PULSE$^3$

Paradigms and Theories for Creating Opportunities and Solving Problems

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Outline

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Rationale and Definitions

- **Science** not the dogmatic insistence of its claims but based on *constant* critique.
- Paradigms and theories *influence* the way people perceive reality and react to reality.
  - A paradigm is a worldview underlying *theories* and *methodologies*.
  - My use - *research tradition* that organises and guides *science* or research.
  - A theory explains the *relationship* between phenomena.
- Paradigms and theories are closely related to *practice*.
  - Theories help us to *organise* and *communicate* the large volume of data we are bombarded with on a daily basis.
- **We** develop and use theories to assess an issue or situation.
  - Theories are part of the never ending cognitive processes.
PULSE3

- People Understanding and Living in a Sustained Environment.
- Cube denotes three forces: thinking, shaping and change.
- PULSE3 analyses practices, plans, projects and programmes.
  - Theory shapes how practitioners see the world.
- PULSE3 recognises individuals, interest groups, scientists and private companies.
- It has an interpretivist and critical agenda, but does not reject rationalism.
- PULSE3 consists of three components.
  - Paradigm assessment
  - The ethos of scientific variation
  - Repertoire of theories for practice
Component #1: Paradigm Assessment

- Paradigms are **not permanent** features of the scientific landscape.
- The 5 scientific paradigms identified assist in the paradigmatic profiling.
- **5 Paradigm Matrix**
- Value 0 = absent, 1 = present, 1 = both are present.
- Paradigm assessment can help in what is being missed.
- The amount of time and resources spent on a rationalist agenda can detract scientists from problems lurking in the shadows impeding understanding and innovation.
Component #2: Ethos of Analytic Eclecticism

- A paradigm or theory has blind spots.
- **Analytic eclecticism:** that includes both social and natural sciences, different research methods in both disciplines.
- Rationale is to avoid *paradigmatic compartmentalisation*.
  - Arguing from one paradigm can become an obstacle in understanding.
  - Analytic eclecticism *does not* discard established paradigms or traditions,
- Analytic eclecticism has three pillars
  - Open-ended problem formulation.
  - Middle-range causal account integrating complex interactions.
  - Connecting scholarly debates with problems.
- Promise: not *simplicity* and *confirmation bias*. 
Component #3: Theories for Practice

• To apply analytic eclecticism one must have a repertoire of theories to choose from.
• This is to prevent PULSE$^3$ from becoming a panacea
  1. Agential power
  2. Ambiguity theory of leadership
  3. Complexity theory
  4. Cultural theory of International Relations
  5. Everyday international political economy
  6. Feminisms
  7. Hydro-social contract theory
  8. Interactive governance theory (Governability)
  9. Interest group corporatism
  10. Interest group pluralism
  11. Marxism
  12. Modernity
  13. Neo-liberalism (Liberal pluralism)
  14. Neo-realism (Realism)
  15. Normative commensalism
  16. Political ecology or Green politics
  17. Social constructivism
  18. Strategic adaptive management or adaptive management
Case Study: NWRS, Second Edition

- The NWRS2 is a 115 page document.
- Based on seven strategic themes.
- There are also five enabling factors to support its implementation.
- It has 16 chapters.
Case Study: NWRS, Second Edition

- NRWS2 through Analytic eclecticism
  - Paradigmatic limitation.
  - Other paradigms are present in the NWRS2 but to a limited extent only.
    - Support to municipalities.
    - Education and awareness.
      - Participatory paradigm
  - No paradigm shift, but rather top-down participation towards the NWRS2.
  - Nevertheless, structuralism strongly comes to the fore in the transboundary domain.
  - Economic development and energy generation priorities emphasis material domain.
  - Agents and ideational elements are also structuralist and material.
    - Objective relations.
    - Logical conditions.
Case Study: NWRS, Second Edition

- Theories for practice.
  - Agential power.
  - Ambiguity theory of leadership.

- Enhancing the NWRS2’s implementation
  - NWRS2 following a trend in the international water discourse.
  - DWS embeds it into rationalist structures.
  - Ontology of SA’s water sector more complicated than rationalism would make us believe it is.
  - Collective beneficiation.
  - Issue of leadership is important.
Case Study: UNDP Water and Ocean Governance

- Web content of the UNDP’s Water and Ocean Governance Focus Area
  - Emphasis on water governance.
- The content is in line with themes in the South African water discourse.
  - Gender.
  - Transboundary water resources management.
- Relevant to the South African context.
Case Study: UNDP Water and Ocean

• The web content through analytic eclecticism
  - Paradigmatic limitation.
  - Prior assumptions about certain actors are highlighted.
  - These assumptions can become law-like in nature.
  - No problematisation of complexity of root causes.

• Should we discard the paradigmatic ways of the UNDP?
• Rather investigate issues it with alternative paradigms in mind.

• The UNDP uses a number of theories.
  - Neoliberal institutionalism.
  - Hegemonic politicians model.
Case Study: UNDP Water and Ocean

• Theory for practice.
  - Social constructivism.
    • People’s actions are always in relation to objects including other actors.
    • Rationalism informs the UNDP’s identity.
    • Competition over water will increase because of climate change – governance therefore conflictual and anarchic.
    • Other paradigms and theories play a role but only…
    • Theories as causal mechanisms in power relations.
Conclusion

- Paradigms and theories have a constituting influence
- PULSE enables the analysis of policies, programmes and plans in a robust manner.
- PULSE also helps visualising policies, programmes and plans.
- PULSE highlights the hidden and finer nuances of governance activities.
Thank you for listening

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