

# Sustainable Urban Water Management

Lecture 4: Governance & SUWM

# Outline

- water management developments in Europe
- water management as a multi-dimensional governance issue
- from government to governance
- theories on decision-making
- dealing with complexity
- application of concepts in an International context

# Developments in water management



From: **mono-thematic, technocratic** approach

To: **integrated water resource management**



Link to  
Lecture 1  
in this  
module

SUS  
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From a city alongside  
the river...

...to a river within the city.



**SUS**  
**TAIN**

# Developments in water management

From top down technocratic management to an integrative approach to water management

Instead of one organization with technical experts, managing water becomes a multi-stakeholder, multi-level, multi-issue process



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**TAIN**

# Water management as a multidimensional governance issue

➔ Combining thematic areas:

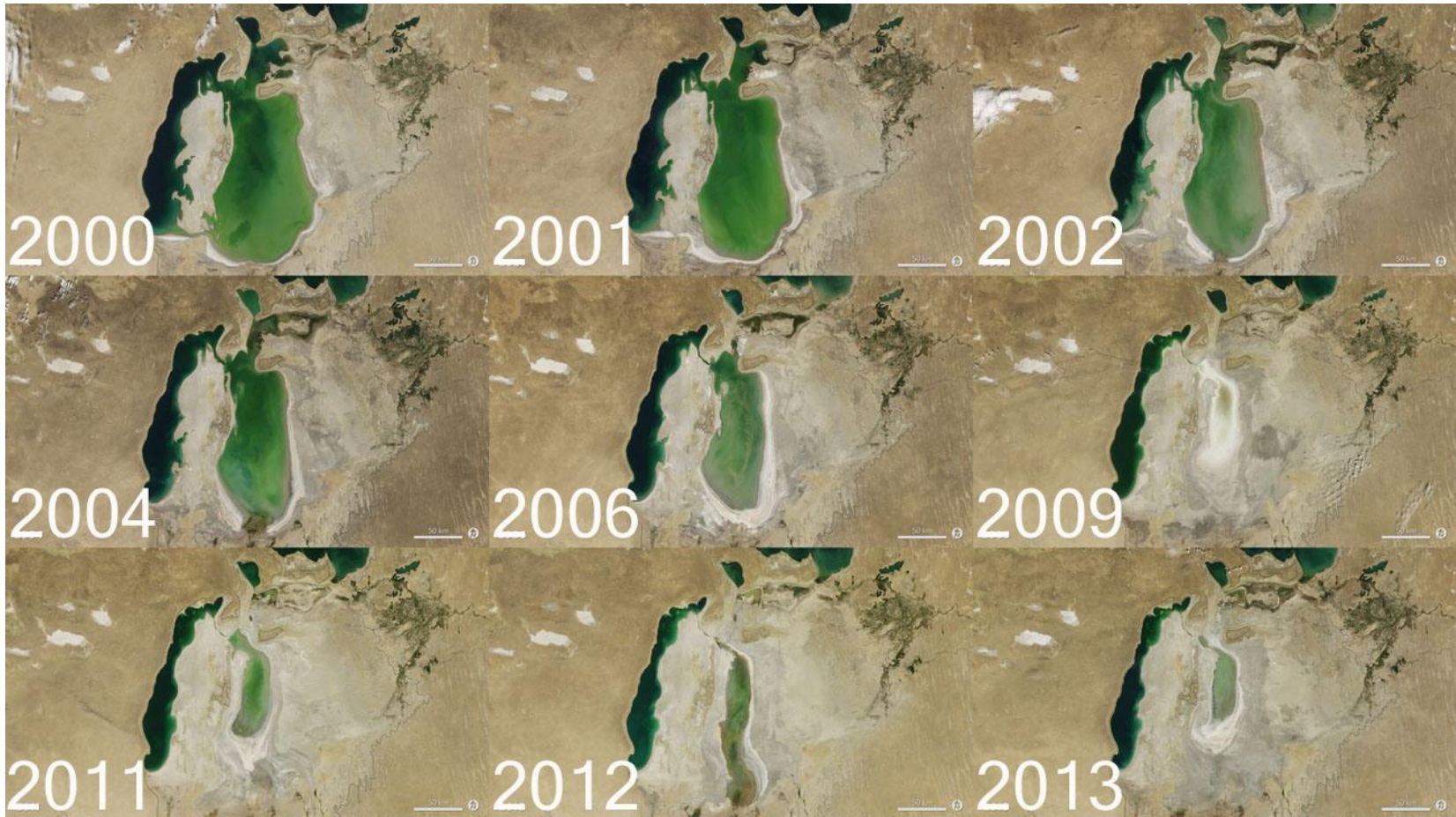
- spatial management
- Economy
- Ecology
- Infrastructure
- Surface water & sanitation/health

# Water management as a multidimensional governance issue

➔ Combining various levels:

- Local
- Regional
- National
- International (transboundary)

