Desecuritization as a Foundation for Benefit-Sharing: Lessons from the Okavango River Basin

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Why should I worry about the future? What is in it for me?

The only thing we can change is the future. We are also going to live the rest of our lives there…. So we better get it right!
Layout of Presentation

• Okavango River Basin
• Securitization
• Desecuritization
• Benefit-Sharing
• Conclusion
Shared River Basins

Africa’s shared river basins contain:

- 61% of the area
- 77% of the people
- 93% of the water

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MEAN ANNUAL RAINFALL

= 860 mm isohyet
= World average rainfall

SADC Average Annual Rainfall = 948 mm

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WATER TRANSFERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

- Existing water transfer scheme
- Proposed new water transfer scheme

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Okavango River Basin and Makgadikgadi Catchment

Map sourced from GEF Report on Okavango Delta Study
Angola
Namibia
A rich diversity of life

Botswana

Botswana
Securitization

- Linkage between perceptions of national security (survival) with water security
- Driven by a specific Threat Perception
- Shifts water resource management out of the domain of the Technocrat into the domain of the Securocrat
- Data becomes classified as Secret
- National interests dominate the agenda
- Regional integration is undermined
- Zero-sum in outcome
Desecuritization

• Politicization of water resource management
• Changed posture based on different Threat Perception
• Shifts water resource management back into the domain of the Technocrat
• Data becomes accessible and institutionalized
• National interests redefined in terms of regionalism
• Regional integration is stimulated
• Plus-sum in outcome
Benefit-Sharing in the Okavango

- Cold War theatre of armed military confrontation
- Downstream reliance on ecological flows
- Upstream need for rapid economic development and post-conflict reconstruction
- Possibility of paying upstream country not to develop the resource
- Needs robust institutional arrangement
- Parallel National Action Approach
Parallel National Action Model

Supra-National

National Level

Sub-National

OKACOM

OTHER

Water

Other

Water

Other

Water

Other

Water

Other

Water

Other

Water

Other

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AWIRU
Possible PNA Model for OKACOM

OKACOM
(National Commissioners)

Technical Committee
(Engineers)

Basin-wide Forum
(Grass-roots representation)

Inter-ministry Policy Coordination Unit

Energy

Tourism

Rural Development

Angola

Namibia

Botswana

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It is the normative aspects of the Policy / Legal Environment that enables Social Capital to be developed. This defines relationships and is the key for Benefit-Sharing.

The water-energy nexus is particularly pertinent in the Mekong in light of the recent ADB report.
Benefit-Sharing in the Okavango

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