In Pursuit of the Effective Water Governance

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Abstract: - This paper combines the work from two case studies to draw some conclusions about the negotiated context of 'multi-level governance' on water resource management issues. The context is set up on the literature about Water Governance and in terms of the European Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). The cases are described focusing on the ttranslation from strategy to practice (Wales and England) and the learning process in the shadow of hierarchy (Greece). This comparison, brings out some of the differences between the type of intermediary work (Greece - systemic network learning; UK- specific alignments/arrangements) but also points out the crucial role of intermediary actors as a tool to facilitate an effective water governance. The paper concludes on the importance of the intermediary actors from the perspective of an effective water governance, how they reveal (often hidden) strategies of working within dominant structures, and therefore the need to develop context sensitive understand of how relevant strategies can be developed.

Key-Words: Water Governance, Intermediariry, Environmental Businesses, Water Resource Management

1 Introduction

A recurrent theme in the literature on water and river basin management concerns the need for effective institutional arrangements.

Historically, barriers such as weak and sector-specific legislation, fragmented administrative structures, exclusive decision-making procedures, inadequate financial resources, and entrenched organizational cultures have separated the water resource management and the other sectors of society and economy.

Following the Earth Summit in 1992, there have been numerous calls for governments and their agencies to reform their institutional arrangements and to adopt more integrated, holistic, or ecosystem-based approaches for sustainable water management.

The EU Water Framework Directive is arguably one of the most significant manifestations of this. Moreover the importance of the effective governance arrangements on the water sector have been widely acknowledged. Danish Prime Minister and EU President Anders Fogh Rasmussen [1] in his speech in 2002 clearly reflected EU's new approach: "*The water crisis is a crisis of governance. This initiative* (the EU "Water for Life" International cooperation initiative) *promotes better water governance arrangements and transparency, building stronger partnerships between governments, civil society and the private sector.*

Effective public services are a basis for sustainable water governance."

But to what extent are new developments and institutional innovations achieving the ideals of an effective water governance? Are innovations in public participation, public - private partnerships, collaborative planning, systemic learning, adaptive management, market-based incentives, networking and other alternative systems of governance starting to address the inherent challenges, and what might be the value of other concepts such as social capital, intermediaries and social learning?

2 Theoretical Context

2.1 Water Governance

As yet there is no agreed definition of governance. The concept of this ambiguous term varies widely from a very restrictive World Bank definition which is much more concerned with the economic aspect of governance to include those issues which are concerned with human and civil rights. Rhodes [2] alone has identified seven common uses of the term, ranging from New Public Management to governing through networks.

On the other hand, Rogers and Hall [3], gives a widely accepted broad definition of *water governance* which refers to the range of political,

organizational and administrative processes through which communities articulate their interests, their input is absorbed, decisions are made and implemented, and decision makers are held accountable in the development and management of water resources and delivery of water services.

The basic principles of effective governance include participation by all stakeholders, transparency, equity, accountability, coherence, responsiveness, integration and ethical issues. But such a set of principles or objectives, cannot be achieved by governmental or intergovernmental activity alone. It requires co-operation or even better partnership between government and civil society, including NGOs (professional associations, ecological groups, educational bodies, religious organisations, etc.) which represent the broad diversity of interests in any given society. Equally key is the network of links between civil society and economic system prevailing in a given country. The efficient governance requires transparency and accountability, participatory mechanisms appropriate to local realities, needs and wishes, and respect for the law and contractual obligations. Water governance encompasses many interlinked social players and must be responsive to citizen's needs and to the long-term sustainability of the natural resource base of the country and region [4].

2.2   The Water Framework Directive

The European Council, having accepted the water crisis as a crisis of governance and in an attempt to introduce a sound background to meet the principles of an effective water governance, introduced the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC - WFD). This Directive, offers a new challenge to water governance and presents an opportunity to enhance interaction between water stakeholders. As a result, the implications of the WFD's implementation formed the major focus of several interesting dialogues in certain regions of Europe where such practices were almost unknown (e.g East and Southeastern member states).

Many experts claim that institutionalizing river basin management in accordance to the WFD will require substantial changes to the established modes of water governance. It is argued that water governance in the EU will in future need to be more open and transparent, inclusive and communicative, coherent and integrative, accountable, equitable and ethical, and thus, efficient [5]. A parallel synthesis process, with continuous co-ordination and integration of "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches is required to ensure that the implementation of any water related policies and

plans can satisfy the Water Framework Directive's objectives [6] Moreover, examples from the international experience show that in order to enhance the democratic mechanisms in the water sector and to improve the societal learning, particular attention needs to be paid to putting ideas into practice and learning from experience through networks and partnerships [7].

