Mackenzie (1955) to Baumgartner and Leech (1998), with all the others in between. Mackenzie (1955: 135-136) uses a number of criteria to narrow the groups he is studying. He does not recognise groups with an informal organisational structure to be a

pressure group. Such groups must also be politically significant; that is they must play a role in public decisions, and not have only limited dealings with government. Those organisations that are constituted by law, but difficult to identify in terms of their real members, are also excluded. Baumgartner and Leech (1998: xxii) do not have a 'strong preference' for a particular concept. What is of more importance is to point to the role interest groups play in society—and more specifically to their relationship with the state and government officials and other non-state entities, rather than to argue over the different concepts.

Furthermore, for Baumgartner and Leech (1998: xxii), a concept makes no difference, for 'we are pluralists on this score'. This sentiment is echoed in other studies as well. For instance, Smith (1993: 1) states that '[t]he important variables in understanding decisions are the nature of the relationships that exist between groups and the state—the types of policy networks—and the interest and activities of state actors—the degree of autonomy'. Baumgartner and Leech and Smith therefore note that rather than to broaden the debate over concepts, the relationship that exists between interest groups, the state and government, their impact on state autonomy and policy issues should be the focus.

In recent years political scientists have moved away from the narrow perspective of interest groups, namely away from the sense that they represent the interests of a specific group in society. Increasingly, interest groups are defined with emphasis on their actions towards the state and other organisations, with influence or advocacy playing a central role. A study of the conduct of interest groups may thus force scholars to answer questions concerning the relationship between the state and society (Wilson, 1990: 1). The concepts *interest groups*, *pressure groups*, *lobbies* and *NGOs/INGOs* have also recently been used to include non-state entities that affect public policy and public opinion. Since the 1990s, the concept *interest group* has been used more widely than *pressure group* and *lobby*. Therefore, in this thesis, this trend will be followed and the phrase 'interest group' will be employed. There is nevertheless a tendency in International Relations literature to use the phrase *NGO*. However, some scholars do not concern themselves with terminology. As indicated, they select a concept and look at the real issue in group politics, namely the role and purpose of interest groups, the processes involved and the relationship of interest groups with the state and other governmental and non-governmental actors. In addition, interest groups are distinctive from social movements because of their exceptional degree of formal organisation. Social movements are more loosely organised. Nevertheless, a number of interest groups can form a social movement. If they do, which is usually the case, such a movement is known as 'transnational advocacy networks' (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 1). How then do scholars in the water discourse use the concept interest group?

Within the water discourse a number of scholars prefer to use the concept *NGO* when writing or referring to these organisations, (i.e. interest group), for instance McCully (1996), Gleick (1998), Turton and Ohlsson (1999), and Turton (2002b). Is this wrong? Most certainly not. The scholars and

practitioners in the water discourse refer to a broad range of organisations and not only to specific institutions when they write about non-state actors in water politics. It should also be kept in mind that not all of these scholars are Political Scientists or International Relations specialists. Some analysts within the Political Sciences are, like their non-Political Science colleagues, unfamiliar with concepts like *interest group*, *pressure group* and *lobby*. They therefore do not present clear definitions within the rubric of their research.

Moreover, at times they do not specifically focus on interest groups in water politics. Some experts in the field of water politics may not have come across these concepts in their work, or may not be accustomed to the concepts used in the analysis of group politics. An example is the director general of South Africa's Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) using the concept NGO with reference to entities lobbying against large dams (M. Muller, personal communication, 13 February 2001).

To provide a measure of clarity and consistency in this thesis the following stipulative definition to describe an interest group will be used: it is *a non-state entity supported by a specific constituency converging on an exact issue that influences government policies and other non-state and inter-governmental institutions, in the national political and the international relations domain.*

### 3. Interest Group Typology

Scholars also use different interest group typologies. The classification of interest groups indicates the nature, composition and method of issue articulation and basis of membership of the different groups found in a political society. Not all types of interest groups, outlined below, exist at any given moment in all countries. Interest groups can nevertheless be classified as follows, namely anomic groups; non-associational groups; institutional groups; and associational groups (Almond & Powell, 1995: 71; Heywood, 1997: 253; Sadie, 1998: 281-282).

**(a) Anomic groups:** Anomic groups arise spontaneously when a group of people feels frustrated with issues and/or actions of governments or other non-state entities. The venting of strong emotions usually accompanies anomic groups and their operational approach. These groups are furthermore unorganised in the sense that no detailed planning goes into their formation. At the same time, anomic groups are short-lived, in that there is no constant group activity after they have been established or disbanded. Sometimes, though, a leader might emerge from events characterised by such spontaneous and short-lived activity. Above all, anomic groups are usually unpredictable and uncontrollable. Thus, tactics used by such groups tend to be illegitimate and can sometimes erupt in violence. Even so, spontaneity is the key element of an anomic group (Almond & Powell, 1995: 71; Sadie, 1998: 282). A lynch mob, riots, or a spontaneous revolution to topple a government are examples, hence their uncontrollable and unpredictable nature. Take for instance the violence that broke out between police and residents of the Alexandra informal settlement near Johannesburg (South Africa) in early 2001. A group of dwellers clashed with police over an eviction

order that stated that 3 500 families had to be moved from the banks of the Jukskei River that runs through the suburb. This, after floods had washed away a number of informal dwellings and after cholera was detected in the river's water (Time, 26 February 2001: 11). The anomic group was short-lived, lasting only a few hours, and came about due to the emotional matter of evictions from homes.

**(b) Non-associational groups:** Non-associational interest groups are smaller groups of people that articulate interests on an *ad hoc* basis, guided at times by a prominent member of society, such as a traditional or religious leader (Sadie, 1998: 282). They are rarely well organised. Their activities are eventful, and their membership is based on common interests of region, religion, profession, kinship, ideology, or ethnicity. Non-associational groups are more permanent than anomic groups because of the different attachments of their members, with collective activities stemming from these ties. Nonetheless, sub-groups in non-associational groups may act from time to time like anomic groups (Almond & Powell, 1995: 71-72).

Non-associational groups are sub-divided into two categories, namely the large group that is formally organised; and the small village or ethnic association (the communal group). An example of the large group is one that has been established similar to consumers of water from rivers and lakes. The members of such a group view their interests in very vague terms. One of the problems associated with large non-associational groups is that of free-riders (members not belonging formally to the group, but deriving benefits from interest articulation) (Almond & Powell, 1995: 72).

In contrast to the large group, the members of a small communal group know each other on a personal basis, and the contact between them is therefore more intimate. Formal membership of this group is not required. Examples are ethnic groups, families, tribes, and castes. These groups are established on the premise of a common origin, tradition, or loyalty (Almond & Powell, 1995: 72). They play important roles in developing societies, for their shared attributes are at times, one of the most important foundations of interest articulation (Heywood, 1997: 253). An example of a communal group, that exhibited characteristics of an anomic group, was the group of Spanish Basques disrupting the opening proceedings of the World Water Forum (WWF) in The Hague in 2000. Two protesters appeared in the nude, with messages written in Basque over their bodies. These messages contained a call to halt large dam projects in Spain, and other parts of the world. Their actions caused much disruption to the opening ceremony and they had to be escorted from the premises by the police (A.R. Turton, personal communication, 22 June 2000).

Therefore, the main characteristic of non-associational groups is that their establishment is based on the subjective attitudes of their members, namely elements such as race, age, religion, class or ethnicity, and that their actions for influencing government are of a promotional nature (Sadie, 1998: 282).

**(c) Associational groups:** Associational groups are established to advance the interests of specific groups that have limited goals. They also have formal procedures for formulating interests and demands, and have an employed staff to execute these organisational operations (Almond & Powell, 1995: 73; Heywood, 1997: 253). Thus, they have a more permanent character and institutionalised operating procedures than other groups. Because of their organisational structure, they have an advantage over non-associational groups. Their tactics and methods of interest articulation are also perceived to be more legitimate than those of other groups (Almond & Powell, 1995: 73). Yet, it is sometimes difficult to separate them from non-associational groups. For instance, loyalty based on class or ethnicity can be strong and can unify the group. Subsequently, membership of an associational group may be the embodiment of a social identity rather than the advancement of a particular goal (Heywood, 1997: 253). They are further divided into sectional and promotional groups. Sectional groups are established to contribute to or safeguard the interests of their members, usually in a material sense. Trade unions, like the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in South Africa, are an example. They also represent specific sectors of society in which they operate. Promotional groups (also called cause or issue groups), on the other hand, are established to promote values, ideas, or principles occurring in a society, like environmental concerns (Heywood, 1997: 254; Sadie, 1998: 281).

**(d) Institutional groups:** Institutional groups are formally organised and have, along with interest articulation, other social functions (Almond & Powell, 1995: 72). For instance, a government department may have a number of interest groups situated within its institutional structure. The members of such interest groups may have other bureaucratic functions to fulfil. Furthermore, for these groups the formulation and implementation of, and emphasis, on public policy, are important. The reason for this is that any organised entity with the ability and capacity to make authoritative decisions may generate internal interest groups (Grant, 2000: 7). These interest groups promote their *cause célèbre* or the interests of a client group (Sadie, 1998: 282). In effect, the main characteristic of these groups is that they are part of the governmental apparatus concerned with public policy making and implementation. They therefore articulate interests and exercise influence through the government machinery. The military and government bureaucracies are typical examples (Heywood, 1997: 253). They can be powerful because of their organisational base and direct access to government, which serves to amplify their strength (Almond & Powell, 1995: 72). Yet, there is much disagreement whether they can be regarded as true interest groups, because of their close link with the governmental apparatus.

Not all these interest groups will necessarily play roles in the articulation of issues concerning WRMPs. Some could be more prominent in this issue area than others, for example the International Rivers Network (IRN) that is more prominent than Greenpeace. These groups can be either insider or outsider groups, depending on the devices that the state applies for incorporation and expulsion, and depending on the impact that they have on policies (Smith, 1993: 3).



In conclusion, it should be borne in mind that the number and different types of interest groups involved in the debate concerning a WRMP will vary from one international river basin to another, depending on the hydro-political situation in the river basin. The previously mentioned classification system will be used throughout the study to determine the types of interest groups that are active in water politics. From the literature review of the concepts and the classification of these political actors, a number of roles and functions are discerned. Nonetheless, the main purpose of interest groups is to influence governmental policies or actions. These groups do not only influence government policy from within the boundaries of the state, but also in a transnational context.

#### **4. Interest Groups as Transnational Actors**

The discipline of International Relations is mostly understood to encompass the associations between states. Other actors in world politics, such as economic institutions (that is MNCs) and social groups, are in many cases given a secondary status as non-state entities in world affairs (Willems, 1997: 287). This is in line with the realist perspective of world politics, but not with liberal-pluralism. The latter perspective suggests that non-state actors, including interest groups, also play a role in the international system, even though they are confined to a second tier of analysis.

However, interest groups indeed play an important role in world politics when operating as transnational actors and should not be confined to a second tier of analysis. In this regard, transnational relations are defined as the 'activities between individuals and groups in one state and individuals and groups in another state' (Archer, 1992: 1). Another definition is that it is the 'contacts, coalitions, and interactions across State boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of government' (Nye & Keohane, 1971: 330).

##### **4.1. Transnational Dimensions**

Since most interest groups do not confine their activities to one state or to domestic policy issues, they play a transnational role by lobbying governments across state borders. An interest group from a particular state is able to cross political boundaries and start a lobbying campaign within another country. In this sense, interest groups can intervene in policy arenas at a transnational level to promote the interests of their members, to provide assistance, to promote scientific and technological research, and to circulate ideological, cultural, and religious ideas (Ghils, 1992: 421). Stated differently, interest groups, like governments of states, can cross international boundaries, communicate with each other and set up networks or even alliances through which efforts are co-ordinated. In this respect, interest groups, as transnational actors, are in fact older than the modern state.

Before the formation of the Westphalian state, transnational actors like trading organisations such as the British East India Company, played a leading role in the spread of ideas and ideologies. In other words, the state was never the only independent actor in world politics. Because of the spread of ideas and

ideologies, social, political, economic and cultural actors 'had to be subnational, transnational or supranational' (Stern, 2000: 246). Regarding ideas, non-state entities always had a transnational character in terms of their formation and scope of activities and whenever political actors interacted, 'assumptions, concepts, creeds, doctrines and dogmas could always be transmitted from one to another' (Stern, 2000: 246).

This is still the case in the contemporary era where the process of globalisation drives these relations between non-state entities<sup>21</sup>. Globalisation 'refers to processes whereby social relations acquire relatively distanceless and borderless qualities, so that human lives are increasingly played out in the world as a single place. Social relations—that is, the countless and complex ways that people interact with and affect each other—are more and more being conducted and organized on the basis of a planetary unit' (Scholte, 1999: 14-15). Globalisation therefore has the effect that social relations are to an increasing extent conducted at a broader level than before, with the result that the world has become a relatively borderless social environment in which interest groups are operating (Scholte, 1999: 14-15).

Interest groups have also staked a claim in dealings with the so-called main actors in world affairs—states. This is clearly indicated by the assertion that 'in the closing decades of the twentieth century, interest group activity has increasingly adjusted to the impact of globalisation and the strengthening of supranational bodies. Amongst the groups best suited to take advantage of such shifts are charities and environmental campaigners (such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth) which already possess transnational structures and an international membership' (Heywood, 1997: 265). One of the possible reasons why interest groups with an environmental agenda, are so adept at conforming to globalisation trends, is the nature of environmental problems facing humankind. Environmental problems are not localised to a single country. Most environmental problems cross state boundaries, affecting regions and even the entire globe. To confront these transnational problems interest groups have opted for a transnational approach. Since the nature and scope of the problem influence correspondingly the nature and scope of the proposed solution, it follows that the type of problem determines the function of the interest group to address the problem.

Thus, the actions of interest groups *vis-à-vis* other institutions, governments included, are becoming more transnational in magnitude (Ghils, 1992: 429). For instance, in 1992 Wolfgang Pricher<sup>22</sup> (1992) served the following warning to the British Dam Society (BDS) by cogently noting that 'a serious general countermovement ... has already succeeded in reducing the prestige of dam engineering in the public eye, and it is starting to make work difficult for our profession', exists. The 'countermovement' Pricher was referring to consisted of a number of interest groups, operating not only within state borders, but also

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<sup>21</sup> Globalisation and internationalisation are two distinct processes. Internationalisation denotes 'a process of intensifying connections between national domains'. The two activities are summarised as follows: 'the international realm is a patchwork of bordered countries, while the global sphere is a web of transborder networks' (Scholte, 1999: 15).

<sup>22</sup> Former president of the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD).

transnationally. This being the case, interest groups have 'global policy goals' to appease (Payne, 1996: 171). Thus, as one observer aptly puts it, '[i]n contrast to "interstate relations" taking place between the governments of two or more states, transnational interactions involve at least one party that is not governmental in character. In the process, the government of at least one of the interacting countries is bypassed' (Soroos, 1986: 13).

As a result, interest groups not only forge links with each other but also, at an increasing rate, with other entities as well. They are energetically involved in a large variety of activities at the local, national, transnational and international levels and perform functions in various issue areas, especially in human rights, humanitarian and environmental domains to name but a few (Mingst, 1995: 237).

Notwithstanding the nature of their interaction with other organisations, the transnational character of interest groups becomes significant when the levels of interaction between them and other actors in domestic and international affairs are considered. At least three levels of interaction can be identified, namely between interest groups themselves; between interest groups and inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) or agencies of these organisations; and between interest groups and governments. At all three levels interest groups have put a considerable amount of global pressure on other actors concerning a wide range of issues, by way of transnational campaigns and lobbying (Krut, 1997: 36).

## **4.2. Transnational Approaches**

Interest groups have a number of approaches (strategies) and tactics at their disposal to 'go transnational' in their campaigns, including those strategies and tactics that are used to lobby certain actors in a specific issue area. A strategy, or more specifically, an approach refers to extensive layouts of attack or to the miscellaneous approaches to lobbying. Tactics, on the other hand, are the particular actions taken or techniques used to promote specific policy preferences (Berry, 1977: 212). A link therefore exists between approaches (strategies) and tactics. Interest groups usually employ tactics in the context of different approaches (strategies).

Four approaches are available to interest groups as linkage strategies, namely: the power approach; the technocratic approach; the coalition-building approach; and grass-roots mobilisation. The success of each approach depends on the specific characteristics of the group and the domestic and international context of the situation in which these approaches are employed (Mingst, 1995: 238-240).

### **4.2.1. The Power Approach**

In terms of the *power approach* interest groups attempt to influence states and other institutions by targeting the top decision-makers in either the domestic or the international sphere. This is done by way of direct communication with the officials of the state or of government institutions in the state (Mingst, 1995:

238). In this case, interest groups target those officials in governmental institutions who have 'power', in other words those officials who make the decisions on a day-to-day basis and who will determine policy directions. For instance, a minister of a specific governmental department will be approached and influenced to change a specific policy that is being executed by his/her department.

Hence, direct personal communication between interest groups and government officials or the administrators of any other institution within the domestic and international political system is not only one of the main tactics used in the power approach, but also the most effective influencing instrument available to interest groups. Specific techniques used for this purpose include personal presentations to government; testifying before congressional hearings; and intervention in administrative proceedings (Berry, 1977: 213, 214; Sadie, 1998: 284).

There are also tactics by means of which interest groups influence the governmental process or that of any other organisation, through their constituents. In this case, the staff of interest groups plays an important role. They act as intermediaries between the citizens and government, effecting lobbying in this manner. Prominent members of society or the interest group can also be asked to contact an important policymaker and influence him/her in that way. In addition, interest groups may attempt to alter governmental policies by influencing the outcome of elections or changing public opinion. This can be done by funding the campaigns of political parties; the publishing of voting results; the release of research results on election issues; and the launching of public relations campaigns (Berry, 1977: 213-214).

Indirect communication is also used. Forms of indirect contact between interest groups and decision-makers include letter writing campaigns; the use of telegram messages; public relations endeavours; the opening of new channels of communication; social functions such as cocktail parties; and financial contributions and gifts. These methods are found to be less effective in lobbying activities (Sadie, 1998: 284). Although it seems as if direct personal communications with decision-makers are highly effective in producing policy changes, Mingst (1995: 238) offers a word of caution by observing that '[t]his is a highly risky strategy; success by a linkage actor [interest group] is apt to lead to sweeping and critical outcomes; failure can lead to a diminution of the actor's long-term influence and a loss of legitimacy'.

#### **4.2.2. The Technocratic Approach**

Through the *technocratic approach*, interest groups use their knowledge of 'procedural mechanisms as well as legal systems'. This knowledge enables them to learn how the domestic and international systems function. Knowledge is subsequently applied to link the two systems, to accomplish particular aims, to caution others about negative policy trends, to intervene administratively in institutions, or to initiate litigation. Interest groups are therefore not apathetic actors and they have the capacity to learn from and teach other actors. The technocratic approach is most effective when interest

groups depend on links with their constituencies at the sub-level of the organisation. Examples of the technocratic approach include litigation, the structural change of an IGO, and the formation of an international forum to address policy issues of concern to these non-state entities (Mingst, 1995:239).

