



Reconciling interests and positions



The implementation of the Renewable Energy Directive has negative effects on water quality and land rights of smallholder palm oil producers in West Kalimantan

Water dilemmas

Scarcity of water, water quality, water security, energy provision, food security and ecosystem services are all examples of water dilemmas in which multiple stake-holders with different interests make competing claims over the same resource. How these dilemmas have come about, are currently managed, and might be managed in the future recognising the increasing uncertainties that climate change brings, are all questions related to water governance.

Conflicting interests and positions

A key insight from CADWAGO is that enabling e.g. water security is more than being attentive to conflicts of interests between stake-holders. It is also about recognising that different 'position holders' make competing claims over who should have agency in the enactment of water governance. A water dilemma therefore must be viewed with attention to its qualities as an interest dilemma as well as a position dilemma.

Robbing Peter to Pay Paul

To help stakeholders reflect on the water dilemma and the potential side-effects of their governance actions, CADWAGO researchers developed the RP3S idiom: 'Robbing Peter to Pay Paul' in a Situation. This refers to: 'Take away from or cause

harm to one person in order to pay or confer something on another; to discharge one debt by incurring another'. The harm inflicted or debt incurred was for purposes of CADWAGO interpreted to link to an interest in a material asset or condition, as well as to who has agency in the enactment of water governance. The situation, or CADWAGO narrative, is the environment that is shaping the operationalisation of the governance action, reflecting on:

- The existing framing of water governance;
- The institutional environment; and
- The governance praxis

RP3S fosters a critical reflection of past, current, or future water governance actions by revealing interests that gain or are harmed and those positions whose agency is constrained or empowered. It was successfully used to facilitate a workshop with Sustainability Development Coordinators of the Baltic Sea Region in Sweden.

Through this reflective process different constellations of stakeholders, who operate outside the pre-existing structures, can be empowered. This may pave the way for water governance transformations that can lead to new modes of climate change adaptation that enables those with limited agency to act.

Insight for Europe

The uncertainties of climate change offer an opportunity to transform water governance in Europe by reconciling conflicts of interest without reproducing pre-existing norms and structures.