2.3 The *"Intermediarity"* Context

The governance literature focuses on how organisations such as intermediaries, can reconstitute modes of policy development and delivery. Additionally, the process towards a sustainable water management, seems to require knowledge and learning processes to take place at different levels. Furthermore, the learning processes might be a key issue for businesses, public administration and organisations that operates under such a framework.

Intermediary organisations can be defined as interest groups operating between the state and the market who, in addition to the pursuit of their own interest, contribute via their intermediary functions to the provision of public goods (in the broadest sense) in response to perceived state or market 'failure'. Accordingly, such organisations attempt to enable the development and uptake of new technologies and changed social practices within the production-consumption relationship to reshape the intensity, timing and level of water use and wastewater production [8]

Under this aspect, any organisation, either a private company, NGO, governmental agency or social network that meets the above principles, function as an intermediary, influencing the water governance arrangements in various ways.

3   Translation from Strategy to Practice

3.1 UK (England and Wales) and North East of England Context

Since the privatisation and liberalisation programme was initiated across England and Wales in 1989, water and sewerage services in the North East of England have been provided by a private company, Northumbrian Water which is owned by a consortium of international financial institutions. There are three regulatory bodies overseeing the activities of the water company: the economic regulator, Ofwat, the environmental regulator, the Environment Agency and the water quality

regulator, the Drinking Water Inspectorate. Alongside these bodies, Water Voice acts as a representative of consumer interests.

In recent years, governance of water in the UK has been transformed through processes of privatization, liberalization, internationalization and increased environmental regulation [9, 10, 11]. The UK is often portrayed as having fully embraced the free market with complete privatization and extensive liberalization of the water sector in 1989, making it something of a 'laboratory' of water governance. Although it is certainly unique in the extent to which private capital plays a role, the UK water sector is also paradoxically heavily regulated and indeed increasingly so due to unease about the effects of privatization [12].

The evermore dynamic nature of the water sector has led to greater disputes over the roles and values of 'water' in society. Indeed water can be seen as a contested entity which draws to it a diverse range of actors who use and imagine it in very different ways. It can be a social good, a fuel for life, a resource for industry, an environmental treasure, or a simple commodity to be bought and sold. As a result the UK water sector should be seen as increasingly complex and contested place in which a high number and wide range of actors compete for their interests in the resource.

3.2 Environmental businesses, intermediaries and sustainability

Given this context, achieving greater sustainability is not merely complex but also contingent upon reforming and coordinating the actions of many different actors. Thus far discussions around sustainability in academic and policy-making circles has tended to focus either on the influence of activist organizations -such as environmental groups or charities-policy and regulatory frameworks or the actions of the 'culprits' themselves, usually big business but sometimes the individual consumer, and the ways in which they are resistant to change. But what are we to make of the contribution made to sustainability by an increasingly apparent yet little studied type of organization in the UK, the environmental business? Such actors are usually dismissed in these discussions because of the very fact that they are businesses – that they driven by profits not 'ideals'. Or that superficially they might be seen as being mere providers of technology or technical knowledge and not involved in 'politics'. A closer look reveals, however, that their contribution is both more nuanced and more significant because such

actors play crucial roles in mediating society's use of environmental/ natural resources –in helping us achieve a more sustainable use of our resources. After all they are located at the interface of society with the environment: it is they who are often involved in the everyday realities of actually realising environmental change, in reforming business and societal processes and practices on the ground, in localised contexts.

So how are we to understand the roles they play in water governance? We argue that the term intermediary is a useful means of conceptualising the work of environmental businesses because it focuses our attention directly on the roles they play in the difficult interactions between 'business' and the 'environment'. By seeing them as intermediaries translating between these often conflicting interests and logics, we can conceive of their work as being about re-framing relationships between environmental resources and economic and societal practices on the ground and thus forging pathways to sustainability. Or to put it another way they have the potential to act as a bridge between society and the environment.