According to Berry (1977: 230), '[t]here is evidence to suggest that lobbying through legal work is becoming an increasingly used strategy of influence'. Yet, there are a number of disadvantages in using litigation. Firstly, it can be very expensive. It should be used as a last resort, for many interest groups do not have the financial resources to sustain a prolonged legal battle. Secondly, although an interest group can be structured to carry out litigation activities, not all interest groups have the institutional capacity to use litigation. Those interest groups that actually use it, usually make a conscious decision to this effect from the outset of a campaign. They can therefore allocate resources to such an activity, in advance, or use an in-house legal department equipped to do this sort of work (Berry, 1977: 225).

#### **4.2.3. The Coalition-building Approach**

The *coalition-building approach* refers to the use of domestic actors by interest groups to build a coalition, which in effect fashions domestic policy consensus as a basis for the creation of transnational coalitions. This process of coalition-building includes connecting issues, the permeation of social networks, and joining groups across national borders (Mingst, 1995: 240). By operating transnationally, interest groups become one of the myriad agents of globalisation. Moreover, this strategy is based on the premise that there is strength in numbers.

Public opinion is not confined to a large number of persons in a single state; it also has a transnational character. Opinions and views about specific policy issues are aggregated and mobilised beyond state boundaries by, amongst others, interest groups. Their leadership defines a certain stance in terms of a policy issue. The members and supporters are then mobilised to share the views of the leaders and in many cases to take action on the issue area. As has been mentioned earlier, when interest groups start lobbying across state borders, they become involved in international relations. A particular interest group in one state may exhibit the same stance on a policy matter as an interest group in another state. They may join forces, exchange information, and propose and promote a unified strategy in opposition or support of a certain policy issue. For instance, environmental interest groups in a number of states form tactical alliances with each other to campaign against or in support of certain policies. In other words, they aggregate resources (Holsti, 1995: 265). What is noteworthy in today's high-tech world is that coalitions are not confined to single states. Issue networks can span the entire globe and interest groups are very active and resourceful in establishing such networks. This transnationalisation of issue networks also means that coalitions between interest groups are more complex, but it can also lead to more conflict between them.

Nevertheless, if an interest group finds transnational partners to work with, it is likely that a coalition may emerge with other like-minded interest groups. A coalition 'will usually reflect the immediate strategic interests of various lobbies whom all want to influence the same policy in the same way'. The large number of interest groups who share their expertise in a policy sphere and who interact with each other on a frequent basis denotes an issue or policy network. In earlier times, issue networks were not of a highly complex nature. This is not the case anymore. The proliferation of interest groups, lobbying resources and coalition formation means that more pressure is put on the institutions of the state 'to respond to demands for policy change' (Berry, 1997: 186-187).

The reason why interest groups are quite inventive in setting up coalitions or issue networks is that these activities are 'means of expanding and co-ordinating the resources needed for an advocacy effort' (Berry, 1997: 192). Issue networks are therefore a means for interest groups to lobby against certain policies. This enhances their power to a certain extent.

In other words, the volume of advocacy work an interest group can perform and its ability to influence government is limited. Interest groups therefore need to share resources with each other, like staff, money, constituencies, and contacts, to be more effective. An issue network's sole purpose is to facilitate communication between the members of interest groups involved in the network. Yet, this can lead to the enhancement of the power of interest groups, since the formation of an issue network means that the role of interest groups in the political bargaining and advocacy process can increase significantly. Nevertheless, the political system determines the extent to which such alliances are forged. In pluralist democratic societies coalitions are 'more viable and noteworthy' as opposed to unitary states where coalitions are less easily established (Mingst, 1995: 234, 240; Berry, 1997: 216). Even so, interest groups can also resort to grass-roots mobilisation as an influencing strategy.

#### **4.2.4. Grass-roots Mobilisation**

Interest groups simultaneously attempt to increase widespread public involvement across the borders of a number of states. This is called *grass-roots mobilisation*. The way interest groups go about mobilising grass-root support is through direct and/or controversial actions, or through ideological enticement. The most important tactics used include letter writing, campaign contributions to political actors supporting the initiative, and personal contacts with leaders of communities that are affected by a controversial policy. The mass media plays an important role in this respect. For instance, advertisements in newspapers and magazines are used to arouse the public's awareness of an issue. Sometimes, celebrities are also involved to advance an interest group's stance on a policy issue. For instance, Survival International asked the American screen actor Harrison Ford, to campaign on behalf of indigenous Indians who are affected by dam building projects in the Amazon rainforest. In addition, press conferences and the distribution of brochures to the public, the media and government officials, complaining about

a specific policy matter, also serve as examples of gaining media attention (Mingst, 1995: 240, 241).

The transnational approaches as discussed represent the strategies available to interest groups to bridge the gap between states and government departments on the one hand, and communities within states and the international political system, on the other. However, an interest group involved in a particular policy controversy may use a different strategy to that applied by another like-minded interest group. The political situation will dictate the approach to be used and will determine the resources available to an interest group. If understaffed, an interest group may opt for building and strengthening an existing coalition with another interest group. The choice of a particular approach will therefore depend on the 'goal to be achieved, the issue at stake, and the cost-benefit assessment of each strategy' (Mingst, 1995: 241). Interest groups therefore operate in a rational way by calculating which issues to lobby against and how to go about their advocacy activities. In this sense, they are just as rational as states.

In sum, interest groups are active role-players in the international political arena, through their transnational approaches to influence governmental policies and the actions of other non-state entities (Hjelmar, 1996: 1). They adopt various approaches or strategies, employ a variety of tactics or methods (nationally and transnationally), have a diversity of targets, and articulate a multitude of issues. Furthermore, they are not only active transnational actors, but they also play a number of different roles.

## **5. Interest Group Roles**

Any system in which actors operate can be viewed as a cluster of roles; so too does the system of interest groups (Rosenau, 1980a: 11). In this respect, a role refers to the interest group's own definition of types of decisions, commitments, rules and actions to be taken, and the functions it undertakes in the international and domestic political system (Le Prestre, 1997: 3-4). These different roles will depend on the following factors, namely the issues they are concerned with; their targets of influence; their methods of articulation; their nature and type as an interest group; their cultural setting in society; their political situation; and their status as an interest group. Interest groups fulfil two important roles in society, namely an influencing role and a representation role. Other roles either complement the influencing and/or representation roles, or they are subordinate to these basic roles.

In this respect, also considering their multiple contacts with different actors in both the domestic and international environment, the roles interest groups play vary considerably. The plethora of roles can be grouped together in three generic categories, namely discursive roles; participation roles; and philanthropic roles. Within these categories, the different roles include, amongst others a contributory or a fulfilled function; an influence or impact; anticipated behaviour based on certain rules; a course of action; a part in a larger script; policy decisions; and a status, rank or position in the political

process. In other words, 'who does what, when, and how' and why? (Holsti, 1970: 245-246; Le Prestre, 1997: 3-4).

The list of these roles is not exhaustive. What these roles have in common is that they are always political, irrespective of whether or not the interest groups are active within the community or are lobbying government. The reason is that politics permeates everything and has an impact on every individual. Thus, in terms of water management in international river basins, these roles will always be of a political nature.

### **5.1. Discursive Roles**

Interest groups play these roles as agents who are part of or in opposition to the discursive elite. These roles are as follows: opinion generation agent, standard creation agent, norm creation agent, epistemic agent and agenda construction agent.

#### **5.1.1. Opinion Generation Agent**

Interest groups perform a function concerning the generation of public opinion on certain matters. They bring, in alliance with but also independent of political parties, important social, economic and political issues to the public's attention, albeit sometimes in a one-sided and biased fashion. Interest groups sometimes use biased information to legitimise their existence in society and to broaden their power base. This is done through the creation of knowledge to which a society may respond. When they operate as shapers of public opinion, they are found in the following issue areas: development, the protection of human rights and the environment, and the promotion of peace. They are therefore important agents in the articulation and evolution of public opinion. They do not only respond to changes in the public opinion sphere, but are also influential in the initiation of change. As they attempt to increase the visibility of certain issues or concerns, they also define many of the issues on which public opinion is founded (Childs, 1965: 237, 244; Pierce, Hagner & Beatty, 1982: 319; Ghils, 1992: 421).

#### **5.1.2. Standard Creation Agent**

As a standard creation agent, interest groups, most notably those from the environmental lobby, hold governments responsible for the implementation of international environmental standards. In addition, interest groups formulate or revise technical and non-technical standards within the environmental sphere (Judge & Skjelsbaek, 1975: 205; Clark, 1995: 507). They then project these revised standards onto national policies, by influencing governments to adopt these standards in their policy preferences. Following this, interest groups will vigorously and unbendingly uphold such standards whenever they lobby against a certain governmental policy initiative.



### 5.1.3. Norm and Rule Creation Agent

The activities of interest groups are not only restricted to the policy process. As norm creation agents, through their exertions, they can also create norms in both the domestic and international domains. For instance, interest groups can play a prominent role in the establishment of international organisations to promote a specific cause, principle, norm, or value. In this way, they become involved in the development and implementation of laws that govern or regulate the national and international political domain. According to the social contract theory, as espoused by Hobbes, together with the creation of the state, other institutions are also created that stipulate what the nature and content of laws and rules would be. These laws and rules determine the way in which a society operates (Soroos, 1986: 86; Ghils, 1992: 421; Richardson, 1993b: 2; Bruch, 2003: 38).

Yet, these rules and laws are not fixed, but evolve according to the needs of society. Interest groups play an important role in the development of new rules and laws that govern the processes by which the state operates. Because rules and laws create conflict, interest groups play a role in offsetting the conflicts inherent to such rules and laws and their accompanying institutions. They will not only be interested in rule and law making, but interest groups will also, by using a number of strategies and tactics, play a law enforcement role (Berry, 1977: 287; Richardson, 1993b: 2). This role manifests, according to Berry (1977: 287), in obtaining 'new rulings or exacting compliance with old ones'. Based on this, it is assumed that interest groups play different roles in contrasting political settings, because of the variation in rules and laws and institutions between individual countries.

In addition, interest groups do not only influence government or stand in opposition to it. They also encourage government to embrace a particular policy (Meehan, Roche & Stedman, 1966: 63). In this respect, some of the roles played by interest groups *vis-à-vis* the state are of benefit to the state. For example, Presthus (1974a: 62) points out that interest groups 'are a functional requisite of the governmental policy process' through the creation of norms.

The new norms and values that are laid down by interest groups, or expressed by them through their actions, also has an important impact on state sovereignty in the sense that it modifies the association between the state, citizens, and other actors on the international scene. The reason interest groups play this all-important role is that society, both nationally and internationally, has the ability of self-modification. Interest groups use this metamorphosis of society through unorthodox means of political protests and influence, with the goal of 'problematizing' some of the basic values inherent in society (Clark, 1995: 509; Hjelmar, 1996: 46). In other words, a problem may not seem to be a serious one by society, yet, by articulating some issues, interest groups are able to raise the salience level of the issue. They therefore also play an important part in the construction of knowledge through the articulation of such norms and values.

To summarise, interest groups are important to domestic societies and the international community. Just like individuals and groups, states are also socialised by norms of obligation. Notwithstanding the socialisation of states, interest groups are always vigilant for new problems that may affect their members or broader society. Interest groups thus protect the citizen against state action through the norms and values they help to create (Childs, 1965: 244; Judge & Skjelsbaek, 1975: 209; Hobson, 2000: 148).

#### **5.1.4. Epistemic Agent**

Within the domestic and international domain, interest groups are valuable sources of information, advice, and estimates of likely impacts of proposed programmes. Some interest groups develop a research capacity, together with analysing and reporting on major events in their field of expertise (Blaisdell, 1958: 152; Clark, 1995: 516). This expert-driven activity becomes a source of highly specialised information, as well as a means for the advancement of arguments for or against a political issue and/or action.

#### **5.1.5. Agenda Construction Agent**

Interest groups highlight new issues of concern and in so doing influence the construction of political agendas. This role does not stop at agenda setting. Interest groups go one step further, pressurising government and other institutions to deal with the issues on the agenda. In addition, they also influence the cultural agenda of societies. They do so by creating a political environment in which the interests of their members and non-members may be placed high on the priority list of such an agenda, both at national and international levels. They are therefore important in respect of agenda setting, through public opinion and the enforcement of the agenda on decision-makers and society. In contrast, they also operate in a manner to prevent issues from being put on the political agenda. Usually this activity takes the form of opposition towards other groups. Some interest groups may be so strong, or of such importance to governments, and their influence on government so effective, that they can prevent government from attending to the issues articulated by other groups. The result of this is usually non-decision-making by government (Berry, 1977: 287; Hague & Harrop, 1982: 79; Pierce, Beatty & Hagner, 1982: 319; Richardson, 1993a: 6; Hjelm, 1996: 30-31).

### **5.2. Participation Roles**

Interest groups act in these roles as agents participating in the political process. As participation agents, interest groups play the following roles: interactive agent, representation agent, transnational agent, policy shaping agent, institution creation agent, watchdog agent, oppositional agent and empowerment agent.

#### **5.2.1. Interactive Agent**

Interest groups are agents through which the citizen can interact with all levels of government, i.e. with the executive, legislative and the judiciary branches.

In this way, they represent the policy preferences of their members and ensure the principle of good governance in a society (Berry, 1977: 288; Bekker, 1996: 29, 32). They therefore help to bridge the gap between the citizen and the government and *vice versa* and help to uphold articulated ideals within society.

Interest groups are one of the most effective channels through which citizens can bring their demands and problems to the attention of government and government officials. They are crucial in this respect because of the wide variety of interests and members they represent. Interest groups are therefore a key component in the link between public opinion and the political process in both domestic politics and world affairs (Childs, 1965: 243, 244; Hague & Harrop, 1982: 77; Pierce, Beatty & Hagner, 1982: 319).

With this in mind, they increase, under certain circumstances, the responsiveness of officials to social problems existing in society. Although the effectiveness of interest groups in causing change is debatable, their role as linkage actors in society is not disputed (Presthus, 1974b: 46). Concerning this, Berry (1977: 3) remarks that 'interest groups offer the citizen a means of collective participation in politics for the purpose of trying to influence public policy outcomes'. Eikeland (1994: 259), furthermore, states that interest groups are partaking at an increasing frequency in policy-formation processes and mechanisms, at least in the developed world.

### **5.2.2. Representation Agent**

Similar to the interactive role, interest groups usually, but not always, oppose state agencies and the policies to be implemented. By influencing government on certain public policy issues, interest groups play a number of related roles. To elaborate, they represent their constituents before government. Regarding this, within the democratic process, ways are devised by means of which groups in society can raise issues or policy preferences and get the government to listen to their concerns (Berry, 1997: 6). This role is in line with the linkage role interest groups play.

In addition, interest groups also influence electoral politics by specifying issues as well as the allocation of funds and votes to a specific political party. Interest groups from the environmental community will usually support a political party with a specific stance on environmental issues, or one created purposely for the advancement of environmental concerns. Interest groups also articulate issues that are too complex or specialised for political parties in their election campaigns (Presthus, 1974a: 65; Wilson, 1990: 4). By doing so, they represent their constituents at a broader level than is devised by political parties during elections.

### **5.2.3. Transnational Agent**

As representation agents, interest groups do not only play domestic roles, but also act transnationally. In this respect, the development of modern communications technology has had an enormous impact on the role of interest groups as transnational agents. Images and messages, travelling at

the speed of light across the world, assist interest groups to play different roles over the world. 'The politics of an individual country cannot be understood without knowing what groups lobby the government and what debate there has been in the media. Similarly, international diplomacy does not operate on some separate planet, cut off from global civil society' (Willets, 1997: 298).

Furthermore, the communications revolution has presently made the activities of governments more public than previously. Proposed government policies are no longer the absolute domain of government officials; they now also lie in the 'global fishbowl of life in the twenty-first century'. What is also significant in the communications revolution is that it has resulted in a wider cast of actors in international affairs. These include interest groups, businesses, journalists, and Internet activists. Of importance is the fact that the communications revolution has enhanced the ability of interest groups to establish and maintain transnational contacts. The revolution has also led to a decrease in the cost of setting up a policy or issue network. It is no longer necessary for members of interest groups to travel vast distances by aeroplane, for instance, to meet members of other groups (Hoffman, 2002: 84; Josselin & Wallace, 2001: 1). This implies that interest groups are active transnational participants in international relations. Put differently, interest groups can receive messages that are not restricted by state borders. If the message is incompatible with the issues an interest group promotes, it may react and start lobbying against governmental policy. In doing so, the interest group will become a transnational agent.

Because of the communication revolution, sovereignty, and non-intervention as its logical correlate, is not an important consideration for interest groups in their role as transnational agents. What is of importance to many interest groups lobbying against governmental policies is how many people are positively affected by the change in policy, and not who (governments or financial institutions) is initiating the policy. In other words, interest groups are 'blind to sovereignty' and other collectivities, like IGOs, and these latter actors will only matter to the extent that they are targets or a channel of influence.

#### **5.2.4. Policy Shaping Agent**

Notwithstanding the transnational role of interest groups, they also attempt on a continuous basis to shape the form of public policy when influencing government actions (Gable, 1958: 89). For this reason many scholars see interest groups as one of the most important actors in domestic and international politics. This particular perception is based on the fact that interest groups undermine the aggrandisement of, as realists note, the most important actor in world affairs—the state.

Interest groups are just as active in the dynamics of water politics within an international river basin, as within the states sharing such river systems. Payne (1996: 171) declares that interest groups 'as diverse as they are, have just as great a number of goals to satisfy, from preserving a particular forest or river ecosystem to restructuring development assistance'. For interest groups

to satisfy their objectives, they employ both national and transnational pressure politics. Not only do interest groups use national and transnational influence strategies on the state, they also direct their persuasion at the policies of non-state actors such as MNCs, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In addition, states that are authoritative in these organisations, such as Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, can also be influenced (Payne, 1996: 171; McCully, 1996: 299-308; Neme, 1997: 49).

### **5.2.5. Institution Creation Agent**

Interest groups are also active where institutional arrangements are non-existent or not in operation. They act as movements that change government structures at large or in certain issue areas. Interest groups may also establish novel and meaningful inter-state mechanisms or pressure some states to comply with existing mechanisms. They can also openly question international institutions as well as, their functions, structure, and legitimacy. In this case, they can propose and work towards the establishment of new institutions (Ghils, 1992: 423-424, 426). An important example in this case is the establishment of the World Commission on Dams (WCD) which was formed, *inter alia*, by continuous interest group proposals for its creation.

### **5.2.6. Watchdog Agent**

Interest groups are not only active in the creation of institutions but are, in addition, important 'watchdogs' of society. The role of 'look-outs' or watchdogs is related to the promotion of norms and values. In this respect, interest groups can respond quickly to new needs in a changing environment. These needs are the direct result of technological breakthroughs and natural disasters, changes in service delivery or policies by government and business, and when government policies have ended or stagnated (Judge & Skjelsbaek, 1975: 209).

