

An introduction into interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary water governance research

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November 5, 2015, Autumn School (morning session)

What to expect from this morning?

- Learn more about ‘doing’ research with a focus on communicating science to ‘outsiders’
- This introduction:
 - Why is this relevant or important when doing water governance research?
 - What are characteristics of research that is relevant to policy and practice?
 - Based on discussion session with the resources management group at IUSF

Water governance research – an interdisciplinary field (Patterson et al, 2013)

- Encompassing societal (political, social, economic, institutional) and ecological dimensions
- Cuts across disciplines, each of them having their own traditions, perspectives, understandings and approaches

Interdisciplinary research

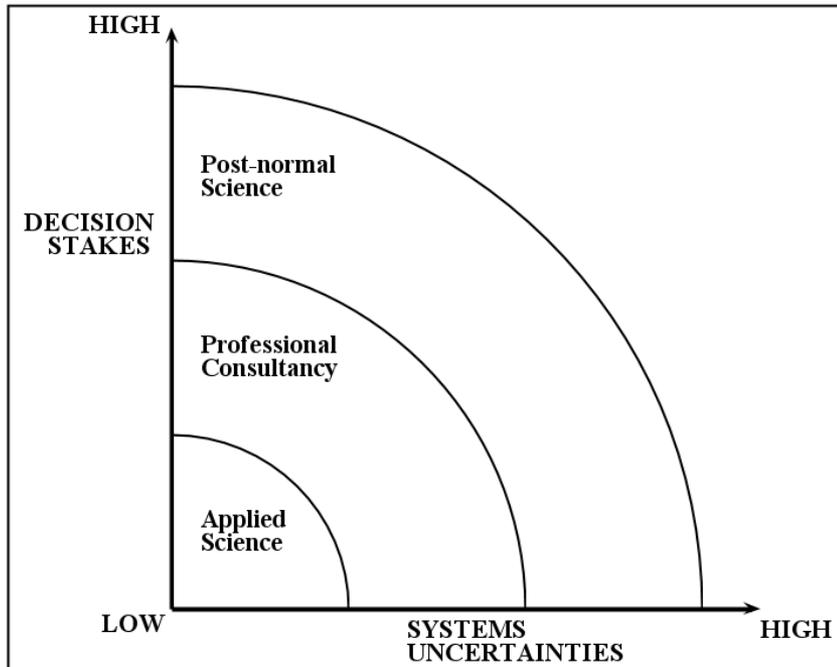
- The production of research that involves the transcendence of or crosses (traditional) academic or disciplinary boundaries (e.g. Aram, 2004 In: Wesselink 2009; Bridle et al, 2013)
- Small versus big interdisciplinarity (Bridle et al, 2013)
 - Big: Collaboration between distant disciplines, e.g. natural and social sciences
 - Small: collaboration between similar disciplines, e.g. public administration and organization sciences

Why interdisciplinary is not enough (Jahn, 2012)

Post-normal science (Funtowicz and Ravetz, 1990, 1991, 1993)

High uncertainty (facts) due to longterm nature of issue (e.g. climate change)

High stakes – urgent decisions – values in dispute



Mode 2 knowledge production (Gibbons et al., 1994)

- Mode 1 (traditional)
 - Researcher-driven
 - Focused on academic knowledge production (not bothered by the applicability of findings)
 - Discipline-based
- Mode 2: multidisciplinary teams working together for short periods of time on specific problems in the real world
 - Context-driven
 - Problem-focused
 - Interdisciplinary