But how do they do this? Superficially they might be seen as being providers of technology or technical knowledge to reform business and social processes. However, what our research reveals, through seeing them as intermediaries, is that to fully grasp their contribution, we have to understand that their work is as much about the 'social' as it is about the technologies and expertise they inevitably apply. To apply these –to bring about changes in processes and practices- they have to re-position people, link them together, make them see the to make them see the relationships between societal practices and water in different ways. This requires a variety of what we could call intermediary skills: to re-position people, link them together, through their ability to speak in different 'languages' to different types of people - to persuade, to engender trust in different contexts of the water sector.

3.3 From Strategy to Practice

To expose these processes we look at the work of a small environmental business within the North East of England. The company was formed in 2000, and between them the two founders, have 40-50 years of working in the water and chemical industry sectors. Both are committed to pushing the case for a more sustainable use of resources in both sectors, whilst retaining the necessary pragmatism to survive commercially. In other words, this is not about performing the role of environmental activists: "We learnt very quickly that if we went and talked about

environmental improvement or sustainable development they saw it as cost. And that is the UK –if it is green it is expensive". As a result, translating environmental improvements, appears to be about avoiding talking about the environment and instead "making the business case" for their actions. So in the business world environmental improvement is sublimated– through business and industrial improvement – saving money, making processes more efficient.

But they do have to present themselves differently at different times to achieve change in processes and practices: "it's a bit of a cliché but we present ourselves in a way that that particular customer would see that we could meet their needs – within the context of 'we're good at what we're good at', we're not going to tell people we're something we're not". So to organizations with more commercial interests they portray the company as an actor capable of making their business more efficient. They sum up this performance with the line: "We manage the industrial water cycle. We optimise the industrial water cycle; we reduce costs". To actors with a technological innovation focus, they emphasise their ability to understand technology and turn it into a commercially successful product: "we can turn the theoretical knowledge, the abstract, into hard-nosed, on the ground business propositions".

Their work on the ground also involves building trust, re-framing views and building consensus to overcome resistance to external advice from those who work in businesses/ factories. There is a sense that they are seen by employees as being either "a threat", in that they may question the quality of the work being done, or that their knowledge is not to be trusted, in that they are incapable of knowing the way a plant is working better than those who work with it everyday. This leads to contests between employees and company over the very nature of processes within a plant: how well a technology is treating the wastewater, whether the workers operating it could do so in a more efficient manner, or whether a new technology would work better. Such is the potency of this resistance company identify it as a major obstacle to increasing the sustainability of the sector. This resistance is further complicated by the fact that there are divergent views within companies on how things are being done and they could be improved upon.

So how does the company go about defining their work given such a competition of viewpoints, what –intermediary- roles do they play? The first thing they have to do is find out what the problem is and determine how improvements can be made. The

techniques and tools they use to assess the performance of equipment in such situations are not unusual –"you can find them in a textbook": flow measurement and chemical sampling to assess wastewater treatment processes are, for example, standard practices. However, what they believe to be the key in this situation is ascertaining the full range of –conflicting- views present in the company, "going around the site chatting to the operator, chatting to the foremen, and so on" to gain a sense of the realities of how the plant is operated and move closer to defining how it can be improved.

By doing this, and talking to people they often find that the "way the kit or technology is working on the ground is very different from the way people say it is working. The chairman has one view of it, the operator another and the foremen yet another." It is only by talking to everyone and assessing machinery if necessary, that they can understand the full range of factors affecting the performance of a plant; to build up a complete picture of the plant, its components and how they interact with each other. Their main role here seems to be one of adopting an 'impartial' holistic approach to the running of the company, "standing back from the details", one which is permitted to them because of their position as 'outsiders' who are not inhibited by designated roles within the running of the plant. Through these interactions they are able to detect the causes of problems within the plant, areas for improvement, where processes aren't working as well as they should due to 'technical' and 'social' problems and thus better define the nature of the service they believe they should provide.

If we look at the range of relationships in which the company is operating we can perceive main types; between the regulator and the regulated; between the operational level and the strategic level of the water and chemical industry; and finally between actors searching for skilled providers of services and the skilled providers of services themselves. In these relationships company act, in their own words, as "negotiators", "facilitators" "bridge-builders".

These can be illustrated by a few examples:
Operating between the regulated and the regulator
The Environmental Agency almost expects organisations like this company to help them translate environmental regulations into practice; to provide the case for change in patterns of consumption of water and production of wastewater to SMEs, who don't have the resources or in-house expertise to carry out the changes themselves. They have the expertise to present the business case for efficiency and general environmental improvements

and the means of achieving them. The Environment Agency doesn't. Here the intermediary role is one of "making the relationship work", "bridge-building" between the environmental regulator and a particular type of regulated user, the SME.