Regarding this, interest groups are not only of value to society, but also to states. Many interest groups, in their capacity as research institutions and the distributors of information, act as early warning systems to detect risks posed and opportunities presented by the domestic and international environment. By acting on such threats, related norms and values are created to direct the conduct of other actors in the political environment.

### **5.2.7. Oppositional Agent**

Related to their watchdog role, interest groups act as checks on and critics of government actions. When certain programmes are implemented by government agencies, interest groups can continuously monitor such programmes and their effect on constituents or other members of society. They will often identify weaknesses in such programmes through the various means and methods (strategies and tactics) at their disposal. They may even lobby for changes in the execution of such plans. Moreover, and as has been mentioned, interest groups do not confine themselves to national public policy

issues alone. Many interest groups influence the stance of national governments on international policies and agendas. Sometimes these interest groups 'go international' by taking a stand on issues in the international arena (Childs, 1965: 243-244; Soroos, 1986: 84; Berry, 1997: 8).

In this respect Richardson (1993a: 11) insists that 'the existence of groups is a constraint on governmental action in all political systems', even in the international community. They can therefore impede the desire of governments to implement their own goals in certain policy matters that are close to the national interest (Coxall, 1980: 108).

### **5.2.8. Empowerment Agent**

Interest groups are furthermore active agents in the sense that they seek to include and empower those who would not otherwise be involved in the decision-making process. This role entails a number of phases. Firstly, information about those groups that could be affected by a policy is obtained. Secondly, the interest groups then provide these groups with information about a policy decision by government. Thirdly, they consult with the groups. Finally, they provide the groups with an opportunity or avenue to shape the outcome of the decision-making process (Bruch, 2003: 39-40). In this way, interest groups involve minority groups in the decision-making process by empowering them. This role can take on a symbiotic relationship between the empowerer and the empowered with each deriving political power from the other.

## **5.3. Philanthropic Roles**

Interest groups play a number of roles as philanthropic agents in that they assist governments, other interest groups or NGOs, and individuals in their endeavours. These roles are as follows: guardian agent, assistant agent and safety provider agent.

### **5.3.1. Guardian Agent**

Regarding the role of guardian agent, interest groups perform a task that is related to the physical safety of its members. This is also a motivation for people to form or become members of interest groups. Interest groups provide the mechanisms that guarantee the safety and security of their members (Bekker, 1996: 33). More specifically, a community or group of people may feel that some form of policy initiated by the state threatens their safety and security. This will prompt them to establish an interest group that can offset the threats emanating from the policy proposal.

### **5.3.2. Assistant Agent**

Interest groups also assist government in performing important tasks such as the specification of goals for society, the allocation of scarce resources, and the resolution of conflicts. This assistance to the state will depend, though, on a number of aspects, of which the nature of the political system and the

culture of a society are two of the most important. Furthermore, interest groups also play roles that are related to service delivery. For instance, they may contribute to development in developing countries, where they are either actively involved in the development process or make resources available for such programmes. Interest groups can provide governments with specialised opinion, technical information, funds and a host of other resources to assist them in their policy and programme formulation and implementation endeavours (Presthus, 1974b: 62; Judge & Skjelsbaek, 1975: 204, 207-208; Coxall, 1980: 11). Interest groups also play a role in humanitarian assistance and contribute funding to developing states in the case of natural disasters to provide relief in such situations. This assistance will depend on factors that influence their activities in domestic policy matters, like government ideology.

Interest groups also assist collectivities, other than governments and states, like minority groups. They can make special services available to these groups to resist government policies that will adversely affect them. For instance, where minorities do not have access to legal services an interest group, specialising in such matters, might perform a legal service on behalf of the group. In this way, a valuable resource is put at the disposal of the minority group to assist it in lobbying against government policies.

Interest groups not only provide intangible resources, like legal services, to assist seemingly powerless groups. Travel and accommodation costs at important forums, with the aim of lobbying governments, are also made available to collectivities that do not have the financial resources to afford this.

### **5.3.3. Safety Provider Agent**

In support of their role as a guardian and assistant agent, interest groups are also providers of safety, especially to prevent violence. Peace is the absence of violence. In this respect, interest groups play a number of important roles to prevent two types of violent interactions, namely personal violence perpetrated by one person on another, and structural violence that is equated to exploitation or social injustice (Judge & Skjelsbaek, 1975: 209).

States and other non-state actors use and perpetrate both types of violence. The sources of these forms of violence either emanates from within the state or it can come from outside state borders. Both types of violence ultimately lead to a lower quality of life and/or a shorter life span because of the premature death of victims. Interest groups can cause a reduction of both types of violence in two ways. Firstly, their activities could be aimed at the prevention of personal and structural violence. Secondly, they can do this by their mere existence without any actions or efforts to promote peace, due to their ability to distribute power more broadly within societies (Judge & Skjelsbaek, 1975: 209).

In conclusion, many of the above-mentioned roles are ideologically influenced, e.g. they are informed by democratic principles. Will these democratically informed roles differ from the roles of interest groups in transitional or fledgling democracies? Not at all! Although there are many different political systems

and forms of government across the globe, the influence of democratic principles is one of the most important considerations in the establishment and operation of interest groups. Interest groups in many transitional democracies are voluntary organisations. They are formed on a voluntary basis and not imposed on the citizenry from above by government, in contrast to authoritarian and totalitarian political systems. Interest groups by their nature are formed on the basis of strong voluntary, democratic principles, irrespective of whether or not they are part of democratic or transitional democratic political systems.

What should also be noted is that not all interest groups in every society will play all of these roles at the same time. Their roles will depend on the same factors applicable to the use of the approaches interest groups will follow in their influencing endeavours. These factors are: the goal(s) to be achieved, the political issue(s) at stake, and the cost-benefit assessment of the role to be played (Mingst, 1995: 241). With this in mind, what are the factors that determine interest group success to influence public policy?

## 6. Interest Group Success

The success of interest group influence is a complex issue. Not only is their efficiency often determined by a number of factors beyond their control, but their success or effectiveness is also tied up with their strategies, tactics and roles. The debatable nature of their political power furthermore compounds this complexity. The general contention is that interest groups are very effective in their influencing activities.

As an example, interest groups make the claim that they are successful in blocking the construction of a dam project. For instance, McCully (1996: 294) is of the opinion that interest groups 'stalled the implementation of the cornerstone of government energy policy [in Brazil]'. In addition, the insight of the leadership of some of the interest groups forced Electrosul<sup>23</sup> to the bargaining table, to implement hydropower installations on a number of Brazilian rivers. Statements to this effect are value-laden and pronounced in such a way to accord positive meaning to the actions of interest groups in their endeavours against water supply projects. However, their effectiveness is affected by a myriad of factors. Accordingly, Wilson (1990: 10) claims that '[i]f it has been hard to define interest groups, it is even harder to reach any consensus about their importance'. From this it is inferred that inherent difficulties and opportunities determine the success of interest groups.

A number of issues relating to interest group power (success), with reference to selected elements influencing interest group power<sup>24</sup>, are subsequently outlined to place the debate into perspective. To be effective in their influencing endeavours, interest groups need to stay in contact with important policymakers in the governmental process (Almond & Powell, 1996: 76). Not only do they have to approach policymakers, they also need to extend their

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<sup>23</sup> This is the agency responsible for the construction of hydroelectric dams in Brazil.

<sup>24</sup> In this case, power refers to the extent to which interest groups are successful in restricting governmental policy options.



influence to other important role players and members of the international community who are involved in water resources management. This is especially true where external institutions are involved in WRMPs. In other words, they must be in constant communication with political actors in the national and international water sectors. Yet, this will not guarantee their success, but may at least facilitate their activities in both the national and international realms.

Nevertheless, one of the most important considerations that affect the power of interest groups is the character of the political system. Political systems vary at the domestic level, in the international community and over time. Interest groups may enunciate the interests of their constituencies, but they can fail to permeate and influence policymakers. An important consideration is that interest groups are not sovereign as are states—they are autonomous. In addition, interest groups can perform functions that are related to a single issue area while states, on the other hand, perform a plethora of services. In this respect, interest groups have more limited policy concerns than states (Clark, 1995: 512; Almond & Powell, 1996: 76). Either this may have a positive influence on their effectiveness or it can be a limitation on their success, depending on the political system of the society under review.

Within certain political systems interest group effectiveness may be influenced more by the governing elite than the other way around. A strong and centralised government can create particular difficulties for interest group operations. In such a top-down system, interest groups may not be welcome in the governmental process, unless their role is in harmony with governmental policies. The nature of the political system can therefore create or prevent an opportunity for interest groups to voice their concerns or disagreement with policies or policy change (Harris, 1968: 6; Ndegwa, 1994: 30).

From this line of argument, clearly an interest group's success at influence should be understood within the context of political power in domestic society and the international system. Interest group power should also be seen as dependent on aspects that are not directly related to the relationships between interest groups and government. For instance, in a particular political system decision-makers may be bound by legislation to listen to the views and concerns of interest groups, because of the mere presence of interest groups (Cox, 1993: 84; Edinger, 1993: 178). Other elements, such as the emotional condition of a government official, which are sometimes far removed from the relationship between interest groups and policymakers, also have an influence. There is therefore a mixture of variables influencing interest group success rates.

### **6.1. Influencing Factors**

The policy type and political policy area in which interest groups operate are determining factors. Interest groups can be influential in particular policy areas. Yet, it would be an error to generalise that they are successful in all instances. In this case, three broad policy areas are identified, as outlined by Lowi (1979)—redistributive, distributive and regulatory policies. Redistributive

policies direct resources from one part of society to another, for example from the privileged to the underprivileged. Distributive policies distribute benefits to separate geographical regions or councils, for example public works projects. Regulatory policies regulate the conduct of society, particularly that of individuals and the environment at large. Examples are environmental regulations and the placing of a ceiling on the consumer price of water (Wilson, 1990: 11).

Each policy area will inevitably generate a unique type of political interaction, with different actors playing dissimilar roles and having particular influences and interests. Interest groups seem to be more successful in regulatory and distributive policies than in redistributive affairs, where political parties are more prominent. In other words, the intensity of group activity and the importance thereof might be dissimilar from one policy type or area to another (Wilson, 1990: 11).

Public opinion and the dominant ideology in a society are other factors in the success of interest group endeavours (Wilson, 1990: 12). A ruling party will show a preference for the inclusion of labour unions and business in the policy making process rather than the inclusion of associational promotional interest groups like environmentalists. Society will also show a preference for or aversion to certain types of interest groups. This brings to mind the pluralism and corporatism dichotomy in respect of insider and outsider groups.

Interest groups that emphasise socio-economic issues will have more status than those who articulate other interests on the environment and human rights (Wilson, 1990: 13). Socio-economic development may be viewed as more important by society than the natural environment. The natural environment may even be seen as a resource to be used for socio-economic development. This can contribute to the relative unimportance of associational promotional interest groups.

Passing circumstances are also a factor in the success of interest groups. Circumstances within the domestic environment and the international system change over time. For instance, a political party that has been relatively unfriendly towards interest groups may be voted out of power and be replaced by one that involves certain interest groups in the decision-making process. Similarly, the end of the Cold War caused the rethinking of the international political agenda in which other more pressing issues started to gain prominence, like environmental concerns and water security. This creates possibilities that allow for particular interest group types to play a more prominent role in issues pertaining to water security and/or environmental concerns. The changing water paradigm, partly brought on by interest group lobbying, is another case in point (Wilson, 1990: 15; Gleick, 1998: 12-16). Accordingly, changing circumstances in a specific sector can give interest groups a prominent place in society. Yet, this still does not mean that they will be successful in their lobbying endeavours against WRMPs in all societies around the world.

The level of support for interest groups is another factor in their success. If an interest group wants to be successful, it should represent all those who support a certain interest or issue. If groups of similar interest are fragmented into a number of smaller competing associations, this may have a negative impact on their activities *vis-à-vis* government. This, of course, creates opportunities for the formation of alliances between interest groups. An alliance between similar groups that uphold the same interests and principles will strengthen their influencing role (Joyce, 1996: 77).

Another factor influencing interest groups' effectiveness is their expertise. If policymakers use the knowledge an interest group generates, it will give the interest group a higher status in the policy process and more influence over policy decisions. This goes hand-in-hand with the tangible or intangible resources an interest group possesses. Access to computer technology that will assist in establishing a global network is an example. In addition, the financial resources and the size of the membership can also affect interest group power and status in society (Joyce, 1996: 78).

The type of sanctions or rewards employed by an interest group is another factor. Tactics like demonstrations and petitions have an influence on group power. Insider groups may threaten not to cooperate in a certain policy area; preventing the policy from being implemented. This may lead to a backlash, since the group may lose its insider status and be relegated to the periphery (Joyce, 1996: 78).

To summarise, this discussion suggests that interest groups, in a globalising world, do not operate in a void. Sometimes they may find that other groups work in the same issue field. This can lead to a situation where networks are not established, for some reason, or where they are established they have a positive impact on interest group success. The problems faced by interest groups, for example their inability to establish alliances and/or networks or the nature of the political system, can produce a vicious circle. Such a situation can make interest groups less efficient and negatively affect their operations. Such inefficiency can lead to less participation in the policy process; relegating interest groups to an outsider status in society and the international community at large (Judge & Skjelsbaek, 1975: 215; Ndegwa, 1994: 30).

## **6.2. Methodological Difficulties**

As noted earlier, the success of interest groups is often exaggerated, even in political systems conducive to their formation. In a favourable political climate, policymakers hold certain attitudes, values, preferences and frames of reference that influence their responses to certain issues. They are also more likely to react to proposals that are in line with their own value systems and attitudes. Under such circumstances decision-makers also have more freedom of action. This will undoubtedly influence the effectiveness of interest groups, either directly or indirectly (Gable, 1958: 91; Wilson, 1990: 14).

Concerning the level of success of interest groups, influence 'hides a minefield of methodological difficulties' that should be kept in mind whenever the

success of interest groups is assessed. These difficulties provide valuable clues about the role and importance of interest groups in any policy area, and indicate important interceding variables that impact on interest group and government relations. A number of warning signs indicates some risk inherent to the debate on interest group power and their relationship with government and its policies (Matthews, 1993: 237). These warning signs are as follows:

Firstly, *it can be presumed that their influence stems from policy consequences*. This argument takes note of the fact that the state or any other non-state entity adopted a policy grounded on the strategies and tactics of interest groups. For instance, a newspaper article heading may read: 'Petition needed to solve problem of interrupted water supplies to residents'. Yet, the influence of interest groups may not have been the overriding element in subsequent government action. Other factors, such as party commitment to the policy, arguments by departmental advisors, the climate of public opinion or the dominant ideology, or the views and communications of other governments are also significant (Matthews, 1993: 237, 238; Roodepoort Record, 9 March 2001: 1).

Secondly, *postulating that power or influence flow from the resources an interest group possesses*. Large interest groups may claim that their huge membership or financial capital produced policy changes. How, for instance, are resources translated into power? Other factors can also come into play, for example scientific expertise and the strategies and tactics a group employs. Resources are sometimes presented as the determining factor but what about access to decision-makers and/or socio-economic influence and status? The resources an interest group possess can be important, nevertheless, they are important only when facilitating an effective administrative apparatus within the group's institutional arrangements and not for being successful in having influenced the outcome of policies. For instance, an interest group may have a pragmatic and effective leadership to guide their activities, the necessary funding and the support of a large constituency. There is, however, no reason why these resources will automatically lead to success in influencing public policies. What is important, though, is not the quantity and quality of the resources, but how other political actors within the national and international realm perceive an interest group. Resources are necessary for influencing *activities*, but are not sufficient to explain the success of such influence (Matthews, 1993: 238; Smith, 1993: 3-4).

Thirdly, *assuming that success is derived from the access to government*. Some scholars and practitioners state that insider groups are more influential than those outside the policy process. Access to the governmental process is, however, not on par with effective influence. Consider, for instance, that the policy process and the implementation of policies are the outcome of a multi-layered procedure involving a number of actors. Interest groups may have access, but they are not the only actors involved in the policy process. Opposition parties sitting on parliamentary committees are just as important. Nonetheless, insider status gives some interest groups a leading edge over

those who have no access at all in their influencing endeavours (Matthews, 1993: 238-239).

Fourthly, *thinking that those who triumphed in the decision-making process exerted influence*. A well-known definition of power states that actor A influences actor B to do something A wants B to do according to A's wishes. Put differently, the capability of A to put *c* amount of influence over B about issue *d*. If A's wishes are complied with by B, then it is said that A has influence over B in the decision-making process. Nevertheless, it cannot be certain that B took A seriously and conformed to the wishes of A. There is just not enough conclusive evidence to make such a statement. Similarly, an interest group may not be part of the process, but still has influence over an issue. In such a case, the government may have acted in anticipation of the group's reaction (Merritt & Zinnes, 1989: 12; Matthews, 1993: 239, 241-240; Holsti, 1995: 118; Nossal, 1998: 90). Government action therefore could have been premeditated.

These warning signs are not intended to hide or minimise the societal importance of interest groups. These non-state actors are and will be an important part of the policy process in any society. However, at times, interest groups will not be successful in influencing policy processes. At other times, they will be successful. Even so, the warning signs are measures to show that statements in the media, or made by interest groups themselves, can exaggerate their power and influence. Care should therefore be taken of biased statements that lay claim to their success. Once again, the arguments stated above indicate the plethora of variables that will affect the relationship between interest groups and the state or government. Some of the variables mentioned would act as interceding rather than independent variables in influencing the power and success of interest groups lobbying governments.

## 7. Conclusion

In this chapter, the fundamental characteristics of interest groups were considered. An attempt has also been made to merge the discussion of interest groups in International Relations and Political Science. As a point of departure, the concepts of *interest group*, *pressure group*, *lobby* and *NGO/INGO* were analysed. The conceptualisation of non-state entities, as *interest group*, *pressure group*, *lobby* and *NGO/INGO*, has a long history. Many scholars studying these entities usually define them with reference to the subject matter they are examining. The different conceptualisations of the terms *interest group*, *pressure group*, *lobby* and *NGO/INGO*, have caused considerable confusion as to what exactly is an interest group. It was shown that it is of no importance to argue over different definitions of these entities. What is of essence is their role and activities in society, more particularly their relationship with the state, government, and international institutions, and their impact on state autonomy and the official policy process.

One of the defining characteristics of interest groups lies in their different types, namely: anomic, non-associational, associational, and institutional interest groups. By outlining their typology, it was shown that they differ widely

in their composition, nature, method of articulation and membership base. Furthermore, these different interest groups can form coalitions. Thus, different interest groups can be involved in lobbying activities, either in coalition or individually. In other words, the dividing lines between these groups can be breached to form coalitions or policy networks when opportune.