# The decline of the Aral Sea





# The decline of the Aral Sea



# Theoretical background

- From **government** to **governance**
- Rise of complexity

# Governance

κυβερνάω (*kivernáo*) = to steer

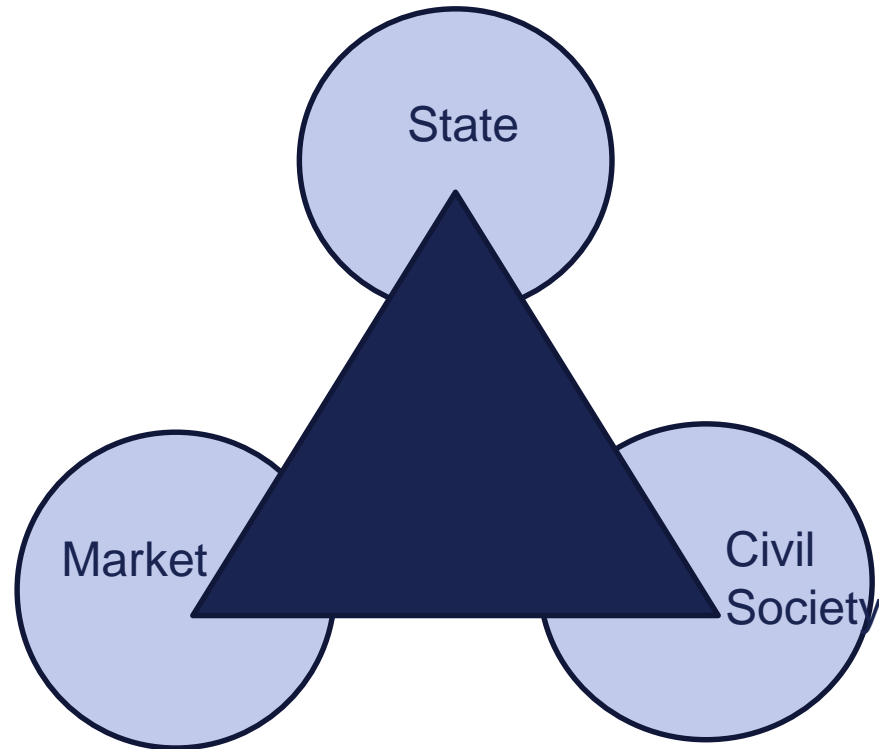
# Classical concept: *government*



# Characteristics

- Elected politicians decide
- Representative democracy
- Unicentric decision making, integrating (all) interests
- Hierarchical decision making and implementation
- Classical bureaucracy
- Closed process

## Hierarchical: Top-down



# Why is this classical or hierarchical model of decision making often criticized?

- Real life decision making is NOT a rational process
- Too technocratic
- Not adaptive to changing circumstances
- What is democratic? (representative vs deliberative democracy)

# Decision-making: Closed process

Advantage:

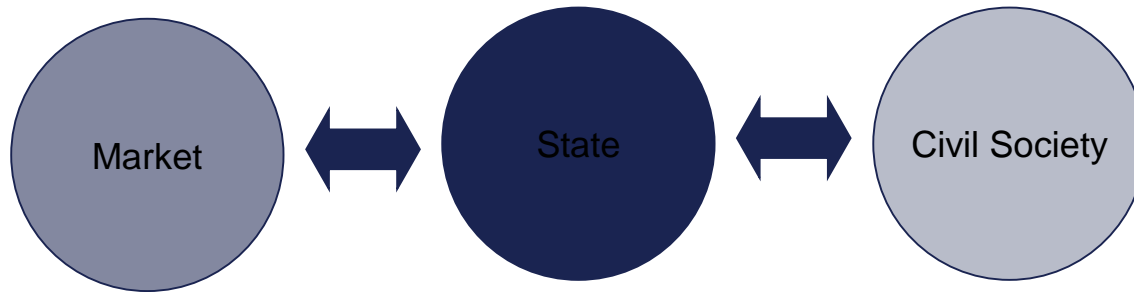
- Short and smooth decision making process

Disadvantage:

- Generates resistance
- 'Implementation failure'.



# Horizontal approach to decision-making



# ‘From *government* to *governance*’:

- Various stakeholders (state, market, civil society):  
**pluricentric**
- Ambiguity: different problem perceptions
- multitude of viewpoints, domains, levels
- Deliberative democracy
- Strategic interactions, negotiations
- Decision-making seen as a complex process of different parties – not linear
- Networks



# Decision-making: Open process

## Advantages:

- Pluriformity, a 'rich' process
- More support for policies, reduces chance on implementation deficit
- More democratic (?)

## Disadvantages:

- Lengthy decision making processes
- Risk of vague compromises

# The rise of Complexity in Water Governance

- *Multi-issue, Multi-stakeholder, multi-level*
- *Non-linearity*
- *Ambiguity*
- *Fragmentation*

# The rise of Complexity in Water Governance

A recent water governance definition:

“Water governance is defined by the political, social, economic and administrative systems that are in place, and which directly or indirectly affect the use, development and management of water resources and the delivery of water services at different levels of society. Importantly, the water sector is a part of broader social, political and economic developments and is thus also affected by decisions outside of the water sector.”

(Edelenbos, Bressers & Scholten, 2012)

# A governance approach to multi-dimensional water issues:

- Takes into account the **complexity** (political, social, economic, administrative) of water issues
- Takes into account the **multi-level** characteristics (local, regional, transboundary)
- Takes into account the **fragmented** nature of water management
- Aims to build **connective capacity**

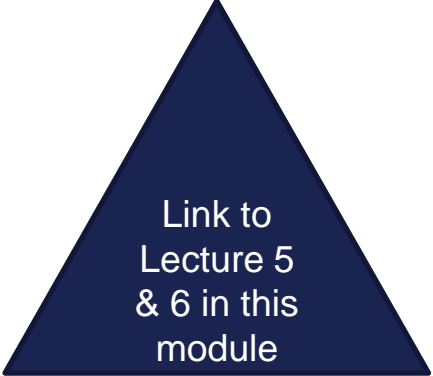
# Connective capacity

The capacity to connect to domains, levels, scales, organizations and actors (with differing perceptions) that are related to a water issue

# Connective capacity

Two important governance elements:

- Sharing a problem definition and a solution strategy (lecture 5)
- The role of Leadership (lecture 6)



Link to  
Lecture 5  
& 6 in this  
module

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# Applicability of concepts in international context

- Is it useful?
- How is it related?
- Can it be adapted?