Operating between operational and strategic levels of water and chemical industry

These are "two groups of people that tend not to understand each other" so they attempt to create new conversations between these actors. An example of the work they might do between these two types of actors would be translating the overall objectives of a technology such as an environmental management system into what it actually means to the people who work on the ground.

Matching service providers to clients

Here they help to source organisations for clients, bridge-building between two types of actor who are always looking for each other but often can't find each other –creating conversations between actors. They use their knowledge of the sector –their resource of 'contacts'- to provide clients with details of people who can perform services or provide technology they require to solve a problem – translating technology and knowledge.

4 Learning in the Shadow of Hierarchy

4.1 Water Governance in Greece and Volos Region

In Greece, the link between water management at all different levels of governance is often disjointed, conflicting and strictly top-down. A top-down policy making and implementation, combined with the absence integrated long-term policy, characterize the water resource management as a whole. Decisions concerning the national planning are taken by the central governmental agencies, or, at the local level, by the responsible municipal authorities. The local/regional social actors are totally excluded from the problem-solving process, a situation that according to Mayntz [13] depicts the lack of dialogue and negotiation.

The Municipality of Volos, one of the largest urban agglomerations in Greece, is located in the Prefecture of Magnesia, part of the Thessaly Region, in central Greece. The most considerable pressures on water resources result from the high seasonal volume of water used for irrigation and to meet the demand of tourism, the relatively intense industrial activity and the considerable household wastewater discharges. The dominance of the municipal water utility and the total absence of dialogue between the stakeholders characterize the water/wastewater sector in Volos, like in the majority of the Greek cities. However, there is an increased interest of new actors, such as private companies, non-governmental organizations and university institutions, which attempts a dynamic entrance into the water market, influencing its existing monopolistic structure. In the future these actors could play a more decisive role by making potential openings in the context of technological and institutional change. It is still difficult though to identify and assess the impacts of the actors' practices on the environment, economy and technology, due to their short-term presence and current weak role.

The water governance in the Municipality of Volos follows the Greek general framework, being responsible to an extent, for the weakness to solve the local water related problems. These problems mainly concern the inadequate water quantity and quality during the summer period and the pollution of the underground water reservoirs from the uncontrolled disposal of the industrial and agricultural wastes. Conflicts between neighboring municipalities on proprietary rights, constitute another important problem of the area.

The obstacles, limiting any efforts to solve the above-mentioned problems mainly derives from the local water governance system itself. The municipal water utility (DEYAMV) is the main competent authority for policy planning and implementation. In the past, DEYAMV had displayed little interest even to consult other key stakeholders of water management in the region, highlighting the apparent lack of any forms of dialogue and bargaining. Today, the local civil society, the local NGO's, the University and the citizens' organizations still play a limited role. Moreover, there is a lack of information flow from the utility to the citizens and the citizens' awareness degree remains at a very low level. Additionally, the willingness to actively participate towards problem resolution is hampered by weak links between the actors, lack of co-operation and collaborative action and often, even distrust.

Within the given institutional framework which is characterised by strict top-down water management policies and hierarchical decision making, a unique, for both the Municipality of Volos and Greece, an *informal network of actors* involved in the water sector was established in the region (DYPOM). This network was set up as an experimental pioneer forum to discuss and approach critical water management problems in a different, more participatory and innovative, way. The chapter

concentrates on the opportunities for learning within the network, but always under the given hierarchical governance structure of the water sector [14]. We focus on this critical issue, following the intermediary concept and mainly investigating what functions of intermediarity have emerged *within* and *outside* the network. Overall, this chapter focuses on the network as an intermediary, which dares to bring together a range of diverse and heterogeneous actors of water, encouraging the development of common perceptions and mutual actions on local water management problems. It should be noted though, that several of the network's members perform important intermediary functions on their own, as individual entities, something that shouldn't be confused with the role of the network alone.

