

In Troubled Waters Workshop

July 13-15, 2018



Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology
University of Hamburg | University of Cologne

Programme

Thursday, July 12

19:00 Informal dinner at *Brodersen*, Rothenbaumchaussee 46

www.restaurant-brodersen.de/en

pick up at 18:45 in front of your hotel

Friday, July 13

10:00 – 10:30 Workshop Opening by Michael Schnegg & Michael Bollig

Venue: Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology – *Institut für Ethnologie*
Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, West Wing, Upper Floor, **Room 221** (see map on p. 3)

10:30 – 12:00 Session I: Concepts

Frances Cleaver: Critical institutionalism and the unmarked terrain of
governance and believing

Michael Schnegg: The Social Life of Water – Networks, Resources, and
Institutional Theory

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch Buffet by *Traiteur Wille – Fine Cookery*

13:00 – 15:30 Session II: Historical perspectives

Barbara van Koppen: The troubled politics and practices of plural water laws
in Africa

Michael Bollig, Diego Menestrey Schwieger & Elsemi Olwage: Hydraulic Infra-
structures, Rhizomatic Extensions of the State and the Emergence of a
Hybrid Hydro-Scape

Friday, July 13

16:30 – 19:30 City and Harbour Tour with special emphasis on the colonial history of Hamburg (walking tour of about 2.5 km), Talk by historian Tania Mancheno

pick up at 16:15 in front of your hotel; direct transfer to the Restaurant thereafter

20:00 Dinner at *La Vela*, Große Elbstraße 27

www.la-vela.de

Saturday, July 14

09:00 – 10:30 Session III: South-East

Amber Wutich & Melissa Beresford: Uses of Neoliberal Water Policy? Diverse Economic Systems and Everyday Water Practices in Southern Africa

Luke Whaley: Pump Action: Fragments from Waterpoints

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee

11:00 – 13:15 Session IV: West

Emmanuel Akpabio: Understanding the political economy of knowledge interchange between the scientists and policy makers in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector in Nigeria

Margreet Zwarteveen & Jeltsje Kemerink: Sociotechnical tinkering by smallholder farmers as a strategy for circumventing policy control

Carla Roncoli, Ben Orlove, Brian Dowd-Uribe & Moussa Sanon: Between a rock and a wet place: riverbank farming and conservation in the Upper Comoé river basin, Burkina Faso

Saturday, July 14

13:15 – 14:15 Lunch Buffet by Traiteur Wille – Fine Cookery

14:15 – 15:45 Session V: South

Björn Volland: Democratic chiefs and nepotistic democrats: Evidence from rural Namibia

Richard Kiaka, Diego Menestrey Schwieger & Michael Schnegg: The Moral Price of Water in Rural Namibia

16:15 – 18:45 Afternoon activities to choose from and to be arranged, such as

- Alster Boat Trip: www.alstertouristik.de/English/home.html
- Elphilharmonie Plaza: www.elphilharmonie.de/en/plaza
- Museum of Art and Design Hamburg (MKG): Museum of our transcultural Present: www.mkg-hamburg.de/en/exhibitions/current/mobile-worlds.html
- Deichtorhallen: Seven decades of street photography: www.deichtorhallen.de/index.php?id=536&L=1
pick up at 16:00 in front of your hotel

20:15 Dinner at Schnegg's & Pauli's place, Wrangelstraße 22

pick up at 20:00 in front of your hotel

Sunday, July 15

10:00 – 12:30 Closing Discussion moderated by Schnegg and Bollig

13:00 Lunch at Portonovo, Alsterufer 2

www.ristorante-portonovo.de

pick up at 12:45 in front of your hotel

List of Participants

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Abstracts

Frances Cleaver, Department of Geography, University of Sheffield, UK

Critical institutionalism and the unmarked terrain of governance and believing

This presentation begins by briefly characterising Critical Institutionalism and tracking the ways that this school of thought has developed in the literature over the past 5 or 6 years. Regarding the concept of institutional bricolage, there is a strong uptake of the ideas about bricolage as blending and adaptation, particularly where the concerns of the authors are with policy and development interventions. However, the importance of beliefs and meanings in the form of moral ecological worldviews and their relation to authority and to social and natural orders are relatively under-developed. Here I begin to map out the intersecting domains of relevance to understanding of governance, belief and moral orders: the domestic and public relationships of everyday life; the functioning of institutions; and the politics and policies of natural resource governance. A focus on these seems important for understanding the outcomes of the functioning of institutions from both social justice and environmental governance perspectives.