A second characteristic is that interest groups are transnational actors. Interest groups use four approaches when transnationally lobbying governmental policies, namely the power, technocratic, coalition-building, and grass-roots mobilisation approaches. These approaches are indicative of their transnational activities. Whenever interest groups use these approaches, they will be transnationally active as agents in world affairs.

When interest groups are transnationally active, they also play a number of roles. Three generic roles are identifiable, namely discursive, participatory, and philanthropic roles. The type of agent is also dependent on the realm in which they are operating and the type of policy issue they attempt to influence. If they are operating within the domestic political sphere, interest groups will only be domestic political agents, but if they are involved in a policy matter across state borders, they will become transnational agents. Thus, the level at which they operate, will influence their agential form (domestic or transnational agents). Their roles are defined in terms of the type of agents they are. Furthermore, interest groups play a variety of roles in society that varies from opinion generation agents to safety provider agents.

A number of factors affect the success of interest groups in influencing governmental policies. Some interest groups claim that they are instrumental in changing such policies. However, closer scrutiny of a situation where interest groups exert influence over a policy indicates that intervening variables often play a greater role in changing such policies than interest groups. Based in part on the proceeding discussion and before the case studies are discussed and analysed, a framework for analysis is developed.

## CHAPTER 4

### INTEREST GROUP INVOLVEMENT IN WATER POLITICS: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to develop a framework of analysis of the transnational role and involvement of interest groups in water politics and to assess the agential power of respectively the state and interest groups in this context, with reference to the selected case studies. The framework also structures the study in such a way as to answer the research questions, more specifically to identify the factors that influence state and interest group interaction and that determine the success or failure of interest groups lobbying against WRMPs.

Puchala (1971: 358) points out that 'a general theory of international politics [is] an inventory of dependent and independent variables, a series of process models, and a set of statements about cause and effect'. In principle, this is also the case with a framework for analysis. By identifying variables and statements concerning cause and effect, patterns are discerned about the interaction between government(s) and interest groups. Since states are not the only actors that possess agential power, and are not the only actors that play a meaningful role in world politics, the framework for analysis must be as comprehensive as possible in order to accommodate other actors and processes.

Since the main objective of this framework is to analyse, explain and predict the nature of the role and involvement of interest groups in the water politics of WRMPs, and in doing so, to determine the agential power of the state and interest groups lobbying against WRMPs in Southern Africa, its constitutive elements must encapsulate this problematique. Accordingly, the framework for analysis comprises three distinct elements, namely the key components of international river basins; the notion of agential power; and criteria for the comparison of the selected case studies.

#### 2. Key Components of International River Basins

International River basins, with reference to WRMPs, are comprised of three key components, namely, the geographic area of the individual basin; the actors involved in the basin's water politics, i.e. those who are implementing or opposing the implementation of WRMPs in the basin; and its hydropolitical history.

##### 2.1. Geographic Area

The geographic area constituting the international river basin is used as a basis for analysis since the river basin and its geographical environment are important sources of water for society. This is especially the case in respect of countries in semi-arid or arid regions, e.g. those in Southern Africa. Another

consideration is that rivers do not necessarily follow or correspond with international boundaries. Worldwide, approximately 268 rivers flow across or form international borders between states. Furthermore, it is estimated that fewer than ten states holds about 60 per cent of the world's accessible freshwater resources, resulting in other states having much less. Botswana is a case in point. Only 6 per cent of the country's total water resources originate within its borders (Church, 2000: 18) while the rest (94 per cent) flows across its borders from other countries.

International river basins are demarcated in accordance with geographical principles used in international law, as defined by the International Law Association (ILA) in the *Helsinki Rules*, 1966. These rules state that an international river basin is a geographic area that stretches over the territory of more than one state and is delimited by the watershed, including surface and sub-surface water resources, which flows into a general terminus. The *Helsinki Rules* (Article 3) also define a riparian state<sup>25</sup> as a state whose territory includes a portion of an international river basin (Le Roux, 1989: 11; McCaffrey, 1995: 89).

The International Law Commission (ILC) of the United Nations (UN) defines an international river as a waterway of which parts are situated in a number of states. This definition not only applies to the main stream (stem) of a river that traverses a border or form the international border between two or more countries, but also concerns the tributaries of such rivers or lakes that cross borders as well as groundwater resources that are linked to some parts of an international river basin. This is irrespective of whether or not these groundwater resources transcend an international border. For instance, nine riparian states share the Nile River basin to the extent that the river basin stretches over the respective territories of these countries (McCaffrey, 1995: 89; Warner, 2000: 38). The demarcation of an international river basin thus determines, amongst others, the number of states that could play a role in the implementation of WRMPs in that river basin.

The demarcation of the international river basin furthermore highlights its unique characteristics by indicating the purposes the river is used for. For instance, a wide, slow flowing perennial river is not only used as a source of water for a variety of users, but also as a transport channel. This is the case with many rivers in the wetter parts of the world, e.g. in North America, Latin America, Europe, and large parts of Asia. Rivers in drier regions also have particular uses, although they differ from those in wetter regions. For instance, cataracts in a perennial river within a semi-arid region will allow the generation of hydroelectricity, but disallow commercial transport on that river.

The geographical demarcation of international river basins also provides an indicator of intervening variables that may affect water scarcities or abundances. For example, these variables include, amongst others, the climatological and hydrological characteristics of a riparian system and river

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<sup>25</sup> The concept 'riparian state' should not be confused with the similar concept used to describe riparian states in a federal political system, like the US.



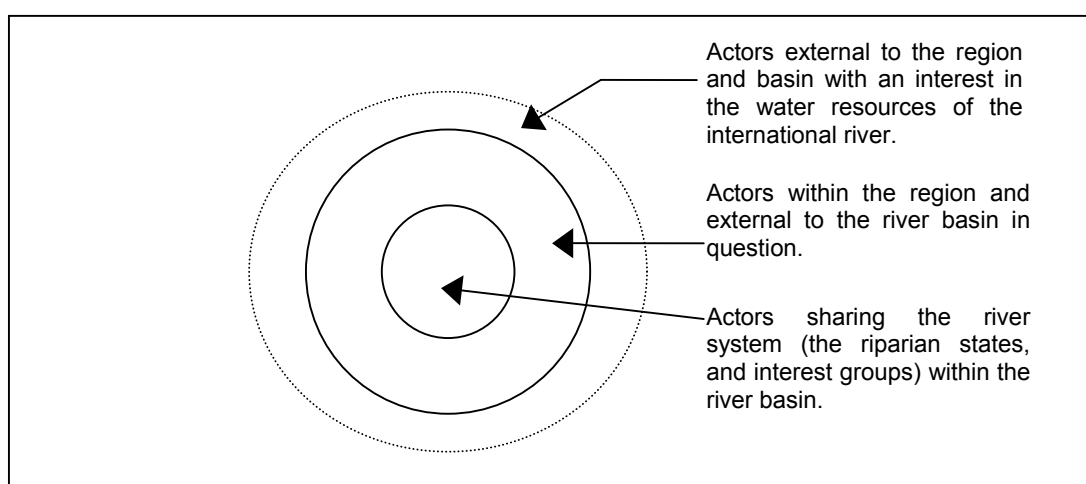
basin that can produce either conflict or cooperation between the actors (Elhance, 1999: 6).

## 2.2. Actors

The demarcation of an international river basin provides an indication of the actors involved in the water politics of the particular basin. These include sovereign states that share the international river basin, as well as other actors active within the international river basin, e.g. non-state entities such as local communities, minority groups and interest groups. These actors are identified and classified according to three spheres of involvement in the water politics of, and more specifically, the implementation of WRMPs in the international river basin, namely the actors in the core, semi-periphery and outer-periphery (see Figure 3).

The core actors are the riparian states of the international river basin as well as those actors who share the river basin, namely the human communities living in the river basin who are directly dependent on its water resources. The semi-periphery actors are those within the region but who fall outside the river basin as such. They can either be other states or non-state entities. The outer-periphery actors are those who fall outside the river basin and the region but who have an interest in the water resources of the international river. Within each of these different spheres, two types of actors can be discerned, namely state and non-state actors. The state actors are those states that share or have an interest in the river basin, as well as international governmental organisations such as the UN, World Bank and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA). The non-state actors range from financial institutions (private banks), through interest groups and epistemic communities, to individuals.

**Figure 3. Actors involved in international river basin WRMPs.**



These different categories and types of actors usually interact in an interdependent manner. For example, interest groups can form an alliance amongst themselves to oppose a WRMP or they can unite with states to implement it. Furthermore, interest groups and states can influence each

other in a reciprocal manner analogous to a cobweb of interactions. By identifying the non-state actors in this manner, the transnational nature of their role and involvement in WRMPs comes to the fore, as well as the sphere from which influence is exerted.

### **2.3. Hydropolitical History**

An overview of the hydropolitical history (HPH) of the international river basin serves the following purposes:

Firstly, it indicates which categories or types of actors are most dominant in the international river basin during certain periods; secondly, based on the manner of interaction between the actors over time, it provides information about interceding variables, such as a changed political environment that influence the implementation of WRMPs; and thirdly, by explaining the duration of the level of experience and expertise to lobby against WRMPs of interest group involvement in the river basin, it connotes when and under what circumstances interest groups begin to influence states not to implement WRMPs.

Notwithstanding these purposes, the HPH begins at the point where the hydraulic mission is first conceived, and varies from one river basin to the other. The category and type of actor who first mentions or implements the hydraulic mission, provide an indication of the ideological mind-set that underpins control of the river basin. For instance, states are governed in accordance with certain ideological frameworks. Because states control river basins, the management of their water resources will also be controlled ideologically.

## **3. Agential Power**

### **3.1. Conceptual Clarification**

According to Lieber (1972: 93), power is the 'currency of the political system in the way that money is the currency of the economy.' Deutsch (1978: 45-46) similarly defined power along monetary lines when he remarks that power is a 'symbol of the ability to change the distribution of results, and particularly the results of people's behaviour. In this respect, power can be compared in some ways to money, which is our usual standardized symbol of purchasing power—that is, of our ability to change the distribution of goods and resources'. Yet, since currency is interchangeable, it provides a medium of barter. In contrast, power resources can be highly static and are therefore issue and situation specific (Nossal, 1998: 97). Power is only in some circumstances concrete, also considering that the nature of a particular theory of world affairs will determine how power is defined (Merritt & Zinnes, 1989: 27).

A power resource that is used successfully in one issue area might not work in another. For instance, it would be fruitless to use military force to resist the transnational lobbying of interest groups against large dams. Power is not

only a means to an end, but also an end in itself. For example, Morgenthau (1967: 25-26; see also Dougherty & Pfalzgraff, 1990: 84) defines all politics as the 'struggle for power'. He therefore thought of power as both a means and an end.

Haas and Whiting (1956: 82) furthermore comment that 'power has objective reality, capable of measurement by the scientific observer. Such measurement is necessary if we are to judge the degree of fantasy or reality in the view of policy makers'. It is difficult, if not impossible, to specify the power variable which determines the dominance of one actor over another. Nonetheless, 'the majority of instances permit rational calculation of comparative power sufficient to determine the ability of one' actor to let its wishes prevail (Haas & Whiting, 1956: 82). However, the aim is to determine who has most agential power, in other words to determine which actor will prevail in the international river basin concerning the implementation or prevention of a particular WRMP (see Merritt & Zinnes, 1989: 27).

Notwithstanding the aforesaid, power is a difficult concept to define (Dougherty & Pfalzgraff, 1990: 556). Within the scholarly discourse, power has different meanings. In addition to the previously indicated meanings, it can imply a 'legal authority to act' or the 'actual capacity to affect human behaviour'. Similarly, power may invoke the image of physical force where one state dominates another through military force. Yet, power may also mean 'non-coercive influence' through various means. A letter writing campaign by interest groups is an example (McGowan & Nel, 1999: 10).

Two types of power can be identified within politics: structural and relational power. Structural power refers to the rules or obligations that an actor develops and to which other actors in the political system should adhere. This setting of rules will eventually determine and control the behaviour of other actors. Relational power refers to the ability to 'coerce (force) or influence' another actor 'to do something that' the other actor 'would otherwise not consider doing' (Leysens & Thompson, 1999: 21). Both these types of power depend on the ability of one actor to change the behaviour of others, and both have influence as a component. Thus, by influencing WRMP policies, interest groups are using relational power.

However, if power is defined as agential power, it could possibly be much easier to determine it. In this respect, cognisance can be taken of the opinion of Stern (2000: 143-144) namely that '[t]he problem with 'power' is that it has so many different connotations that no single and agreed meaning to suit all contexts and occasions is possible'. Therefore, to the extent that power can indicate a relationship between actors in the international arena, the concept agential power becomes more appropriate. The reason for this is that agential power involves relationships between actors (states and interest groups) in the context of the implementation of WRMPs in international river basins.

### 3.2. Theoretical Dimensions

In his analysis of the state in international relations, Hobson (2000) describes and classifies the agential power of the state as seen through the lenses of contending International Relations theories. This classification is useful because it not only provides a definition and typology of the agential power of the state, but also indicates how this agential power relates to non-state entities. As a point of departure, Hobson (2000: 5-10) distinguishes between two main categories: domestic agential power and international agential power.

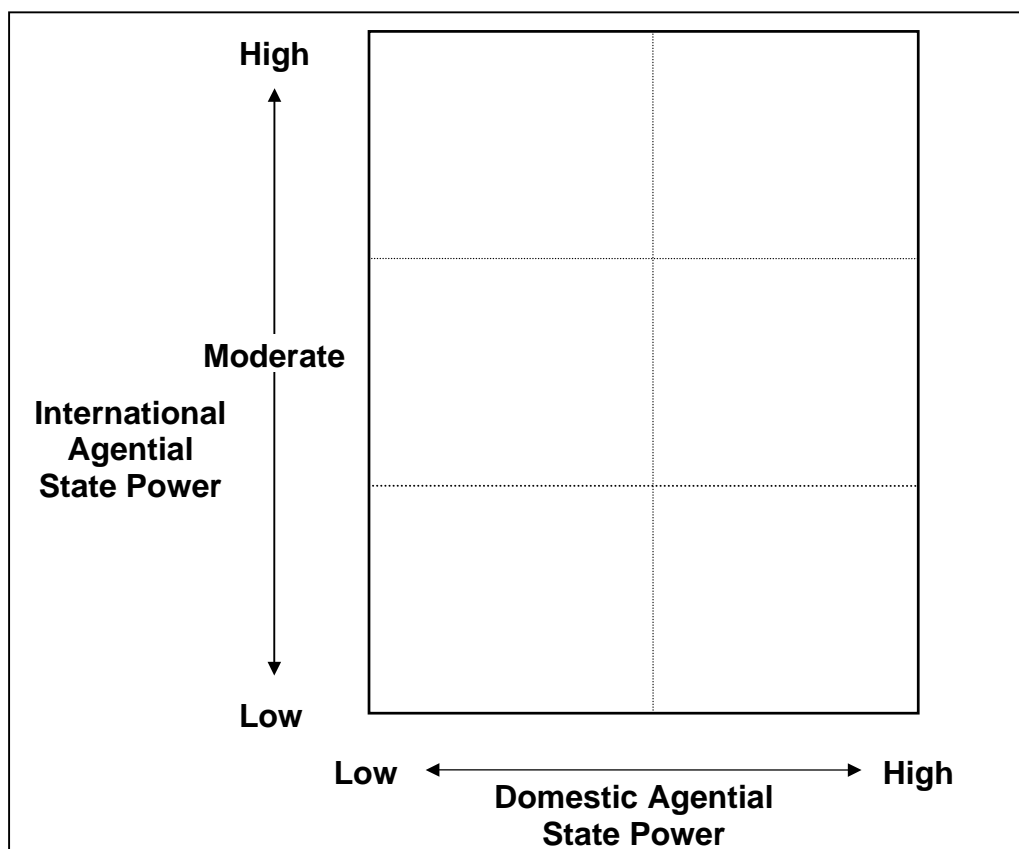
Domestic agential power is defined as, '*the ability of the state to make domestic or foreign policy as well as shape the domestic realm, free of domestic social-structural requirements or the interests of non-state actors*' (Hobson, 2000: 5). This definition is analogous to the idea of state autonomy, namely a situation where an actor has sovereignty over its actions, when self-governed or self-determined (Reath, 1998: 586). In this respect '[t]he autonomy of any social entity refers to the correspondence between its preferences and actions. A very autonomous one ... invariably acts as it chooses to act, and does not act when it prefers not to do so. An autonomous state translates its policy preferences into authoritative actions; it is autonomous insofar as public policy conforms to the parallelogram (or resultant) of the public officials' resource-weighted preferences' (Nordlinger, 1981: 8).

Moreover, state autonomy promotes state interests and relies on the capacity of the state to act in a relatively independent manner (Wolfe, 1991: 239). Notwithstanding this, concerning specific policy issues, state autonomy varies over time (hence Nordlinger [1981] questions the existence of a totally autonomous state). In general, and according to state centric approaches, the state's main goal is to promote the feasibility of state institutions and, consequently, the existence of the state itself. The capacities of the state evolve from the instruments it employs as well as from its ability to withstand the pressures of interest groups that may limit state action. Hence, state theorists set state institutions and the operation of their officialdom aside and above civil society, although they may disagree about the actual capacities of the state and the sources of its interests (Wolfe, 1991: 239).

State autonomy therefore infers that the state as an entity can act irrespective of the interference of other actors and has sole authority over the decisions and subsequent policies it adopts. Domination and limitation of the state's policy actions by other actors are the antithesis of state autonomy. Political power, seen as autonomous action, is therefore implicit in the policy decisions and activities an actor undertakes relative to other actors, within the state or outside its borders. In this respect, low domestic agential power is defined as a situation where states conform to the requirements of domestic structures or non-state actors. States have high agential power, on the other hand, when they are autonomous relative to domestic structures or non-state actors and does not experience any resistance or opposition (Hobson, 2000: 219).

International agential power is ‘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*. At the one extreme, high agential power refers to the *ability of the state to mitigate the logic of inter-state competition and thereby create a cooperative or peaceful world*’ (Hobson, 2000: 7). Although Hobson (2000) refers to ‘foreign policy’, agential power by implication also refers to any other policy. This is evident from his definition, at the other extreme, of ‘moderate’ and ‘no’ international agential power. Moderate international agential power refers to the ‘power to determine policy and shape the international system free of international structural constraints but insufficient agency to mitigate inter-state competition’. No international agential power is defined as the inability of states ‘to determine policy free of international constraints or shape the international system,’ and where they ‘must passively conform to the logic of inter-state competition’ (Hobson, 2000: 219). International agential power should not be confused with the neorealist assumption of state capability or state power. The latter refers to the ability of the state to conform, effectively to international competition and the rationalism of the international political structure. Hobson also presents a matrix outlining the agential power of the state (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Hobson’s agential power matrix.**



**Source:** Hobson, 2000: 6.

Although Hobson is explicit about agential state power, he nevertheless notes that non-state entities can exhibit and possess agential power. He is, however, of the opinion that many, although not all, International Relations theories are 'silent', especially about the state and its relationship with actors in the domestic realm. Hence, to gain more insight into the relationship between the state and civil society, cognisance must be taken of theories in other disciplines that provide an understanding of the interaction between the state and societal actors. At the domestic level, a range of theories emphasises the significance of social structures and actors that have the ability to lower the domestic agential power of the state to some degree, dependent on the policy situation, the issue and the nature of the political system of a society (Hobson, 2000: 226).