4.2 Learning to Change

As mentioned above, water infrastructure and resource management in Greece has traditionally been shaped by the central government and ministries and at a lower scale by regional and local authorities. Traditional forms of command and control approaches and hierarchical structures are still dominant at all levels-scales of governance concerning the water sector (local, regional, national). In each respective scale there is usually one powerful principal actor, which becomes usually powerless in higher scales [15]. DEYAMV for example, is undoubtedly the dominant actor at local level in Volos metropolitan area; however its impact at a regional level is limited, to reach the point of non-existent at national scale. Despite the apparent absence of elements of strong "governance" [16], some different "styles" of governance have been developed –or better they are under development- in niche sectors, in the "*shadow of hierarchy*" (Medd et al, 2004). It seems that local governmental bodies and DEYAMV actively support such a shift, but without putting at stake their dominant role.

According to data collected during the meetings between the actors within DYPOM and the conducted interviews in Volos, it is also apparent a *selectiveness of governance* [8] to the actors involved, the issues addressed, the policy fields targeted and the options considered. The efforts made by local intermediaries, are extending the scope of governance (for example the promotion of innovative technologies and social practices) but in a fragmented way and based mainly on individual motives, rather than in common action fields. Recently, there is an obvious willingness from DEYAMV to open a broad dialogue, again selectively though, but in general, top-down policy delivery is dominant and DYPOM has a minimal impact on policy planning, development, delivery and implementation.

The most important contribution of DYPOM at the local governance structure is that constitutes a pilot for new forms of horizontal and democratic governance. Since the beginning of its operation the basic idea was to establish a horizontal network, where all the actors should have an equal role and power, through the processes of dialogue, exchange of views and shared leadership. In reality, each actor has a role depending on its potential and its experience for each respective emerged issue and action. Moreover, there are already some actors who are influencing more the whole operation of the network (etc DEYAMV) either because they are more institutionalized or they have important experience on water management issues.

It seems though, that the intermediaries in Volos are weak counter-responds to certain needs, partially because of the inability of the utility to meet these needs alone. The driving forces are primarily environmental concerns, market needs and technical / technological support to the utility's actions. The added value of DYPOM, in this field, concerns mainly the empowerment of the intermediary nature of those actors participating in the network. The members of DYPOM are working together more often now, while the context of networking is still unknown. However, common actions are conceptions more familiar to them. It is also impressive that all intermediary actors were positive to undertake common action, share opinions and knowledge, built mutual trust and set up a basis for more open-minded approaches to the existent problems. Even DEYAMV seems willing to give away (very carefully though) some of its formal "power" within an informal network. Additionally, after the establishment of DYPOM there is a general expectation that the network can function as a step for dialogue, enforcing the involvement of more actors and creating more intermediary spaces. In general the intermediaries, try to bridge gaps between the utility and the consumers by remarking the emerged problems and by participating to the network's actions. On the other hand, according to the members' quotations the main factors hampering the development/activation of the intermediary actors are mainly the centralized institutional structure, the absence of cooperative climate and the fragmented exchange of knowledge.

4.3 A "shadowy" shift of governance arrangements?

DYPOM is a novel model of organization aiming to provide more democratic and horizontal modes of

water governance in a hierarchically structured policy environment. However, despite the relatively lengthy operation of the network, activities in the shadow of hierarchy and vertical power relations are still dominant. At this point the organizations participating, proved that they can initiate a dialogue that will eventually create those conditions required for horizontal forms of governance, where citizens will have access to relevant knowledge and information. Although, the expectations for a deep change in the local water governance are in practice rather limited, what does appear to have radically changed is the knowledge and skills acquired by the network members as the result of a learning process with their active involvement. This process could be an important precondition to subsequent shifts in modes of governance. Actually, the case has shown that up to now, the public is not only isolated from the procedure but also uninformed or misinformed. DYPOM has successfully proved that such a form of networking gives birth to a "cultural" background for further negotiations which can lead to local, regional or even national policies that supports the success of sustainable environmental objectives.

DYPOM has already undertaken and accomplished a series of common actions. However, the most important procedures are taking place *within* the network. For the first time, all the involved actors have accepted to undertake such actions, share responsibilities and open a broad dialogue between themselves and the society. Moreover, new problems have been identified and conflicts have been softened, while the exchange of knowledge between the members of DYPOM is significant. Intermediarity has been an emblematic issue not only for the intermediary functions of the network between the participants and the society but also for the intermediarity within the network. Applying this concept to analyse the activities and processes within the network contributed to better understand the forming procedures of the relationships between the participating organizations under different powers, responsibilities, targets and points of view.