Michael Schnegg, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Hamburg, Germany

The Social Life of Water: Networks, Resources, and Institutional Theory

During recent decades, the value of water has profoundly changed in rural Namibia. Inspired by global policies, the government largely transferred the responsibility for providing and managing water from the state to local user groups. In doing so, the state turned water from a public into a common good. To govern the ‘new’ commons, the state urged communities to develop formal institutions that follow Elinor Ostrom’s design principles. Those principles include formal organizational structures, fixing boundaries, paying proportional to use, and implementing monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms. More than 20 years after this process began, the social realities that emerged in the pastoral communities we study could hardly be more different from policy blueprints and design. Unlike intended, specific institutional regimes rarely exist. In contrast, water is mostly governed situationally. A closer look at social relationships helps to explain why this is so. In the communities we study, water is a social good. The sharing of water cannot be separated from sharing in other domains, including food, pastures, and ancestries. Thus, it is impossible to think of rules for water alone. To explore this multiplicity, we introduce the concept of institutional multiplexity, which describes the overlap between distinct domains of sharing, and is measured via social network analysis. Looking at the multiplexity of sharing ties allows to explain why formal organizational structures are not maintained, boundaries not enforced, sanctions not practiced, and payment is not per use. While institutional multiplexity hinders the implementation of formal institutions by design, it opens alternative ways for governing the commons. The ‘new’ water institutions we find follow ‘old’ social and moral principles.

Michael Bollig, Diego Menestrey Schwieger & Elsemi Olwage, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Cologne, Germany

Hydraulic Infrastructures, Rhizomatic Extensions of the State and the Emergence of a Hybrid Hydro-Scape

Recent theories on institutional dynamics often neglect the material aspects of institutions that are dependent on specific technologies placed and in a particular landscape. Infrastructures entrap people, their aspirations and their social strategies to control and monitor the exploitation and distribution of natural resources. Such infrastructures have deep histories and ‘contain’ sediments of past community-state engagements. We here take the emergence and maintenance of a hydro-scape in northwestern Namibia as an example. Before the 1950s the area was characterized through the paucity of permanent water-places. All in all there were about 30 permanent water points in an area as large as Switzerland. Between the 1950s and the 1980s the South African Apartheid administration drilled hundreds of boreholes in that area. Initially local traditional authorities had rejected the idea of water development through borehole drilling. They felt clearly that once such a complex and expensive infrastructure was operational the state was there to stay and was the guarantor of the basic hydro-infrastructure for the vast herds of livestock herded in the region. Vociferously the state’s representatives were blamed for the state’s vicious and cunning way to lure people into such entrapping arrangements. The request of the administration to finance part of the drilling program through the *stamfonds* was flatly rejected. The elders of the 1950s and 1960s had a clear idea on power asymmetries and dependencies. The state financed a burgeoning drilling program and within three decades nearly 300 boreholes were drilled. The administration furnished these boreholes with pumping technologies, wind pumps and diesel pumps. A vast network of roads connected these boreholes, roads that not only facilitated the maintenance of boreholes but also helped other state functionaries and army staff to move in this vast area. The state had come to stay and the water infrastructure was a major means to facilitate this.

Since the early 2000s these boreholes are handed back to the community. The idea is that self-reliant communities will manage these boreholes sustainably and that the state will only get involved once major repairs are necessary. While handing back the physical infrastructure to the communities, the administration attempts to prescribe the institutional infrastructure connected to the borehole. The structure of water point associations, water point committees and rules and norms along which such bodies are meant to operate are advertised.