In this respect, pluralists and liberals place emphasis on the importance of individuals and interest groups over that of the state. For them, interest groups, and individuals comprising these groups are the most important actors, with a certain degree of power. Similarly, Marxists believe that class forces are important, while postmodernists see discourse and the 'logic of representation' as pivotal. In contrast, elitists, statist and first-wave Weberian sociologists embody the state as an absolute autonomous entity. According to them, there is therefore no other entity with the same degree of autonomy anywhere to be found (Hobson, 2000: 226-227).

The previously mentioned views are problematic because they logically assume a zero-sum conception of power. In other words, if interest groups or any other non-state entity are strong then states must be weak, and contrariwise, since a clear trade-off exists between the power held by social entities and that of the state. In contrast, a 'structurationist' approach is preferred with a comprehensive 'both/and' understanding. This logic rests on the notion that strong states and strong societies can exist hand-in-hand with each other, since it is assumed that states possess 'embedded autonomy' or 'governed interdependence', or more specifically reflexive agential power (Hobson, 2000: 204-205, 227).

The difference between embedded autonomy and reflexive agential power is that 'embedded autonomy' relates to the competence of the state to lodge itself in the domain of the capitalist class. Reflexive agential power hints at the 'ability of the state to embed itself in a broad array of social forces, not just the capitalist class, as well as the ability of the state to embed itself within non-class structures (e.g. the normative structure of society)'. Yet, this does not infer that the state should completely subject itself to the obligations of classes or social forces. Hobson's conclusion on reflexive agential power is that as the state becomes reflexive, the more significant its governing capacity is compared to when it is less reflexive or isolated from society. If the state broadens its network of collaboration with a comprehensive range of social forces and non-state structures, it increases its power. Therefore, the state can have autonomy while, at the same time, being pressured by social forces such as interest groups. He even goes so far as to argue that 'the deeper a state's embeddedness is, the greater its governing capacity becomes'. State power is therefore embedded in social power, therefore making the

relationship between society and the state a very important element of the agential power of the state in the international domain (Hobson, 2000: 207, 209, 213, 227). Nonetheless, the state's embeddedness should neither be ignored nor assumed to apply in every society and under all circumstances. It can rightfully be asked if Hobson does not equalise all societies and all states concerning the manner in which the state is embedded in society that makes it so powerful at times (Hobson, 2000: 205-213).

The question is whether this also applies to developing countries and the implementation of WRMPs in their international river basins? In other words, does the same situation that Hobson outlines also apply to water politics? Here it seems as if his argument about reflexive agential power needs further scrutiny. Hobson (2000: 227) notes that 'while cooperating with social forces may enhance governing capacity, it also places limits upon or circumscribes parameters within which the state operates'. If the state sides with a certain interest group which then gains insider status relative to the governing process, the state will start making concessions to 'please' it and ignore the rest of society. The privatisation of utilities in South Africa, of which water is one, is a case in point.

Within the tripartite alliance, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) advocates the privatisation of such utilities while the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP) oppose it. Therefore, some concessions by government on the privatisation bid might be expected in order to lower the level of conflict within the tripartite alliance. Considering this, what about reflexive international agential power? The degree of a state's reflexivity in the domestic political realm determines the proportion of its agential power that it can procure within the international domain. It is in this regard that Hobson (2000: 4) remarks that domestic agential power and international agential power are 'the two faces of state agential power'. In other words, they are interrelated.

In summary, Hobson presents a definition and a typology of agential state power. He also links the different kinds of agential power to that of non-state entities and other social structures. Yet, how can 'agential state power' and that of interest groups lobbying against WRMPs in international river basins be determined? In other words, what kind of indices can be used to gauge agential state and interest group power? The answers to this become clear by referring to the determinants of agential power.

### **3.3. Sources of Agential Power**

The sources of power identified by Mann (1993a: 7-10) are used to assess the agential power of the state relative to that of interest groups. These power sources provide an indication of the manner in which actors conduct themselves in a particular situation, on a specific policy matter, at a certain time. Mann classifies the sources of power into four distinctive categories, namely: ideological, economic, military and political power.

Mann (1993a: 7-10) believes that each power source can be autonomous relative to the others. For instance, ideological power can be in the hands of non-state entities or individuals that possess little or no political power. Similarly, the political power of a state does not mean that it will be endowed with ideological power. Even military and political power are not independent of each other. Mann furthermore notes that in a specific societal context at a certain time more than one source of power might be manipulated by a political entity. Yet, not all four sources of power are ever in the hands of one group at the same time. Networks of power reach across national borders, therefore preventing a single actor (individually or collectively) from possessing all the power sources at once (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000: 634).

### 3.3.1. Ideological Power

Ideological power resides, firstly, in the human necessity to discover meaning in life, to allot norms and values, and to partake in aesthetic and ritual exercises. The control over an ideology<sup>26</sup> that links absolute meanings, values, norms, aesthetics and rituals, conveys general social power (Mann, 1993a: 7). In other words, the mouth that speaks the dominant ideology rules the world, or in this case the international river basin.

Ideologies, in combination with doctrines, provide the intellectual framework through which policy planners and decision-makers perceive reality. A doctrine is therefore part of an ideology, and in this way, ideologies can rationalise and justify the choice of policy preferences. Furthermore, ideologies are legitimating emblems, by means of which a group or an individual sanctifies its activities (Holzner, 1972: 144; Holsti, 1995: 276).

Holzner (1972: 144) notes that an ideology is 'a limited aspect of the interpretive order of faiths and beliefs, namely, those reality constructs and values which serve to legitimate the claims for *power* and prestige and the activities of groups and their members'. Thus, political power and ideology are interrelated. Realities construct ideologies that influence the means, actors and circumstances through which policies are formulated.

There is therefore a distinctive interrelationship between ideology and power<sup>27</sup>. Thorne<sup>28</sup> (1965: 1) makes the point that although ideology and power seem like two separate aspects of political life, they are entwined and help to shape each other in such a way that they relate to each other. This interdependence manifests itself in two ways. Firstly, an ideology can be realised through

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<sup>26</sup> The concept 'ideology' is enmeshed in controversy (Vincent, 1995: 1). Heywood (1997: 406) defines an ideology as a relative set of ideas that serves as the foundation for political activities. As used in modern times by academics, politicians, and reporters it means, in a simplistic way, a set of beliefs on how society should be organised, what the nature of it ought to be and how to improve it in its entirety, regardless of whether those ideas are good or bad or true or false (Adams, 1993: 3).

<sup>27</sup> Power can, in this case, be defined along philosophical or ideological lines by using the aphorism: 'Nothing is as powerful as an idea which has arrived' (Haas & Whiting, 1956: 81).

<sup>28</sup> Thorne (1965: 1) is of the opinion that 'it is impossible to ignore the force of political ideology in modern times'. The reason is that within the formulation and implementation of policy, ideology and power, and their interrelationship, holds true.



power. Whoever holds power can make ideology prevail within a political setting and policy issue. Secondly, through an ideology, the support of the masses can be achieved and enhanced by the political elite, in that 'the command' can be reinforced and the means to achieve power made simpler (Thorne, 1965: 1).

The exercise of power in modern political systems has become dependent on ideologies to develop and affirm authority and legitimacy or even domination (Pranger, 1988: 14). Every entity in international affairs has an ideology that corresponds with its power base, success, level of economic development, internal structure and international power. Such an ideology is engraved in the belief system of citizens, in the case of states, and members, in the case of interest groups, so that they can show commitment to the political entity. Subsequently, the individual regards the authority of the entity as legitimate and becomes personally attached to it (Ennaji, 1999: 150). Thompson (1987: 516) is of the conviction that '[t]o study ideology ... is to study the ways in which meaning serves to sustain relations of domination'. In this equation, language also plays an important role, because it is one of the fundamental instruments through which meaning is mustered in any social context (Thompson, 1987: 516).

More specifically, Vincent (1995: 18) describes ideologies as 'complex structures of discourse that carry immense amounts of inherited, interwoven intellectual baggage, often increasing by the year'. As such, a discourse describes expressions of domination that are seen as asymmetrical power relations in a political system (Thompson, 1987: 519, 520). Stated differently, '[t]here is power behind discourse just as there is ideology behind discourse' (Ennaji, 1999: 151). Furthermore, an ideology-free discourse does not exist. Discourses reveal the powerful or non-powerful status of participants in political processes (Ennaji, 1999: 151). Therefore, power, ideology and discourse are interrelated aspects of the debates between the state and interest groups on WRMP water politics. As such, an ideology can be used by the state or an interest group to solidify support for, or protest against a WRMP.

Since meaning is transmitted by linguistic expressions—although other forms of non-verbal communication such as images, gestures, and codes can also be used—discourse involves linguistic and spoken expressions and interactions. In this regard, a discourse is the manner in which people converse about something or an action. They will ascertain what this something or action is through the mobilisation of language and meaning (Grint & Woolgar, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1994: 36; Jägerskog, 2003: 36). Thompson (1987: 520) similarly uses the concept of discourse to describe 'occurring instances of expression which appear in the flow of conversation, text or similar form'. The discourse surrounding an entity, actor, physical thing, issue or policy action is in the end a deciding factor of its effect (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000: 706).

To an extent, Dant (1991: 7) summarises this meaning of discourse by defining it as 'the material content of utterances exchanged in social contexts

that are imbued with meaning by the intention of utterers and treated as meaningful by other participants'. Therefore, a discourse is where various power relations between participants in a debate (either written or spoken) over a certain issue are enacted and implemented. Through discourse, which is an inherent element of ideology, domination can be expressed in a political society by using certain knowledge systems to convey to others the meaning ('truth') about something (Ennaji, 1999: 152).

Furthermore, by focusing on the discourse surrounding something, analysts can determine who possesses the power to get their version of what that particular something means, accepted. Those individuals or entities who get their discourse recognised as the truth will exercise power and will in all likelihood use it to advance their interests. This 'truth', in some instances, may not only represent reality, but it can also create it (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000: 942). Power associations can manifest themselves in and be actualised by the discourse about something or an action (Dant, 1991: 8). This imposition of dominant ideas onto others is known as hegemonic knowledge and forms an integral part of any political relationship (Leysens & Thompson, 1999: 23).

A link also exists between policy and discourse. Allan (2001: 10) notes that '[i]nformation on future regional and global water supply and demand could be introduced into discourses on water which precede policy making. Political processes facilitate the achievement of the interests of the powerful, who in turn want to stay in power. The discourses are in practice "sanctioned". The information entering the water discourses is selected, distorted, or deemphasised'. Here he refers to the sanctioned discourse employed by the state over information on water and water-related matters.

Regarding WRMPs, a specific ideology that contains discourses can be applied to advance these projects. The hydraulic mission<sup>29</sup> of the state exemplifies this aspect that can be seen as a type of ideology in water politics. The ideological form imbues itself into the governing or sanctioned discourse, which serves to legitimise and sanction, this discourse (Turton & Meissner, 2002: 37, 39).

It is not only government that can use a specific ideology to advance its arguments for a specific policy issue or action within the water sector. Interest groups can similarly apply ideologies to counteract the policy stances or actions of government. In this respect, Korten (1990: 124) is of the opinion that non-state entities and social movements are not motivated to act because of their budgets or organisational structure, but rather by ideas, or more precisely by a vision of a better world and future for people. How do interest groups go about these actions? Two influencing strategies are discerned: direct communication and indirect methods. Both contain language in either a verbal or written form such as letters, research reports, telegrams and articles published in the printed media or distributed over the internet (Heywood, 1997:

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<sup>29</sup> The hydraulic mission is defined as the overarching rationale that underpins the state's desire to establish conditions that are conducive to socio-economic and political stability (Turton & Meissner, 2002: 38).

262; Sadie, 1998: 284). It is *via* direct and indirect communication that interest groups articulate, introduce and spread ideas about a policy issue.

Ideology also plays a role in the way in which interest groups are perceived and the way in which policy options are deemed feasible by the state. In each policy sector, the policy process is dominated by various ideologies. These convictions limit agreeable options open to decision-makers and policy planners. Interest groups that do not agree with or conform to the belief systems within a particular policy sector, stand the chance of being ignored or marginalised by decision-makers (Smith, 1993: 4). They can therefore become outsider groups in the policy making process; a situation that can affect their ability to influence the state on policy issues and/or actions.

If an interest group has an outsider status, it can either be ignored by government or it can be consulted. Should it be consulted, this consultation process will be uneven and not necessarily conducted by senior government officials. In some cases, outsider status can even be a sign of weakness because the interest group or alliance lacks formal access to the government apparatus. As a result, these groups are forced to 'go public' with the expectation to exert indirect influence on the policy making process. In these cases the ideological line adopted by interest groups, for instance radical groups like some environmentalists, can sometimes have an impact on their status and relationship with government. However, government may perceive it to be too radical and opt not to interact with the interest groups. They will then have little choice but to remain outsiders since their goals are out of line with the priorities of government. Yet, as an alternative strategy, and based on their ideological convictions, their members and supporters can choose not to have close links with government (Grant, 1989: 14-15; Heywood, 1997: 255).

How can it be ascertained that agential domination or influence in the water sector is exercised through a specific ideology? In order to determine the ideological power of states and interests groups, the following two criteria can be used:

- Consideration of the social-historical circumstances of opposing actors and how they produce their discourses concerning a specific issue: Discourses are produced, distributed and received by people who are located in particular social-historical circumstances. These conditions are characterised by certain institutional arrangements and relations of power and domination. In the words of one observer, '[t]he study of ideology must be based on the social-historical analysis of the conditions within which forms of discourse are produced and received, conditions which include the relations of domination which meaning serves to sustain' (Thompson, 1987: 525). For instance, an actor with a liberal democratic background may be more willing to agree with the arguments of interest groups concerning a specific issue. This would be contrary to an actor with authoritarian credentials. It is therefore necessary to analyse the social-historical circumstances of the different actors involved in the debate about a WRMP in an international river basin.

- The level of national loyalty: States are less likely to call on ideological loyalty when they have heterogeneous populations. A diverse ethnic population can hinder or constrain loyalty to a set of values or policy preferences (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000: 629). For example, political processes and governmental politics in Africa reflect the inability of many states to develop an all-inclusive political system, taking into account that citizens' primary loyalty is not always to states. In many instances, the state vies, on an ideological level, with ethnic groups, tribes or nations for the citizen's allegiance. The reason for this is that the citizen's sense of self is in itself based on factors such as kinship ties, race, language, locality, religion, and tradition. Several African states are governed by one ethnic group, which is with some exceptions usually numerically dominant. In some cases, the resources of the state and economy are used for the benefit of that group and to the disadvantage of others. 'This causes resentment, particularly when other groups see themselves as having certain tangible attributes—like economic power, intellectual excellence, a tradition of military prowess—that could be translated into political power' (Malaquias, 2000: 99-1000). In such instances, when access to political power is denied, the state can find it difficult to resort to nationalism or another ideology to advance or implement policies on WRMPs. Members of an ethnic community can have stronger allegiances towards their clan than towards the state. If such a community is in 'the way' of progressive WRMPs, based on their prevailing ideology they can oppose the scheme and lobby government not to implement it.

What is the link between ideological power and the implementation of WRMPs by the state or the rejection of these projects by interest groups? Each power source establishes particular group forms. In the case of ideological power, it is mainly diffused, in that it is 'not directly commanded; it spreads in a relatively spontaneous, unconscious, and decentered way' (Mann, 1993a: 6-7).

Ideological power commands collectivities through persuasion, advanced by a commitment to truth and participation in rituals. Its diffusion has two forms. Firstly, it is socio-spatially transcendent. This means that an ideology may diffuse through the borders of economic, military, and political organisations and entities. In a political setting, organisations and entities can subscribe to the same or a different ideology. This is so in every society, in that government departments can adhere to one or a number of ideologies, while interest groups can advance opposite or identical ideologies to solve the problems they confront. In this regard Mann (1993a: 7) remarks that '[h]uman beings belonging to different states, classes, and so forth face similar problems to which an ideology offers plausible solutions'.

After ideological power has diffused through political society, it spreads transcendentally to mould an original, discrete and powerful network of political interaction (Mann, 1993a: 7). For example, members and supporters of an environmental interest group may perceive large dams as a threat to the environment and to people who are directly affected by these structures. The solution to this threat will be postulated in terms of a particular ideology. In

most instances, interest groups adhere to the ideology of political ecology (Dobson, 1993: 216).

This ideology brings together a large number of interest groups and aggregates them into a movement that influences government WRMP policies. It is in this respect that the opposing ideological conviction will clash with that of the state. Many states, on the other hand, may see the construction of large dams as a necessity to stimulate socio-economic development, for instance Turkey's Greater Anatolia Project (GAP). The motivation for building such grand schemes may be influenced by a certain ideology such as, socialism or nationalism.

In this respect, McCully (1996: 1) notes that 'to many writers, leaders, engineers, bureaucrats, nationalists and revolutionaries ... big dams have been potent symbols of both patriotic pride and the conquest of nature by man. Providers of electric power, water and food; tamers of floods; greeners of the desert; guarantors of national independence—for most of our century, dams, the largest structures built by humanity, have symbolized progress, whether that amorphous concept be the creation of capitalist wealth, the spreading of the fruits of socialism, or the great march of communism.' History is replete with examples of states and leaders who used WRMPs to elevate the status, prestige and economical development of nations, by way of a certain ideological conviction<sup>30</sup>.

Ideological power is diffused in that it produces an existing power organisation and develops such an organisation's inherent morale (Mann, 1993a: 7). An ideology therefore acts as a medium that instructs organisations on the moral stance they should assume over certain policy issues and actions. The environmental movement, through political ecology, sees the destruction of nature as immoral. The state, on the other hand, often sees the use of nature and its resources as moral, given its purpose to enhance the socio-economic development of the population.

### **3.3.2. Economic Power**

Economic power is primarily based on the tangible variables of a state's economic system that include the following, namely: its geopolitical location and resource base; the size, quality and the structure of its population; and its industrial output and the capacity of its economy (Cantori & Speigel, 1970: 13).

More specifically, a state's economic capacity, gross domestic product (GDP) and gross national income<sup>31</sup> (GNI), can be used as indicators of economic power. GDP asserts the total value of all goods and services produced within

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<sup>30</sup> For instance, the Dnieper Dam in the Soviet Union was constructed to provide hydroelectricity to industries. The dam was also a symbol of the spirit of the Soviet people and government. The status and prestige from the dam was so extensive that, in 1941, the dam was deliberately breached to prevent the German army from using it (Hughes & Welfare, 1990: 77-79).