The quality of the so far received knowledge mainly concerns learning, on specific water/wastewater related problems within the network. More specifically, exchanged knowledge complies with new water management practices and policies, new technologies and experiences from other countries. Also, through this bargaining process the views of the participated actors have been highlighted and the dominant actor (DEYAMV) made important steps to improve its profile and move closer to the society. Nevertheless,

there is a slow pace of learning, which is a general characteristic of the Europeanization process of the Greek society as a whole. However it is rather encouraging that the members of the network show an important willingness for further learning and participation in common actions.

However the future of the network, is still unclear. Its members are willing to maintain and further evolve DYPOM, but currently there is an ongoing discussion, focused on the redefinition of the actions and aims of the network. It seems that only the "core" members which have participated since the beginning actively in all actions, are those who support the further evolvement of the network. Moreover, the so far experience has stressed that any future actions should be re-oriented and be concentrated on the different social and economic local groups (households, SME's, industries, farmers). It is also important that through the action learning the participants have detected new points of awareness mainly concerning the water consumption of public enterprises who haven't yet complied with the new water management practices.

There is a clear skepticism concerning the potential of DYPOM to create those conditions for the empowerment of its members' role and the involvement of more local actors into the water management process, leading to general change of the local water governance structure. At this initial phase it seems to happen only because the network itself gives space for the participation of new actors into the process of water management. This role of DYPOM could be further encouraged under some certain conditions such as the change of attitude (culture) of each member, a new institutional environment and clear incentives given to the active participants of the network's common actions.

Summarizing, it could be said that there is an expectation that DYPOM could potentially play an important role, concerning not only the facilitation of knowledge on sustainable water management practices in the area but as a catalyst on the slow change of Greek water governance. At this phase, the local community perceives DYPOM as a weak but nevertheless innovative practice for the Greek reality, which should be implemented in more sectors and –possibly- in a more systematic way, supported with governmental aid.

5   Conclusions

Although the two cases refers to different types of intermediary actors and to different sets of actions

(UK - a private company which combines environmental and commercial targets, Greece – a social network under a learning process), some conclusions can be drawn on the importance of the intermediary actors from the perspective of an effective water governance.

It is argued that we must look beyond the "visible" functions of intermediary organisations and take a nuanced view of their contribution, as such actors play crucial roles in mediating society's use of environmental/ natural resources, helping to achieve a more sustainable use of our resources in a way that meets the requirements of an effective water governance.

After all both cases pinpoints that intermediary organisations, no matter their type, are located at the interface of society with the environment (society's use of the environment): it is them who are often involved in the humdrum realities of actually realising environmental change- in reforming business/ social processes and practices on the ground. And to achieve this –to bring about changes in processes and practices- they have to do more than merely give some 'practical tools' to realise environmental objectives. They attempt to re-position people, link them together, make them see societal practices and environmental resources in a different ways This very general –but nevertheless crucial role- requires a variety of what we could call intermediary skills; the ability to speak in different languages to different types of people; to persuade, to engender trust and succeed in doing so, in very different contexts. Thus their work is fundamentally concerned with transforming/ reconfiguring a number of relationships: between individuals within organizations; between a range of different types of organizations; between technologies and those who operate them.

The Greek cases pinpoints that even in places where the whole water sector is characterized by many weakness that do not allow the development of a strong society with strong ties with the environment –and thus hampers the intermediary functions- organizations can *learn* to intermediate where they are most needed even when direct benefits are not apparent. Thus they challenge the dominant logics and enhances mainly participation, transparency and responsiveness in a way that - slowly but decisively- leads the whole water governance sets of a region to new, more effective arrangements.

On the other hand, the case of Cookprior points to the potential space or necessity for businesses with intermediary skills, in societies where the water sector is privatized and commercialized. Still they are bound by context –environmental values of water are largely secondary. Water as a commodity means to a great extend that the path to sustainability is through economic savings.

Overall, it can be said that such organisations play vital roles but they are often limited. Indeed one of the limitations of intermediarity is that intermediaries can often only practice what society preaches. So in some ways we can say that societies get the intermediary actions that they deserve, according to their current water governance arrangements and the societal needs.

As such, the organisations are trying to intermediate in between different spaces, according to what society needs: bridging of environmental and commercial interests in a liberalised sector in the first case, knowledge and participation in a strictly hierarchical and inflexible sector in the latter. Their overall objective –what they are actually pursuing- doesn't really matter, as their actions in the given water governance structure, greatly affect change.

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