This contribution explores the history of the infrastructures that establish the peculiar hydro-scape of north-western Namibia. It will show that the state was from the beginning a key agent in this hybrid- landscape and that there is no way to excise the state from the infrastructure it once established. Communities and the state are mutually entrapped by boreholes.

Barbara van Koppen, International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Pretoria, South Africa

"The troubled politics and practices of plural water laws in Africa"

In contrast to the strong recognition of legal pluralism in land tenure, the plurality of water laws has received very limited attention, especially in Africa where states' permit systems are often seen as the only existing normative system to allocate water resources. Water law reform since the 1990s under the banner of IWRM further revived permit systems. Tracing the history of permit systems in Africa, this paper shows how colonial powers introduced permit systems for a minority of whites while vesting ownership of water resources in colonial rulers, while explicitly marginalizing African water use and management. Recent water law reform consolidates this colonial dispossession.

The paper further substantiates the notion of local water law in rural areas by describing some key features emerging from literature, including recent insights in both the WASH and irrigation sub-sectors, each focusing on their mandated single water use, about the prevalence and capitals intrinsic to communities' own investments in infrastructure for self-supply. Local/customary water law is found to be shaped by combinations of gender- and class-specific:

- a) territorial claims to the resource
- b) prioritization rules for sharing this common-pool resource within and across territories
- c) hydraulic property rights creation' through sustainable communal or household infrastructure development for self-supply, typically for multiple domestic and productive uses.

Seeking to overcome the administrative siloes between water and land tenure; between water allocation and water infrastructure development; and between the WASH and irrigation sectors, the paper concludes with two sets of policy implications. Water legislation should target permits as regulatory tools (so without entitlements) to the few formal, high-impact users, while redesigning formal entitlements and allocation priorities according to constitutional and/or human rights norms, including gender equality, and aligning elements of local law. Public infrastructure development or rehabilitation should take local self-supply for multiple uses as the starting point of planning public investments

Amber Wutich & Melissa Beresford, School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Arizona State University, USA

Uses of Neoliberal Water Policy? Diverse Economic Systems and Everyday Water Practices in Southern Africa

This literature review examines how diverse economic systems and everyday water practices have emerged in the wake of neoliberal water policies in Southern Africa. To begin, we discuss neoliberal water policy in Southern Africa. We examine global trends in neoliberal water policies, and then briefly discuss how these have been enacted in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland. In particular, we focus on the privatization/commoditization of water and water citizenship. We review the impacts of

these policies on water institutions, water insecurity, and water poverty. In the next section, we turn to our theoretical framework, which bridges the economic scholarship of James Ferguson and JK Gibson-Graham. Specifically, we ask what unexpected outcomes might have resulted from the implementation of neoliberal water policies in Southern Africa. Following Ferguson's (2010) work on "the uses of neoliberalism," we discuss ways in which neoliberal policies have been embraced in Southern Africa, and the relevance of this for water economies. Following Gibson-Graham's (2008) work on "diverse economies," we explore ways in which neoliberal policies may have opened up new opportunities for integrating non-market and market practices in diverse water economies. We then propose a framework that bridges Ferguson's work on neoliberalism and Gibson-Graham's economic work to explore diverse water economies. Following this, we review the ethnographic literature to highlight three types of economically-diverse water systems and practices: reconceptualizations of water ownership, entrepreneurship, and individualizing water technologies. In the section on water ownership, we explore the privatization of communal water sources, marketization of social network ties, and metering through the lens of governmentality. In the section on entrepreneurship, we discuss everyday practices such as selling well water, vending water from trucks, and social entrepreneurship. In the section on individualizing water technologies, we review the literature on bottled and sachet water, point-of-use filtration, and sanitation. We conclude with a broader discussion of the implications of neoliberal water for diverse economic systems and everyday practices throughout the region and globally.