<sup>31</sup> Gross national income (GNI) is the term that replaced gross domestic product (GDP) (Internet: The World Bank, 2000a).

the borders of a state *per annum* and is a good indicator of the level of economic activity in a state. The economic growth of a state is indicated by the percentage decline or increase of the GDP. In contrast, GNI is a better indicator of the standard of living of the citizens of a certain country (Nel & McGowan, 1999: 319).

Economic power originates from the need to extract, transmute, disburse and use natural resources (Mann, 1993a: 7). In this regard, water is unique. Water is needed in every economic activity: for electricity generation, the growing of foodstuffs, manufacturing and at the household level, to name but a few. Water is also necessary for biological functioning. After three to four days without water, life ceases. Water is therefore a natural resource with economical as well as environmental utility, as enshrined in the four *Dublin Principles*, 1992 (in Van Wyk, Meissner & Jacobs, 2002: 217). The first principle states that '[f]resh water is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustain life, development and the environment.' The second principle declares that, '[w]ater development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policymakers at all levels'. The third principle involves women, in that '[w]omen play a central part in the provision, management and safeguarding of water. The fourth principle has to do with the economic value of water for it asserts that '[w]ater has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good' (Internet: GWP, 2003).

Economic power creates different classes, because every society has unequal control over the distribution of economic resources. Therefore, class is a universal phenomenon and common to all political spheres. Classes can interact with each other either vertically or horizontally. Vertically class A is above class B and therefore exploiting it. Yet, in a political system groups and classes can also encounter one another horizontally. Mann (1993a: 7, 8) refers to these groups as segments and their members are drawn from different classes, e.g. a community, tribe, industrial complex, and the ruling elite. The idea of segments is also similar, if not identical, to interest groups.

How is economic power expressed in society? Economic power has a dimension, which is not often mentioned i.e. water. Because of water's unique status as an economic resource, it must be mobilised before it can be used in factories and homes. Infrastructure must be provided to move water from point A to B, and the water must be in a form that is suitable for different uses. Drinking water must be of a high quality, and this entails the cleansing of water by means of purification plants. Whether it is a large dam or a new water network for a city, these infrastructural projects are expensive. On top of these expenditures are the costs to establish a bureaucracy to facilitate and oversee the mobilisation of water resources. Such institutions are usually government departments. Examples are South Africa's Department of Water Affairs and Forestry or parastatal and private water companies such as Rand Water. In other words, a resource, usually of a financial, technical and political character, is needed to mobilise another resource, for example water.

A distinction can be made between first-order and second-order resources. A first-order resource is a basic or primary resource and it is usually in its natural form that becomes either sparser or more abundant over time relative to population growth. A second-order resource is the resource needed to transform the primary resource. Yet, second-order resources go one step further in that they also involves institutional arrangements to oversee the management of first-order resources. For instance, financial and technical (second order) resources are needed to build a hydroelectric power plant to use water's (first order resource) physical characteristics to produce electricity. This is usually done under the auspices of a government department (institutional arrangements). A second-order resource is an assortment of likely 'adaptive behaviours'. These originate from the broader social context. They can be used by the decision-making elite, either legitimately or illegitimately (Turton & Ohlsson, 1999: 3).

In order to finance WRMPs, governments have two avenues open to them depending on the economic situation of the state. Financial resources can be generated either within the state or in the international system. For instance, either private commercial banks or external financial institutions such as the World Bank or regional development banks like the DBSA can be used. Other states can also be a source of financial resources. If a state can finance WRMPs using domestic funds found within the national economy, its economic power is such that it will be unnecessary to find financial resources elsewhere. The opposite applies in the case of a state that does not have the economic power to access the financial resources inside its borders.

If a state does not have the internal means to finance WRMPs, and turns to foreign financial institutions for assistance instead, interest groups can undermine its ability to implement such schemes. In this regard, the state can turn to the international community when it faces domestic challenges, such as the financing of a WRMP, to alleviate such problems. Similarly, when the state is confronted by global or international constraints, like the transnational lobbying of interest groups against a WRMP, it can resort to the domestic environment to solve these problems<sup>32</sup> (Hobson, 2000: 230).

This was the case with the Sardar Sarovar Dam<sup>33</sup> on the Narmada River in India. The Indian government received funding for the project from the World Bank and the Japanese government pledged \$230 million for the hydroelectric turbines for the dam. Interest groups were primarily concerned about the destructive ecological impact the dam could have on the environment. Among these concerns were the silting of reservoirs, land salinisation, deforestation and the disturbance of downstream fisheries. Local interest groups under the leadership of Medha Patkar from the Committee for Narmada Dam-Affected People started a campaign against the dam in the late 1980s (Payne, 1996: 174-176; McCully, 1996: 301-306).

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<sup>32</sup> Hobson (2000: 230) calls this the 'ultimate Bonapartist balancing act that states can achieve'.

<sup>33</sup> The Sardar Sarovar Dam is part of a gigantic Indian water development programme (Payne, 1996: 175).

These campaigns were initiated on the national and the international front, involving a number of other external interest groups like the Environmental Defence Fund (EDF) (now called Environmental Defence [ED]). A number of strategies and tactics were used by these interest groups to lobby the Indian government, the World Bank and other countries like Japan, to suspend the construction of the dam. One of the most important successes of the interest groups was achieved at a symposium in Tokyo in April 1990, resulting in the withdrawal of funding. The interest groups used the symposium<sup>34</sup> as a platform to advance their lobbying campaign against the Sardar Sarovar Dam in conjunction with Japanese interest groups, academics and politicians. After the symposium, leaders from the interest groups met with Japanese government officials to press forward their arguments against the dam. In May 1990, for the first time in Japanese history, the Japanese government withdrew all further funding for the dam. The World Bank also suspended its financial support in March 1993. This, after local and external interest groups threatened the Bank that they would launch a campaign to cut off government funding to the World Bank (Payne, 1996: 174-176; McCully, 1996: 301-306).

The Indian government had to pour more funding into the project. Yet, with World Bank funding and financial aid from the Japanese government no longer available, the interest groups stepped up their lobbying campaigns against the Indian government. In January 1995, the central government in New Delhi forced Gujarat state to suspend the raising of the dam wall (McCully, 1996: 304-305). As part of their campaign against WRMPs, interest groups can employ tactics that will make it difficult for a state to find and secure outside funding. It is doubtful whether the interest groups in India would have had a similar success rate if the government of Gujarat had secured funding internally for the project. Yet, other factors may also have favoured the interest groups, like the political structure of India, which is organised along federal lines.

In this case GNI *per capita* in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) expressed in international US\$ terms can be used to determine economic power. PPP is a method to gauge the relative cost of living in a particular state. This is done by ascertaining how many citizens can manage to buy products and services in US\$ terms in their home countries (Nel & McGowan, 1999: 327). If people can afford the price of wholesome freshwater, the funding of WRMPs can be implemented by the state by incorporating the financing of a project in the water bill of individuals. Therefore, if a state can fund a WRMP from internal financial sources, it will follow that it has economic power, and will be able to implement it.

### 3.3.3. Military Power

The third source of power, as conceptualised by Mann, is military power, which has to do with the organisation of physical force. Military power is deduced from the necessity to organise defence against aggressive states or entities and the utilisation of aggression by different actors (Mann, 1993a: 8). Giddens

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<sup>34</sup> The symposium received significant press coverage in Japan (McCully, 1996:302).



(1990) believes that military power is concerned with controlling the methods of violence. The focus here is on the state with the traditional legal right to exert violent force on the population and those who threaten the existence of the state from outside its borders (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000: 1077; Ritzer, 2000: 558).

By nature military power contains intensive and extensive elements. On the one hand, military power relates to the intense organisation of armed force to safeguard life and to wreak death. On the other hand, in its extensive form, military power can also organise large numbers of people over immense sociospatial areas<sup>35</sup> (Mann, 1993a: 8). Many interest groups lobbying against WRMPs do not employ military power at all to communicate or advance their arguments against such schemes. The reason for this is that the state has the monopoly over military power. The state can, and has in the past, used violence against interest groups campaigning against WRMPs. For instance, in March 1978, 100 000 demonstrators journeyed to the Chandil Dam construction site in India. The following month, police fired into a crowd of about 8 000 people assembled near the dam, killing four persons in the process (McCully, 1996: 299).

#### **3.3.4. Political Power**

The fourth source of power is political power. Political power originates from the value of territorial and centralised control. Mann (1993a: 9) is of the conviction that '[p]olitical power means *state* power'. The nature of state power is fundamentally authoritative, dictated and determined from a centre in that states can employ force legitimately (Leysens & Thompson, 1999: 22).

Regarding this, the determining distinctiveness of the modern state is that it commands political space territorially. Politics is, in this instance, about complexes of rule, and the state is a system of regulation that involves legitimate sovereignty over a spatial extension. This rule is regulated by a government and bureaucracy composed of government officials (Schoeman, 1998: 3). States are therefore actors in the international political system that administer their authority over a certain geographical area delimited by a national boundary (Leysens & Thompson, 1999: 21).

The organisation of the state is therefore twofold in nature. Firstly, it is domestic, in that the state is territorially centralised, and that authorised jurisdiction is imposed over a population. Secondly, the state is organised externally, which infers geopolitics. In this regard, the right to govern in this dominion is recognised by other states. Furthermore, apprehension of a danger to the state may be met by and warded off with warfare, which is the use of military power (Mann, 1993a: 9; Schoeman, 1998: 3). In this regard, the state holds sovereign political power.

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<sup>35</sup> The US and alliance partners mobilising and deploying their troops abroad after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington D.C., provides a good example.

In conjunction with the above, two forms of sovereignty can also be distinguished, namely internal, and external sovereignty. Internal sovereignty denotes the idea of the state having control over a territory and the people, organisations, and groups that exist upon that territory and within the boundaries of the state. In this respect, the state is an institution that organises and regulates individual lives in every respect. Under international law, the state has two kinds of rights within this domain. The first is the supreme authority to make and enforce laws concerning the people and territory under its sphere of jurisdiction. No other political actor has the right to replace these laws. Secondly, sovereignty also betoken the principle of non-intervention<sup>36</sup>. In principle albeit not in practice, no other state or entity has the right to interfere in the domestic affairs of another state, no matter how repulsive a government's behaviour is towards its citizens and territory (Marriott, 1927: 6-7; Rothgeb, 1993: 23; Adar, 1999: 77-79).

Yet, throughout the twentieth century this rule of international law was broken several times, for instance over South Africa's *apartheid* policy. In this instance Geldenhuys (1998: 19) is of the opinion that '[s]overeignty ... did not give governments *carte blanche* in dealing with their own subjects', when it came to upholding or violating human rights. Therefore, non-intervention upholds the right of the state to conduct its own affairs, as it sees fit, at least in theory. In practice, it is not an absolute right but is qualified.

Furthermore, sovereignty also has an external component. This infers that states have the right to make their foreign and domestic policies *vis-à-vis* other actors in the spirit of independence. States do not have to clear every decision with other entities; they are free to do as they please (Rothgeb, 1993: 23-24). This denotes a sphere of freedom of activity within which states can operate and connote autonomy or agential power.

Considering these forms of sovereignty, it will be noted that involvement or intervention in states' domestic affairs does occur on a constant basis, either by other states or by non-state entities. Furthermore, states have the right to make their foreign or domestic policies in the spirit of independence. Yet, this does not infer that these policies cannot be questioned by other entities, or that states have a right to be immune from influence. Moreover, no other entity has the right to change the laws of the state. However, they have the right to influence the state to change these laws or to implement better practices.

Both these dimensions of state organisation have an impact on the social development of the population, particularly in modern times (Mann, 1993a: 9). One of the main tasks of government is to provide the population with social services and, in addition, to promote economic growth and increased welfare. In ancient times, a state was perceived as one that can provide justice and

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<sup>36</sup> Geldenhuys (1998: 6) defines intervention, or 'foreign political engagement', as follows: '[I]t is the calculated action of a state, a group of states, an international organization or some other international actor(s) to influence the political system of another state (including its structure of authority, its domestic policies and its political leaders) against its will by using various means of coercion (forcible or non-forcible) in pursuit of particular political objectives'.

public order. In the contemporary age, there exists the idea of the welfare state that must provide for those who cannot help themselves. It also entails that the state has more responsibilities such as the enhancement of economic growth and the provision of a variety of services. There is a responsibility to uplift the quality of life of its citizens. The provision of freshwater for a number of economic activities is one such service. Internally, taxes are collected to finance the large number of services provided by the state. Yet, states must also trade with others in the international system to increase wealth and economic efficiency, to provide the population with such services (Holsti, 1995: 97, 98).

Because political power is organised internally and externally, and the state has a responsibility to its citizens, the state controls many of the resources found within its territory<sup>37</sup>. This is the case with water in many countries. These resources can be distributed, used, and regulated by the state to create welfare and socio-economic development. The manner by which the state goes about using water rests in the hands of government. According to the principle of sovereignty, the state can therefore do with the resources as it sees fit, as long as it enhances the welfare of the population. Worldwide, this is a source of contention between the state and environmental interest groups. The state would opt for supply management policies whereas interest groups would go against such policies, and prefer that the state embrace demand management principles. This brings the elements that influence interest preferences of decision-makers, into contention.

In this context, Smith (1993: 51) argues that the interests the state pursues are not purely the individual interests of decision-makers in government institutions. These interests are partially ascertained by the organisational culture, the character of policy-making establishments, and the association of these institutions with other components of the state and civil society. Government policies do not always reflect the wishes and demands of interest groups. Policies are the outcomes of the ways states see their interests, how problems are perceived, and how they address the problems of national interests such as water provision. Governments can therefore suggest policies that are in direct opposition to the interests of interest groups. Nevertheless, how is political power determined in the context of interest groups lobbying against WRMPs?

An answer to this question is found in Mann's (1993b) distinction between despotic and infrastructural power. Despotic power refers to the 'range of actions that the elite is empowered to undertake without routine, institutionalized negotiations with civil society groups' (Mann, 1993b: 5). This definition correlates with that of agential power. Mann (1988) argues that statist theories characterise state autonomy as a zero-sum game between the state and civil society entities (Hobson, 2000: 198).

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<sup>37</sup> This seems to be case in many developed countries where the state is actually and in a physical manner controlling water resources, *via* some sort of infrastructure and institutions. In many developing countries, there is a lack of physical control through infrastructure and institutions over water resources, with the consequence that many people go without water and sanitation.

Statist theories, however, tend to overlook infrastructural power, namely 'the capacity of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the [political] realm' (Mann, 1993a: 55). Infrastructural power can alternatively also be defined as power through or with, rather than power seen as *contra* or above civil society. The state possesses an elevated governing capacity to such an extent that it is capable of extending this governing capacity into society to carry out its policies (Hobson, 2000: 198, 199). In other words, civil society is used as a conductor through which state policies can be realised and can therefore facilitate the formulation and implementation of policies.

In contrast, infrastructural power also enables interest groups to control the state to a certain extent (Mann, 1993a: 59). This is similar to the assumption of the theory of interest group corporatism, but is in contrast to Giddens' assumption about the surveillance powers of the state (Hobson, 2000: 199).

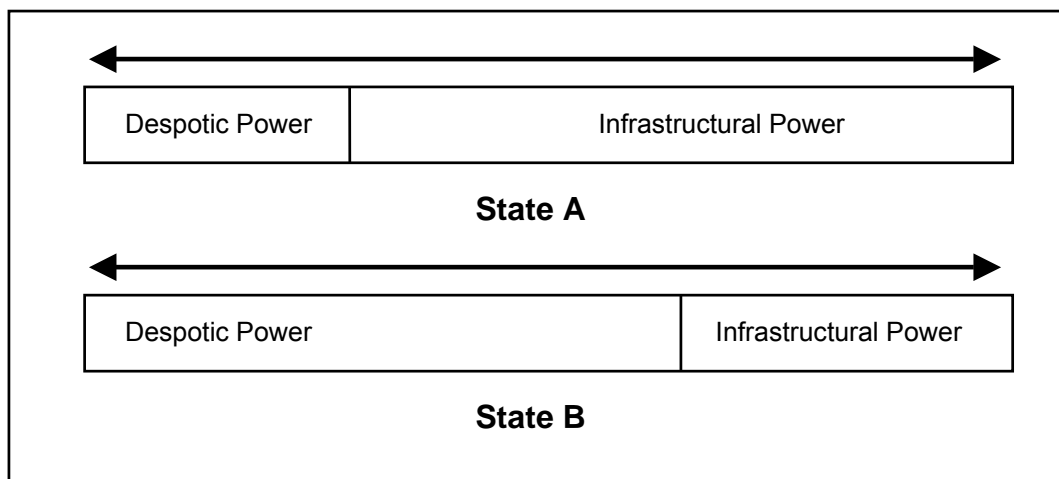
States that have despotic power are weak because they are unable to penetrate and reach the entire society and exist, to a certain extent, in isolation. Many modern states that do not have high levels of despotic power, however, possess high infrastructural power. This provides them with the means to rule in a more direct manner and more effectively than ancient or medieval state entities (Hobson, 2000: 198-199). This is true for the entire range of state and civil society relationships.

What about the relations of only a segment of civil society, e.g. interest groups, the state and especially those environmental groups who are in principle against WRMPs? Liberal democratic, developed societies are likely to have high infrastructural power. Does the same apply to fledgling developing democracies? Will the same situation prevail in these states as exists in the rich north, where interest groups lobby against WRMPs? It would seem, based on the dissimilar political cultures and systems in developed and developing countries, that the situation concerning states and their penetration of societies would be different in developing countries. The contrast between the political cultures and systems of developed and developing societies can be influenced by a number of factors, for example socio-economic development; ideology; composition of the population; history; geographical location; and a host of other aspects.

This implies that the type of political system a state possesses will influence the type of political power (despotic or infrastructural) that prevails (see Figure 5). It is noted that state A and state B possess different levels of despotic and infrastructural power. In the case of state A, infrastructural power is more prevalent, while the opposite situation exists in state B, with despotic power more widespread. State A will, in all likelihood, have the characteristic of a typical liberal democratic state, where civil society groups play a large role in the policy process. State B will be more conservative in nature and can assume a number of forms ranging from a democracy, with the elite forming a closely-knit clique, to a more authoritarian government structure.

From an international relations perspective, a realist situation, or state/interest group relationship, will rely heavily on despotic power in the conduct of certain matters. On the other hand, a liberal-pluralist situation will be more conducive to an infrastructural power relationship between states and interest groups. This will also determine whether certain interest groups have insider or outsider status. Figure 5 indicates the type of political power that is dominant within a state. How this type of political power influences state and interest group's agential power becomes apparent in practice.

**Figure 5. The prevalence of despotic and infrastructural power within political systems.**



Political systems are primarily structured by enmeshed ideological, economic, military, and political power. These four sources of power do not subsist in a pure form. 'Actual power organisations mix them, as all four are necessary to social existence and to each other' (Mann, 1993a: 9). An ideological organisation needs economic resources, military defence, and state regulation. Therefore, economic, military and political organisations assist in structuring ideological organisations, and contrariwise (Mann, 1993a: 9). In other words, the four power sources exist in every type of organisation. Moreover, every type of organisation in a political system sustains the sources of power available to them, to undermine one another in the furtherance of their own interests and demands.

