Synthesis and summary of the Autumn School sessions

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Day 1 (morning) – Introduction to water governance and comparative analysis

- What Claudia explained:
  - Failures, definitions, concepts, research domain
  - Trends, diagnostic approach, complex and adaptive systems
  - Governance modes, gaps (OECD study), polycentricity, path-dependence, etc.

- What we discussed/questioned:
  - When does governance fail?
  - Polycentricity, centralization, decentralization
  - Scientific ‘buzz words’ develop faster than practice adopts new ideas; plans without implementation
  - Inclusion of normative aspects?
Day 1 (afternoon) – Participant presentations

- Many qualitative studies, some comparing a larger number of cases
- Wide variety of research themes:
  - Irrigation, urban water management, international/transboundary cooperation/agreements, polycentricity, participation, justice, reforms, climate change adaption, power, collective action, social networks, Water Framework Directive, governance assessment, infrastructure investment, learning, nexus
Day 2 (morning) – Frameworks (focus on SES framework)

- What Claudia (B) explained:
  - Variety of frameworks, each of them helping to answer diverse research questions
  - IAD framework and the SES framework
- What we discussed/questioned:
  - Follow-up research: how are frameworks applied in practice? (not included in Binder et al paper)
  - Where to place values?
  - How to improve the GoSES database
Day 2 (afternoon) – MTF framework

▪ What Claudia (PW) and Christian explained:
  ▪ Background of the framework (adaptive and integrated water management)
  ▪ Focus on action situations with possibility to visualize development over time or policy phases

▪ What we discussed/questioned:
  ▪ Application of MTF to urban water management
  ▪ How to define an action situation, how to weight them?
  ▪ Where to include development of technology?
  ▪ How to study ‘power’ using the framework?
Day 3 (morning) – Property rights

- What Insa explained:
  - Ownership ≠ property (right to use a thing)
  - Water rights, bundles of rights, gaining rights, development and changes of property rights
  - Common pool resources (common property resource does not exist) and property rights regimes
  - Land and water grabbing

- What we discussed/questioned:
  - ...
Day 3 (afternoon) – Water management in Eifel-Rur region

- What Antje explained:
  - Rivers and reservoirs in the region
  - Organisation, laws and duties/responsibilities
  - Projects (river restoration, reservoir management) and stakeholders
  - Strengths and weaknesses of the governance structures

- What we have seen:
  - Results of river restoration
  - Open-cast mines
Day 4 (morning) – Philosophy of science, causality

- What Peter explained:
  - Philosophy of science, ontology, epistemology
  - Types of explanations, theories of causation
  - Continuum from positivist to post-positivist and interpretivist
  - Critical realism (Peter’s position – meanings are causes, focus on events, mechanisms, structures)

- What we discussed/questioned:
  - Inter, multi, cross, trans disciplinarity
  - Ostrom – a positivist approach
  - Combining ontologies
Day 4 (afternoon) – Comparative research design

- What Peter explained:
  - Comparison in interpretivist, positivism and critical realism
  - Most similar and most different design (vary system), Mill’s method of agreement and difference (vary outcomes)
  - Primary / secondary / tertiary cases (situations)

- What we discussed/questioned:
  - When do we commit to an ontology? – Articulate and explain
  - Where does ontology come from and how does it change?
  - What is a structure? What is a conceptual model?
Day 5 (morning) – QCA approach

- What Stefan, Joanne and Christian explained:
  - QCA as a case-oriented, set-theoretic approach, balance between number of aspects and number of cases, formalizes and systematizes comparison, iterative process.
  - Outcome of interest, necessary and sufficient conditions
  - Indicators, thresholds, aggregation, decisions…

- What we discussed/questioned:
  - Philosophical underpinnings of QCA
  - Contextualization, aggregation, number of cases versus conditions, variation of outcome and normative aspects, …
Day 5 (afternoon) – QCA techniques

- What Stefan and Christian explained:
  - From data matrix to truth table
  - Contradictions, limited diversity, consistency and coverage, ‘solutions’ (patterns to an outcome), interpretation
  - Challenges – many choices, need for documentation!

- What we discussed/questioned:
  - Decisions to be made – a subjective process
  - Causality in QCA – a matter of interpretation
  - What is needed before getting started?
Operational definition of 'sustainable use'

- Ecological: environmental quality, natural resource protection & risk avoidance in as far as related to observed rivalries (cf. 'good status')
- Economical: economic consequences of ecological degradation or improvement and of measures taken
- Social: social consequences of ecology and measures taken
Day 6 (morning) – Governance assessment

- What Hans explained:
  - Extent and coherence, public policy, property and use rights
  - Boundary spanning, integration of sectors
  - Governance Assessment Tool

- What we discussed/questioned:
  - IAD framework – focus on spontaneous governance and interest of public administration researchers in government
  - Relations/interactions between qualities
  - Translation of observation into recommendations and action
  - Inclusion of normative/ethical aspects (focus on supportiveness towards policy implementation, effectiveness)
Day 6 (afternoon) – Infrastructure, technology and institutions

- What Rolf explained:
  - SES framework (not model or theory) – focus on sustainability, policies, self governance, actor-centric
  - Importance of technological and socio-economic drivers
  - Economic perspectives, neo-classical, new and original inst.
  - Alignment of technology and institutions (related to levels)

- What we discussed/questioned:
  - How to include infrastructure in the SES framework?
  - What is a focal action situation? (Core coordination problem)
  - Applicability of critical transactions framework
Day 7 (morning) – Transdisciplinary research and communication

▪ What Joanne and Sören explained
  ▪ Inter- and transdisciplinary research
  ▪ Message box and the ‘so what’ question
  ▪ Power of visuals – emotional brain

▪ What we discussed/questioned:
  ▪ Defining a common problem – mismatch between societal problem and expertise of the scientist
  ▪ Incentives and motivations for inter/transdisc. Research
  ▪ Interest of the journalist and the researcher – what happens to your message when it is ‘out there’?