Luke Whaley, Department of Geography, University of Sheffield, UK

Pump Action: Fragments from Waterpoints

The rural water supply sector in Africa has become increasingly concerned with the sustainability of waterpoints. This concern moves away from a more singular preoccupation with securing overall levels of infrastructure coverage. It is said there is a 'hidden crisis' whereby at any one time roughly a third of waterpoints are non-functional. As a result, the focus has turned to understanding the technological and social causes of this crisis. In this presentation, I reflect on insights from current research into the sustainability of rural waterpoints in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Malawi. Our discussion moves beyond the technomanagerial framing that has typified research to date. Instead, I offer a number of 'fragments' pertaining to questions of gender, religion, witchcraft, and everyday political economies at the waterpoint. Through these fragments, I reveal the richness and complexity that characterises the problem of functionality. These insights have implications for meeting many of the challenges set by the Sustainable Development Goals.

Emmanuel M. Akpabio, Department of Geography and Natural Resources Management, University of Uyo, Nigeria

Understanding the political economy of knowledge interchange between the scientists and policy makers in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector in Nigeria

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) services are critical public health issues, which are best handled by the State through public financing and regulatory mechanisms. But how do State agents or policy makers cooperate with scientists in addressing WaSH challenges in Nigeria? This paper examines the relationship between scientists and policy makers in relation to water, sanitation and hygiene management in Nigeria from the prism of the political economy. The study depended on elaborate and secondary review of institutional arrangements and process mechanisms for the production and communication of scientific knowledge/data in the policy domain. Much emphasis was paid on the political interests/commitments, economic incentives and the enabling platforms for transmitting available scientific data into the policy domains as well as the extent of utilization of such data in framing enabling policies in the WaSH sector. Additional methods of data collection came from the researcher's fieldwork experiences in the WaSH sector and in depth interviews of relevant interests. The study also benefitted from discussions from two public lectures delivered by the researcher at the University of Uyo (May 31st and June 21st 2016 respectively) on this theme. The two public lectures attracted top government and policy makers in the WaSH sector, academics, students and members of the civil society groups. Findings demonstrate extremely poor and complex relationship between the scientists and policy makers reflecting in poor utilization of scientific data in framing public policies on WaSH matters. Most WaSH policies tend to be driven from dominant international agenda with minimal or no inputs from the local scientists. Politics of service, economic interests of public servants and a lack of capacity at individual, institutional and science domains theoretically and empirically accounted for the observed findings. It is argued that the inability of WaSH related policies to benefit from local scientific inputs potentially limits progress in achieving and evolving local solutions to WaSH challenges in Nigeria in particular and sub-Saharan Africa in general.

Margreet Zwartveen & Jeltsje Kemerink-Seyoum, UN-IHE Delft Institute for Water Education, Department of Integrated Water Systems and Governance, Delft, The Netherlands

Sociotechnical tinkering by smallholder farmers as a strategy for circumventing policy control

Because of its notoriously capricious nature, water in agriculture seldom neatly follows policy directives (Kemerink, 2015; Zwartveen 2015; Bakker, 2004). The question of how to more effectively measure and control water flows therefore receives much attention in contemporary water debates. In this paper we take issue with how much of this attention remains firmly premised on the belief that it is possible to accurately account for and regulate water from a distance: water that escapes stipulated plans, prescribed rules of control, designed infrastructures or visible decision-making arenas is by definition conceived

as water lost or wasted, reflecting a failure of regulation or management. We instead propose that this ‘lost’ or ‘wasted’ water provides a promising entry-point for re-thinking water behaviour: it allows understanding water flows as importantly shaped by the everyday practices of those directly using and managing it. We provide some iconic cases of such practices to argue that these constitute forms of sociotechnical tinkering through which ‘universal’ institutional models or technologies are adapted to specific contexts. While this appropriation thus makes technologies or institutions ‘work’, it also changes them: through sociotechnical tinkering, local actors modify, and sometimes contest or circumvent official allocations. Identifying these acts of sociotechnical tinkering from the perspective of those engaging in them may therefore help identify pragmatic spaces for progressive social change or resistance to forms of control and domination (cf. Haraway and Harvey, 1995: 514; see also Kuper et al., 2017).