The four sources of power outlined above determine the capabilities that actors have in a political system. What should also be considered is the interaction, or relationships, among the actors. This is significant because the capabilities of an actor can be less important when interaction is not considered. Thus, how actors do or do not respond to each other should also be taken into account when analysing their interactive behaviour. Hence, '[i]t can even be argued that, with respect to any situation, issue, or problem, boredom is bound to set in if analysis does not turn soon from capabilities to relationships' (Rosenau, 1990: 184).

### 3.4. Actor Interaction

Within the international system, different actors can interact with one another in a variety of ways. Three distinct interactive patterns of politics can be identified, namely:

- Competitive contact between actors. In competitive situations, the accomplishment of objectives by one actor clashes with the fulfilment of goals by other actors. The ensuing action that can develop from this type of interaction can vary from breakdown in communication to outright physical violence;
- Cooperation between actors. Complementary actions between the actors facilitate or promote cooperation. This usually manifests itself in cooperative agreements between state and non-state entities.
- A mixture of both cooperative and competitive interactions between the actors. In such a situation, actors pursue a multiplicity of goals. Some aims are incongruous and can lead to competition, while others are in accord and are sought and attained through complementary endeavours (Puchala, 1971: 5).

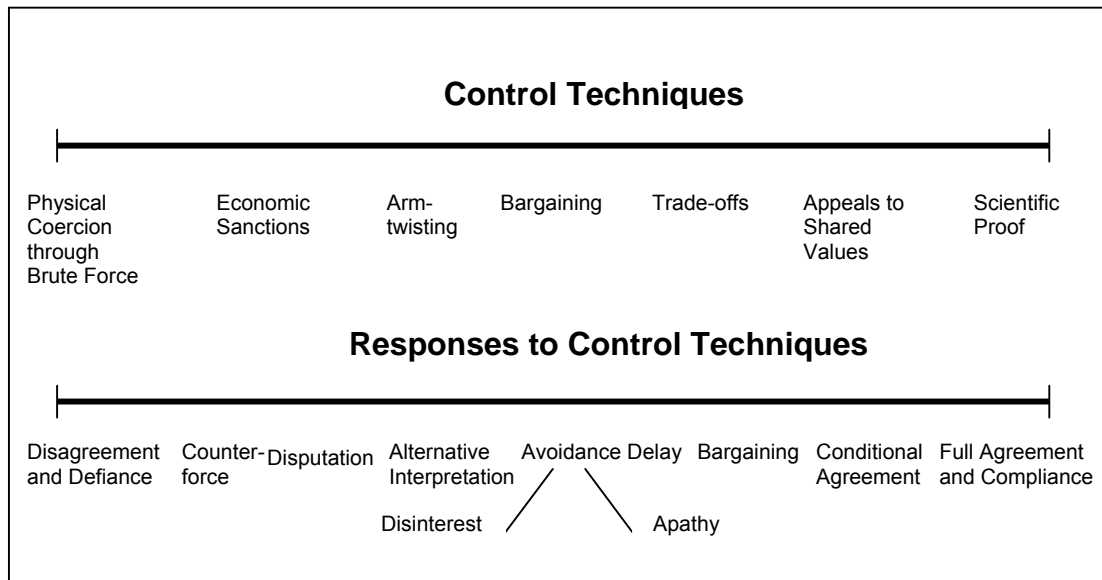
In a similar vein, Soroos (1986: 6) remarks that 'world politics is a rich and perplexing mixture of trends and counter-trends'. What is meant by this is that for any given period, conflict and violent confrontation can exist alongside cooperation and accommodation. This is true not only for world politics, but also for the interaction between states and interest groups in an international river basin. The three patterns of interaction—with the third type of interaction being the most important—will always be discernible within the dynamics of any international river basin.

How do these interactive patterns manifest? Efforts to control or influence the exercise of power regarding goals develop in a relational context wherein actors are involved. A spectrum of control techniques can be discerned within a relational context at any level of politics. This spectrum ranges from the most violent actions at one end of the spectrum to the least violent at the other. 'Brute force and other forms of physical coercion are found at the former extreme, scientific proof and reason at the latter' (Rosenau, 1990: 182). Yet, actors generally prefer the technique of scientific proof. The reasons for this are that people achieve their goals in their relationship with others through cooperative and peaceful means; and the technique of scientific proof is the least costly endeavour, less so than violent confrontation. Responses to control can also be placed on a spectrum. These range from full agreement and compliance at the one end, to disagreement and defiance at the other. 'Between these two extremes lie such reactions as avoidance, disputation, delay, and counter-force. Somewhere in the middle of the [spectrum] are the responses of disinterest and apathy' (Rosenau, 1990: 185) (see Figure 6).

It is important to note that the state and interest groups can use these control techniques against each other. This is also true for any responses to the use of such techniques. For instance, a coalition of interest groups can use

scientific proof as a control technique in their relationship with the state, in order to secure the non-implementation of a WRMP. The particular state in question can respond either through disagreement and defiance or through full agreement and compliance. It can also produce and disseminate scientific proof on reasons why the WRMP should be constructed. This can similarly evoke a response from interest groups either in the form of disagreement and defiance or in the form of full agreement as to the potential of the WRMP.

**Figure 6. Control techniques and responses to control techniques.**



**Source:** Rosenau, 1990: 185

Regarding scientific proof, it is noteworthy to see that it links up with social engineering. The model of social engineering states that decisions, actions and the development of institutions, should be founded on rational, and therefore scientific information. It also infers that the decision-makers are frequently committed to using research findings. Moreover, those who are affected by such choices will accept such scientifically based decisions (Marais, 1991: xiii).

Why is it important to identify the type of interaction between the state and interest groups? If the type of interaction is known, it will be possible to determine the nature and degree of control or deviance from control between the two groups of actors. The nature and degree of control or deviance vary constantly and are not the same at any given moment. By identifying the degree of control, it is possible to detect the overall relationship between states and interest groups in the implementation of a WRMP.

In a situation where actor A does not comply with the control techniques of actor B, then they will have incompatible reasons for the implementation or halting of a WRMP. The nature of the relationship between the state and interest groups regarding a WRMP should therefore also be considered. In addition, it will help to distinguish with which point of view the actor identifies

with. This will furthermore indicate how water resources within the international river basin or the entire state should be managed, and whose ideas are prevailing. In other words, the interests and issues of actors are highlighted, as well as how they convert these interests and issues into control techniques. Furthermore, the nature of the relationship between the state and interest groups, known as the relations of authority, lies at the heart of the ability of the state (Rosenau, 1990: 186-191).

Authority is defined by Rosenau (1990: 186) as 'that set of premises and habits on which macro leaders are entitled to rely to obtain automatic compliance from their followers'. Authority is necessary for collectivities (states and interest groups) to endure. In this regard, authority provides a legal basis for a collectivity's leaders and for the preservation of such a collectivity's hierarchical structures. Decisions are made and implemented through authority, which also sustain a collectivity's unity. Therefore, authority relationships are defined as those 'patterns of a collectivity wherein some of its members are accorded the right to make decisions, set rules, allocate resources, and formulate policies for the rest of the members, who, in turn, comply with the decisions, rules and policies made by the authorities' (Rosenau, 1990: 186). Should a collectivity not exhibit authority relations, '... goals could not be framed and energies could not be concerted'. If this should happen, there would be no collective action. The collectivity would lose its identity 'as a social system distinct from its environment' (Rosenau, 1990: 186).

It is therefore important to note, that authority relations are inherent in any group where people undertake collective activities. These authority groups range from families to interest groups that are not part of governmental entities. The relations between these entities are also part of world politics and have decentralising tendencies that induce an increase in transnational relations. Because of this, these authority relations undermine the hierarchy and intensify the impulsiveness of global authority structures, including the governing apparatus of the state (Rosenau, 1990: 187).

This is a significant assumption, since the highest authority for the past couple of centuries has been lodged in states. Their sovereignty has warranted them to take authoritative actions which have not been challenged, because their sovereignty is not subject to a more encompassing authority. 'Both the citizens of the state and actors external to it have long been habituated to complying with them [actions of the state], and the citizens of other states have long acknowledged that they are not entitled to interfere in the processes whereby the acts and policies are framed and implemented' (Rosenau, 1990: 188). Therefore, the state has a legal right to act as an entity in the implementation of its policies.

Notwithstanding the legal nature of the actions of the state to act and implement policies, most authority relations are not legal in nature. Authority relations are distinguished not by the finality of the decisions made by those who have been authorised to act on behalf of the collectivity, but by the relationship between those with authority and those who obey it. Therefore,



the state have authority, through the governmental process, to make and implement decisions, and the citizens of the state naturally comply with its decisions. However, there are a number of issues in which citizens are directly involved wherein the authority of the state can be subordinate to that of others (like international organisations) (Rosenau, 1990: 188). Thus, it is expected that the effectiveness of authorities relies on the role and type of a collectivity.

The effectiveness of authority is not only derived from the manner in which it is embedded in the roles and characteristics of those who possess it, but also from the dynamics of control relations. Two dimensions are important with respect to the willingness of a collectivity's members to accede to and support the decisions of its leaders. These are the degree of integration and the scope of the relationship (Rosenau, 1990: 189, 190).

The degree of integration dimension ranges from highly integrated relationships to those where decisions are continuously opposed. Highly integrated relationships exist where members of a collectivity habitually and automatically conform to the leadership's decisions. Between the two extremes of highly integrated and persistent resistance, 'compliance may be subject to reflection over, scepticism toward, and anguish about the decisions' (Rosenau, 1990: 190).

The scope of the relationship 'refers to the number of issues across which the compliance of a membership is operative' (Rosenau, 1990: 190). In certain relationships, like those maintained by governments, there is a broad scope. This means that the habits of compliance can be mobilised on a wide range of issues. Other actors, like interest groups, adopt a limited number of issues. The leaders can then rely on automatic compliance. 'Ordinarily, leaders prefer to protect their authority by not exceeding its [interest group's] scope, with the result that the fewer the issues it spans, the more likely an authority relationship is to be integrated and the less it is susceptible to crisis' (Rosenau, 1990: 190-191).

Apart from their scope and degree of integration, the dynamic nature of relations of authority is also significant. If powers inside and outside the collectivity are at work, they can erode the habits of compliance to authority. The erosion can be of such an extent that the leaders of a collectivity can embrace coercion to implement their policies. This in turn can lead to a crisis, because this alteration in the nature of leadership can erode the habits of compliance extensively (Rosenau, 1990: 191).

Thus, the interaction between the actors in the water politics of a WRMP involves the way authority is exercised and the manner in which it manifests in the relationship between collectivities. The notion of the erosion of authority is in this regard significant, for it links up with the idea of lowering the agential power of the state. In this respect, 'agential state power' concerns the acceptance or resistance of actions and policies and the relationships of control inherent in the interaction between the state and interest groups regarding the WRMP issue area.

#### **4. Criteria for Comparison**

Emanating from Rosenau's notion of 'distant proximities', criteria can be identified in terms of which to compare the case studies under consideration. Distant proximities involve, amongst others, the numerous electronic and word-of-mouth inputs that underlie the increasing interdependence of human life in a contracting world. The criteria under the rubric of generic processes are micro-macro interactions; organisational explosion; bifurcation of global structures; weakening of states and territoriality; authority crises and subgroupism. The criteria under the generic institution types are states and interest groups; sub-divided into structures of authority; types of authority and nature of transnationalism. All these criteria were selected from Rosenau (2003) and Rosenau (1997).

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

Processes refer to the dynamics behind the relational and structural elements within and external to the international river basins and the WRMPs in question. These relational and structural elements are indicators of the way dynamic processes have shaped the transnational role and involvement of interest groups, and of changes in the actors involved in the water politics of the WRMPs.

###### **4.1.1. Micro-macro Interactions**

Micro-macro interactions involve power relationships. To elaborate, 'people at the micro level want their macro collectivities and institutions to be responsive to their needs and wants, just as macro leaders seek to control—democratically or otherwise—people at the micro level' (Rosenau, 2003: 26). Stated differently, individuals are central to the process of micro-macro interactions through their power relations with each other.

In effect, this description gives an indication of the types of actors involved in micro-macro interaction—i.e. individuals and collectivities as generic actor types. Regarding individuals, three types of persons are identified. The first is the ordinary individual who as a citizen may participate indirectly in micro-macro relations but whose behaviour contributes to the increase of micro inputs. Secondly, the activist, who may be responsible for the initiation of intentional micro inputs. The third type is the leaders or elites who are in charge of macro collectivities. In this respect, macro collectivities refer to 'any impersonal aggregates of people', amongst others interest groups, MNCs, political parties, IGOs, parastatals, government departments, governments and states. The leaders of collectivities are, however, not the only actors that can bring about change in a system. Ordinary individuals can also fashion macro consequences without acquiring legitimate leadership status (Rosenau, 2003: 27). The latter indicates the significance of individuals and their actions in politics.

The prominence of individuals is further exemplified by the involvement of leaders of collectivities. The actions and decisions of these leaders may be a consequence of their own values, leadership and creativity. However, the situations in which their respective collectivities find themselves, are also contributing factors. These situations can generate both intentional and unintentional micro inputs from activists or ordinary people who aggregate into mass publics (Rosenau, 2003: 26). Hence, individuals, whether they are ordinary citizens or leaders of collectivities, are the shapers of micro-macro inputs.

Apart from treating the values, identities, capacities, strategies and interests of individuals as variables, three processes aggregate these elements into the dynamics that shape micro-macro interactions. Unintentional micro inputs take place 'when the values, identities, capacities, strategies, and interests of people are impelled by changing economic, social, or political conditions to alter their attitudes, practices, or behaviour in ways that are sufficiently cumulative to arrest the attention of leaders at the macro level as constraints or demands that cannot be ignored and thus initiate sequences of micro-macro interaction'. Intentional or unintentional macro inputs are brought about 'when the elites of collectivities are impelled to pursue a course of action by circumstances in their environments that have consequences for micro actors and initiate sequences of micro-macro interaction'. Intentional micro inputs occur 'when people purposefully engage in protests, demands, or other forms of collective action that leaders at macro level choose not to ignore' (Rosenau, 2003: 28) (see Figure 7).

The flow of micro-macro inputs introduces, the notion of a 'tipping point'. A 'tipping point' is brought on by any event in the body politic of society, e.g. opinion polls, a disaster, or any other development, that indicates to elites the existence of previously unrecognised aggregations taking place in a sector of political society. Interest group activity can also be a source of 'tipping points' since the role of interest groups, amongst others, is one of the most obvious forms of intentional micro inputs. As non-state actors, these interest groups are furthermore 'standard features of political processes' (Gladwell, 2000; Rosenau, 2003: 28, 30).

To summarise, micro-macro interactions are some of the more inconspicuous features of the political process, since it is a difficult task to trace their origins and to identify the plethora of actors they involve. The large number of actors engaged in political processes, encapsulated by the notion of an 'organisational explosion' in world affairs, do however give some indication of the existence of micro-macro interactions.

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

In recent years, there has been an explosion of 'voluntary associations' on the international scene. At the local, national, regional and supranational levels people from all lifestyles are joining efforts 'on behalf of shared needs and goals'. Since many of these activities are occurring at the local level, Rosenau (2003: 56) contends that 'few would argue with the proposition that

the pace at which new associations are formed and old ones enlarged is startling, so much so that to call it an explosion is almost to understate the scale of growth’.

Even so, this ‘explosion’ in associations at all levels has given people the opportunity at the micro level to introduce intentional inputs into macro processes. What then are the reasons for this extensive growth? Rosenau (2003: 57-58) forwards six reasons:

- The continuing proliferation of distant proximities.
- The skills revolution.
- The diminished competence of states. This decreased capacity enables other actors, who press their demands, an opportunity to do so.
- A ‘pervasive cynicism’ toward politics and the governmental process across the entire world.
- The ‘deepening complexity of world affairs [that] has led to more and more specialization, which in turn, has fostered greater reliance on coordinating with like-minded others to pursue common goals.’
- ‘[M]icroelectronic revolution has facilitated the formation of groups, alliances between them, and networks among them’.

To elaborate on the formation of loose coalitions and ‘weak’ interest group networks, Rosenau (2003: 60) argues that ‘it is precisely the weakness of their ties to distant networks that enables people to join them and participate in their organisations’ activities.’ People do not have the time and energy for strong ties, so they feel ‘compelled to limit their ties to those networks that allow minimal involvement.’ This is called ‘the strength of weak ties’, and paradoxically means that ‘the looser the ties that sustain the network, the more does it have the flexibility to integrate with other networks, whereas strong ties heighten network boundaries and thereby foster fragmentation’ (Rosenau, 2003: 60-61. See also Granovetter, 1973).