Transdisciplinary research

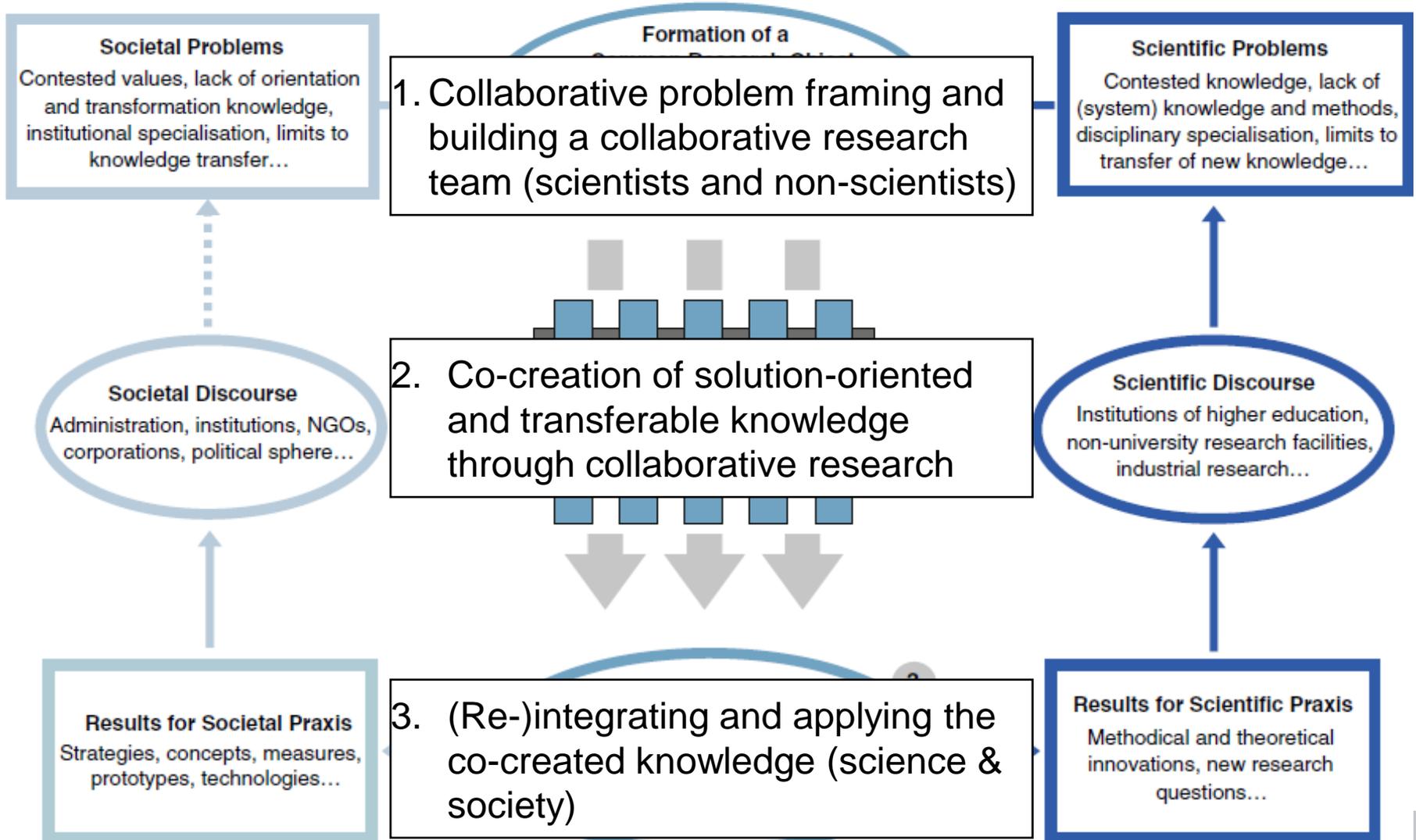
- Water governance research deals with complex, societal ('real') problem situations → *How to produce knowledge that is relevant to science, policy and practice?*

- Move beyond academic disciplines
- Incorporate **non-scientific knowledge** or **non-academic actors** in the research process

Transdisciplinary research (Jahn, 2012; Patterson, 2013; Angelstam et al, 2013)

- Starts of with complex societal problem (applied practice, joint problem formulation and solving)
- Involves scientific actors (cooperation between various scientific disciplines and fields) and non-scientific actors (science-society)
- An approach (not a theory or methodology) that does not replace disciplinary practice
- Producing peer-reviewed knowledge AND influencing policy or practice, with the potential of enabling mutual or transformative learning

A transdisciplinary research process (Lang et al, 2012; Jahn et al, 2012)





Thank you!

Questions? Suggestions? Comments?

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