Key-words: irrigation, smallholder farmers, water infrastructure, institutions, socio-technical, water reforms

Carla Roncoli (Emory U); Ben Orlove (Columbia U), Brian Dowd-Uribe (U of San Francisco) & Moussa Sanon (INERA, Burkina Faso)

Between a rock and a wet place: riverbank farming and conservation in the Upper Comoé river basin, Burkina Faso

This paper focuses on riverbanks as important, but often neglected, constitutive elements of the waterscape. Since they are not bounded in any natural way, riverbanks do not easily fit into broadly shared classifications of space and are often sites of struggle over rights, norms, and meanings surrounding water resources. We draw on political ecology, mixed-method research conducted over 10 years in the Upper Comoé river basin in Burkina Faso, an area known for social tensions surrounding water resources. Local water users include small-scale farmers who cultivate the riverbanks using river water to irrigate their crops. Their numbers have increased significantly in the last decade due to a government program which has provided farmers with moto-pumps at subsidized rates to promote food security and economic growth. At the same time, government and NGOs blame these farmers for water scarcity and riverbed siltation and target them with interventions to establish riparian buffers, efforts that have mostly failed and even fueled social conflicts. To explain these unintended effects, we examine two interrelated disjunctions: a) the politically-driven inconsistencies across environmental and economic policies for managing the riverbanks and b) the culturally-embedded differences between scientific and local knowledge systems that shape social actors’ engagement with the waterscape to which the river and the riverbanks belong.

Björn Völlan, Marburg Centre for Institutional Economics, University of Marburg, Germany

Democratic chiefs and nepotistic democrats: Evidence from rural Namibia

We experimentally analyze two main attributes of local political leaders, namely their procedural fairness preferences and their engagement in preferential treatment of relatives or friends regardless of merit. Our main focus is on testing theoretical considerations that democratically elected leaders should outperform appointed traditional village chiefs in those two domains. In addition, we deployed an incentivized social preference task and standardized surveys on local governance perceptions. Our sample consists of 64 leaders and 384 villagers in rural Namibia, where democratically elected leaders (Chairperson of the local Water Point Association) and traditional chiefs co-exist within the same village. Our results contradict common assumptions of democratic decentralization processes as traditional chiefs are slightly more likely to implement fair, democratic decision making and that they are also less likely to act nepotistic. Moreover, we find support that differential selection into office is not driving these results, as elected leaders and chiefs share similar fundamental social preferences and personality traits. Rather, we find a substantial discrepancy between planned and de-facto democratic institutions at the local level in Namibia paired with villagers' perceptions of chiefs being legitimate and upward accountable.

Richard Kiaka (U Hamburg), Diego Menestrey Schwieger (U Cologne) & Michael Schnegg (U Hamburg)

The Moral Price of Water in Rural Namibia

In Namibia, the institutional framework for governing the rural water infrastructure has profoundly changed during the last decades. Following a community-based water management (CBWM) strategy, post-independence policies transferred the responsibilities for providing water from the state to local user groups. This turned water from a public into a common good, and today all pastoral communities have to cover the costs for water collectively. In this article, we explore the economic consequences these developments have had. Our analysis reveals that CBWM puts a significant burden on all households. At the same time, those effects differ across the Kunene region. While the poor pay a high share in the northern part of the research areas, in the south, they find ways to resist. Our analysis reveals that the moral economies can account for those differences to a significant degree. Communities in the north are characterized by very strong reciprocal patron-client networks, which give the poor relatively little power to oppose pricing rules preferred by their wealthy neighbors. By contrast, social networks are based on sharing norms and are much more egalitarian in the south. Along with other factors, those differences help to explain why the poor find it much more difficult to resist their wealthy neighbors in the north than in the south. In the end, the actual price of water differs across the region and depends on the moral economies people live by.