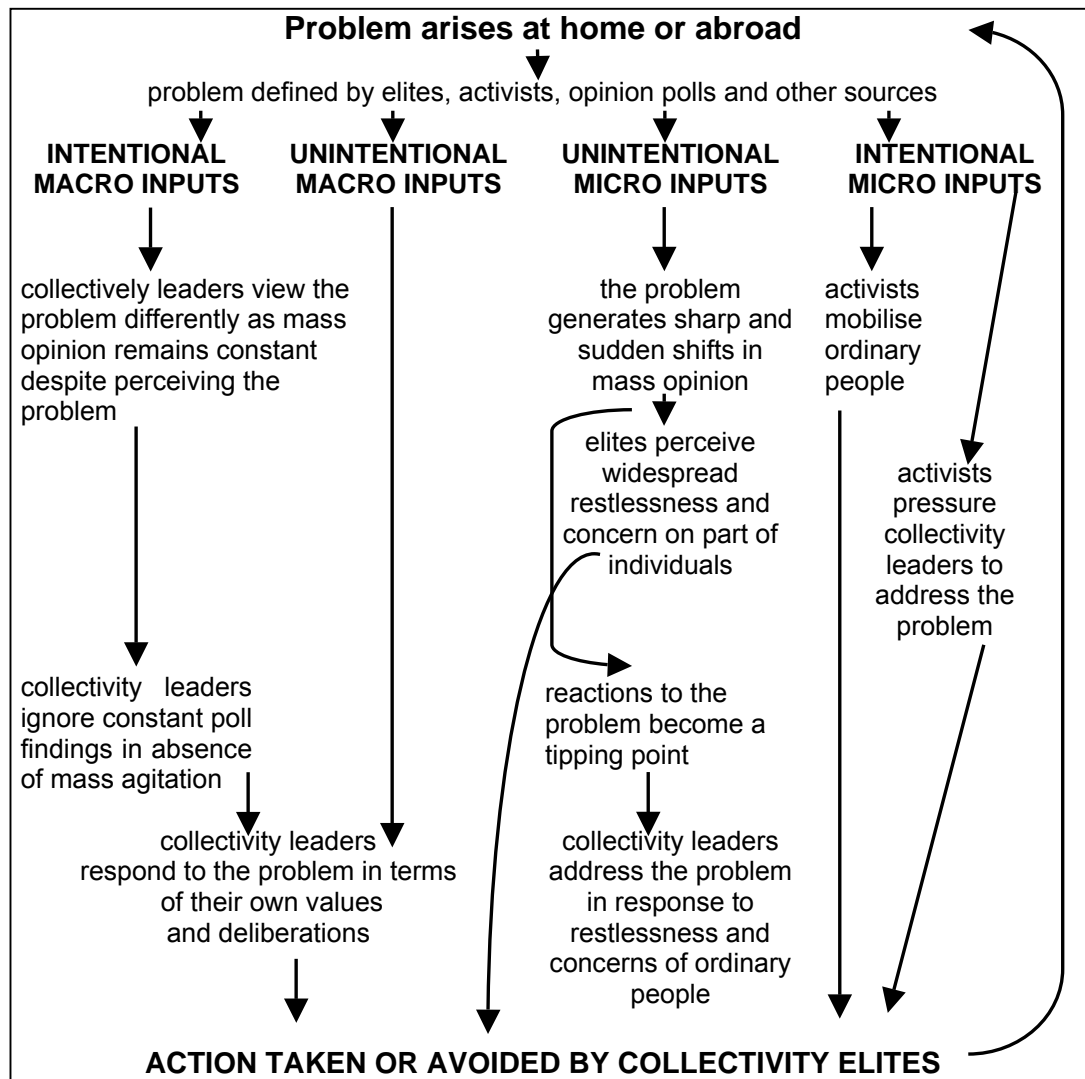
It is thus clear that the international scene has become ever more crowded with actors. In earlier periods and after 1648, these actors were mainly states and intergovernmental organisations. In the contemporary era, the number of actors has been and still is multiplying at an increasing rate. States are still important, but their numbers are dwarfed by the multiplicity of non-state actors, operating to bridge the divide between micro level and their collectivities at the macro level (Rosenau, 2003: 61-62). In short, the ‘organisational explosion’ led to a proliferation of actors that in turn gave rise to a partitioning of the international stage into two worlds.

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

At present a bifurcated global structure exists, namely a world of collectivities in the form of states and IGOs, and a world of NGOs and interest groups. The latter include a wide variety of independent nongovernmental, transnational and subnational (non-state) actors that interact with the actors in the state-centric world on local stages. Although, states may still be prominent players in the course of international and domestic events, the state system ‘is no

longer as predominant as it once was' (Rosenau, 1997: 49; Rosenau, 2003: 62).

**Figure 7. The flow of micro-macro inputs.**



**Source:** Rosenau, 2003: 29

Two worlds are therefore existing at present: the one is made up of states, their institutions and inter-governmental organisations, with the other consisting of a myriad of non-state entities of every kind and description. These 'two worlds' are 'most of the time interacting as the boundaries separating them are maintained.' Although this interaction is at times violent and at other times peaceful, for the most it is a combination of the two types of interactive modes. The bifurcation of the world has brought about the weakening of states by creating 'spaces' for the establishment or 'consolidation of collectivities in the multi-centric world, and thus for the activation of individuals who have not previously had an outlet for their global or local orientations' (Rosenau, 2003: 62-63).

#### 4.1.4. Weakening of States and Territoriality

As indicated, states are in decline despite counter-arguments that they are still as viable and competent as ever. However, although the state's general competence has diminished considerably, most remain viable. They, for instance, still play an important part in the conclusion of international agreements and in the running of economies. Yet, the key dimensions of their power—authority and legitimacy—have dwindled considerably (Ikenberry, 1996; Rosenau, 2003: 65).

Along with their diminished capacity, their territoriality has also lost its organising focus. This process of 'deterritorialisation' means that states are no longer able to control the flow of persons and ideas across their borders, mainly due to technological advances in transport and communication. More specifically, these advances do not only transcend state borders unhindered, but at best ignore these boundaries completely. Since state borders are 'frayed', 'deterritorialisation' sets in (Rosenau, 2003: 66).

The essence of this phenomenon is encapsulated by Appadurai (1996: 19, 23) who contends that '[t]he very epoch of the nation-state is near its end ... It may well be that the emergent postnational order proves not to be a system of homogeneous units (as with the current system of nation-states) but a system based on relations between heterogeneous units (some social movements, some interest groups, some professional bodies, some nongovernmental organizations, some armed constabularies, some judicial bodies)'. In other words, the 'deterritorialisation' of the state has heralded the twilight of the state, and is bringing about a different order in world affairs where dissimilar entities or actors (of a non-state character) are at the order of the day.

Activists at the micro level have capitalised on the lessening of state capacity. These activists have been directing their protests and demands to economic institutions 'on the grounds that states are no longer as able to shape the course of events as are these [economic] institutions' (Rosenau, 2003: 68-69). In conjunction with the decline of state capabilities, the erosion of state sovereignty, has led to a decrease in 'their ability to claim the final word at home or speak exclusively for the country abroad, and if necessary, to use force in support of their actions at home or abroad that is widely considered legitimate' (Rosenau, 2003: 69). The Large Dam Debate epitomises the sovereignty issue in that it contests the right of any state to develop economically and socially in a manner that it sees fit (Turton, Meissner & Stols, 2003). Since the communities of an international river basin are also involved in the management of water resources (GCI, 2000: 8), the interest groups that voluntarily involve them erode state sovereignty.

Although not a capability as such, sovereignty nevertheless to an extent invokes the state capacity to act legitimately. Even so, although 'most states have not been able to exercise full sovereignty at all times, the myth of states as sovereign has long remained intact'. However, in an era where a plethora of non-state actors are sharing the international arena with states, there are 'uncertainties and contradictions over where, when, and how states can

exercise their sovereign rights under particular circumstances' that pose grave challenges to the notion of states as sovereign actors (Rosenau, 2003: 69).

This is even more so the case when these 'challenges and contradictions' find expression in processes where state boundaries are skirted by electronic signals, air pollution, natural disasters, transnational crime, Internet communication, and transnational interest groups that influence the policies of governments or other actors. In addition, sovereignty is eroded when people do not readily, or in a lessening fashion 'view their states as the object of their highest loyalty', namely when authority crises have set in (Rosenau, 2003: 70).

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

The weakening of states have contributed to the authority crises of governments, epitomised by bureaucratic disarray, executive-legislative stalemate and decision paralysis. This has enhanced the individuals' readiness to utilise new skills to promote own interests. 'To view most states as deep in crisis, in other words, is not to have in mind only street riots and the violence that can accompany them; it is also to refer to crosscutting conflicts that paralyse policy-making processes and result in stasis, in the avoidance of decisions that would at least address the challenges posed by a frangible world undergoing vast and continuous change' (Rosenau, 2003: 72). Authority crises have undeniably led to the enhancement of the jurisdiction and legitimacy, of non-state entities and as a result, have 'contracted the range of national jurisdictions and extended that of local institutions'. Authority crises may lead to people redirecting their loyalty and legitimacy attitudes, and consequently modify the loyalty collectivities are able to command. This, in turn may lead to the emergence of new authority spheres or, to put it more succinctly, to the authority vacuum left by governments being filled by other 'authorities', which are most non-state actors (Rosenau, 2003: 72).

#### **4.1.6. Subgroupism**

As indicated, groups that are part of and active at the subnational level constitute an element of authority crises. This subgroupism originates 'out of the deep affinities that people develop toward the associations, organizations, and subcultures with which they have been historically, professionally, economically, socially, or politically linked and to which they attach high priority' (Rosenau, 1997: 50). Hence, subgroupism is seen as a process whereby actors 'seek out like-minded others in their close-at-hand environment for support and psychic comfort' (Rosenau, 2003: 73).

Subgroupism has developed from and is supported by a number of factors, of which the most important is the 'disappointment with and alienation from' the system's performance. '[Subgroupism's] intensities are the product of long-standing historical roots that span generations and get reinforced by an accumulated lore surrounding past events in which the subgroup survived trying circumstances. Moreover, subgroupism tends to beget subgroupism as

new splits occur in subgroups after they achieve their autonomy' (Rosenau, 2003: 73).

Intense attachments are invoked by a host of subgroups, including interest groups, that leads to a 'politics of identity'. Regarding these groups and identities, Rosenau (2003: 74) is of the opinion that, 'it would seem that as the proliferation of identities and the values of multiculturalism thereby generated become increasingly ascendant throughout the world, states are bound to weaken, with their capacity to sustain broad consensus around shared goals diminished and their ability to concert the energies of citizens in support of policies reduced.' Therefore, the state is weakened by the proliferation and spread of identities that are not linked to the state and the governmental apparatus.

## **4.2. Institutions**

From the description of the aforesaid generic processes, it is clear that a number of institutions form part of or participates in them. As has been noted, two particular institutions are involved in the water politics of international rivers and WRMPs, namely states and interest groups. Both possess agential power and therefore a certain amount of authority depending on their ideological, economic, military and political power, and the relationship between them. Hence, the need to clarify the structures and types of authority of institutions.

### **4.2.1. Authority Structures**

Regarding the relationship between influence, power and authority, Rosenau (2003: 274, 275) observes that 'the more authorities have to resort to the threat or use of force, the less voluntaristic is the compliance and the weaker is their authority'. Taken a step further, habits of compliance also play a role. Authority relationships are dependent on these habits and they are not easily established or maintained because they evolve only through recurred reinforcement. Therefore, '[w]hen compliance habits become frayed or fail to evolve with the continued intrusion of distant proximities, an authority structure is bound to be weak and tenuous' (Rosenau, 2003: 276).

Accordingly, authority relationships can be placed on a continuum that extends from habit of compliance at one end to defiance at the other. 'It follows that the more circumstances move away from the compliance extreme and toward the center of the continuum, the more do processes of persuasion and bargaining sustain the authority relationship, just as the more a situation is located at the noncompliant extreme, the more is power evoked to reinforce the relationship' (Rosenau, 2003: 276). Negotiations will therefore characterise authority relationships of habits of compliance and friendly relations, whereas, authority relations of antagonism and non-compliance will bear witness of increasing coercive use of force.

What then is the nature of the state as an authority structure? First, over the past centuries the authority of the state in domestic and international politics



was supreme except during times of revolution or ‘intense factional conflict’. Micro-macro interactions reinforced state authority by specifying it ‘in constitutions, bylaws, legislative enactments, and judicial decisions.’ These legal elements collectively stipulate ‘the rules of the game whereby politics and governance within a state’s jurisdiction are conducted and thereby serve as constant reinforcements of compliance’ (Rosenau, 2003: 276-277). Second, and related to the first, the state’s authority is endowed with tradition (i.e. bestowed through a combination of moral sanctions, heroic legends, and a superior knowledge basis) that ‘underlie the readiness of its citizens to comply habitually with its directives’ (Rosenau, 2003: 277). Authority crises come about when these traditions are broken down and a normative change takes place that recognise that actors other than states act authoritatively in a domestic context. Thus, ‘[t]he rules of domestic order no longer exclusively involve the state, but rather include global institutions, NGOs, and sub-state actors as legitimate and authoritative entities’ (Mason, 2002; Rosenau, 2003: 277). To summarise, the authority structure of the state is characterised by and based on legal codification and on the compliance of its citizens reinforced by tradition.

What then is the nature of the authority structures of interest groups? Their authority is based on informal as well as formal sources of legitimacy. In addition, the relationships that sustain such collectivities are embedded both in horizontal networks and vertical hierarchies. Networks in particular are an important element in the day-to-day functioning of interest groups especially where an interest group in one country form a coalition or an alliance with like-minded groups in other countries (Rosenau, 2003: 278).

#### 4.2.2. Authority Types

Five different types of authority can be identified namely moral, knowledge, reputational, issue-specific and affiliative authority.

**(a) Moral authority:** Organisations ‘dedicated to alleviating torture, famine, and other forms of suffering are especially capable of generating habitual compliance. Such organisations, if they are successful in garnering support of those in need, are backed by moral authority.’ This type of authority ‘attaches high value to human dignity, freedom, and well-being’ (Rosenau, 2003: 283). Although the moral authority of non-state actors has increased, that of government has decreased. Many governments appear to have lost their moral authority *vis-à-vis* each other and their publics, mainly because of scandals, corruption and policy failures. Although they can still revert to other types of authority, these will be less effective due to a lack of moral authority (Rosenau, 2003: 283). Regarding this, Sankey (1996: 273) contends that ‘in this situation the human rights NGO have to be the conscience of the world, as one government will often be reluctant to make accusations against another because of political alliances, commercial interests or fear of the “pot calling the kettle black”’.

**(b) Knowledge authority:** Authority also has a knowledge base, especially in the case of scientific associations and epistemic communities. Other

collectivities and individuals tend to comply with the recommendations of these associations and communities on scientific issues because their own knowledge on these matters are extremely limited. Since interest groups and other collectivities presently have access to the same information and knowledge as governments the knowledge authority of the state is eroded. 'This proliferation of knowledge authority and the accompanying mushrooming of cynicism toward governments has tended to render any pronouncements they make—no matter how solid the evidence or how advanced the expertise they offer may be—objects of suspicion and ridicule' (Rosenau, 2003: 284).

**(c) Reputational authority:** Many non-state entities have an international reputation that produces habitual compliance among governments regarding the policy recommendations they make. In comparison, governments do not have the same ability to secure habitual compliance through reputational authority. Accordingly, '[t]he lack of trust and cynicism toward politics and governments today makes it very difficult for them to evoke compliance on the basis of a reputation for equity and evenhandedness' and 'for many governments it may well be that this form of authority has eroded beyond repair' (Rosenau, 2003: 285).

**(d) Issue-specific authority:** Non-state entities often evoke the compliance of those they target, based namely on the fact that they have established themselves prominently in a particular issue area, in the process becoming 'experts' on the issue that may fall outside the ambit of governments. Although governments have not lost issue-specific knowledge in areas such as agriculture, finance, immigration and water affairs, the trend towards deregulation and less government has reduced the scope of their issue-specific authority (Rosenau, 2003: 286).

**(e) Affiliative authority:** Affiliative authority has to do with the authority inherent in shared affiliations, through common cultural, ethnic, or religious roots, alongside a sense of being 'a beleaguered minority'. This type is one of the most effective sources of authority on which a collectivity can depend and can rapidly induce habitual compliance. Does this also hold true for governments? '[W]racked with internal division, and lacking a clear-cut external enemy, a number of governments cannot rely on loyalty to their country to achieve compliance with their policies'. To whatever degree, governments may have exposed themselves to the greatest loss of authority because of a breakdown of national consensus and the reduction of national loyalties (Rosenau, 2003: 286-287).

#### 4.2.3. Transnationalism

Throughout the aforesaid discussion of processes and institutions, transnationalism—as ambiguous territorial attachments that extend beyond national borders (Rosenau, 1997: 125)—has been alluded to. Due to these ambiguous territorial attachments, the type of transnationalism between states and interest groups will differ. Nevertheless, '*transnational* behaviour is conceived as derived from a multiplicity of institutionalized and *ad hoc* arrangements through which governments and nongovernmental collectivities

accommodate to each other and, in so doing, come to share responsibility for the course of events' (Rosenau, 1997: 51). As a result, the transnational behaviour of states and interest groups becomes a defining causal factor in world affairs.

Interest groups acting independent from the interstate system are, however, more likely to maintain friendly and cooperative transnational relations with like-minded interest groups than with states (Rosenau, 1997: 134). Similarly, states are also likely to maintain cooperative transnational contact with other like-minded states and inter-governmental organisations, rather than with interest groups opposing them. Thus, interest groups from 'abroad' may be seen as 'others' in the relationship and therefore be ridiculed by government officials and even openly accused of sovereignty breach. Regarding the transnational character of the relationship between governments and interest groups, Falk (1995: 120) contends that '[e]conomic and political elites will not protect the general human interest on the basis of their own values or even through ... enlightened self-interest ... Only a transnational social movement animated by a vision of humane governance can offer any hope of extending the domain of democracy.' This position not only reifies but also enhances the significance of transnational interest groups in world politics.

## 5. Conclusion

In this chapter a framework has been developed with the explicit purpose to analyse the transnational role and involvement, i.e. the agential power of interest groups relative to the state, in the implementation of WRMPs in selected Southern African international river basins. In the second part of the chapter, the agential power of the state was defined and classified. It is noteworthy that the state is not the only actor involved in water politics that possesses agential power. Interest groups can also hold agential power. Yet, this does not imply that if the state's agential power is high, the agential power of interest groups is low. The 'structurationist' approach employed by Hobson notes that non-state entities can exist along with strong states (and *vice versa*), and share the same geographical and political space. States can enhance their agential power if they are reflexive to the social forces (interest groups included) operating in society. Hence, a non-zero sum relationship can exist in the agential power relationship between interest groups and the state.

The framework has the following main elements, namely key components comprising the geographic area, the actors, and the hydropolitical history of the international river basin; agential power; and criteria for comparison.

As a key component of the international river basin, the geographic area has to do with the physical description of the basin. From this component a number of variables can be identified that impact on the transnational role and involvement of interest groups and their agential power. The actor component identifies the different actors involved in the water politics of WRMPs. The HPH component clarifies the ideological mindset of the actors implementing the hydraulic mission.

The agential power of states and interest groups are determined by the sources of power. In the agential power component, Mann's (1993b) four sources of power—ideological, economic, military and political—are applied. A link exists between the four sources of power and the interaction between interest groups and the state concerning the implementation of WRMPs in international river basins. Actor interaction assists in determining the nature and degree of conflict or cooperation between the state and interest groups. States and interest groups can simultaneously be in control of all four sources of power to varying degrees. Through one source or a combination of sources, interest groups can undermine the ability of the state to implement domestic or foreign policies regarding the construction of WRMPs. Contrariwise, the state can use one or a combination of power sources to offset the lobbying campaigns of interest groups that are against WRMPs.

Following the aforesaid, criteria have been identified to compare the case studies. These criteria are divided into two generic types, processes and institutions. Under these two generic types a number of criteria are outlined i.e. 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 state and interest group (the institutions') transnationalism.

In the following two chapters (Chapters 5 and 6), the framework is subsequently applied to determine the transnational role and involvement, or more specifically the agential power of interest groups *vis-à-vis* the state in the WRMPs of international river basins. The following two chapters, therefore, represent the empirical component of the study, focusing on the involvement of interest groups in the politics of the proposed Epupa Dam to be constructed across the Kunene River and the LHWP across the Orange River respectively. In accordance with the framework and in respect of each case study, the first two main elements of the framework will be discussed, namely the key components of the particular international river basin (geographic area, actors, hydropolitical history); and the agential power of interest groups *vis-à-vis* the state, i.e. their role and influence. The third element of the framework for analysis, namely the criteria for comparison, will only be applied in Chapter 7 where the salient features of the two case studies are brought together, compared, and assessed.