



20th AfWA International Congress and Exhibition 2020

Breaking new grounds to accelerate access to water and sanitation for all in Africa

Working with the grain to improve rural water supply

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DEVELOPMENT'S SILVER BULLETS



- Simplified policy formulas that are decontextualized and depoliticised
- Based on notions such as ‘best practice’ and ‘good governance’; often irrelevant or unrealistic in local settings
- Applied mechanically, these ‘silver bullets’ not only fail to deliver but prevent local actors from coming together to provide their own solutions
- E.g. the associational model of CBM





How do researchers move beyond critique and evidence of complexity to also provide constructive guidance and recommendations?

WORKING WITH THE GRAIN



- From 'best practice' to 'best fit'
- Alternative approaches *locally anchored* in the problems people face and their accepted ways of doing things
- Existing institutions, practices, values and beliefs become resources to work with rather than obstacles to overcome
- Possible similarities to how many NGOs and government officials staff work
- A danger of reproducing or entrenching existing unequal power relations



HIDDEN CRISIS PROJECT



Unlocking the
Potential of
Groundwater
for the Poor



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ECONOMIC
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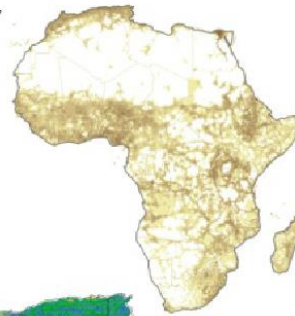
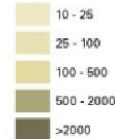
TEAM AND COUNTRIES OVERVIEW



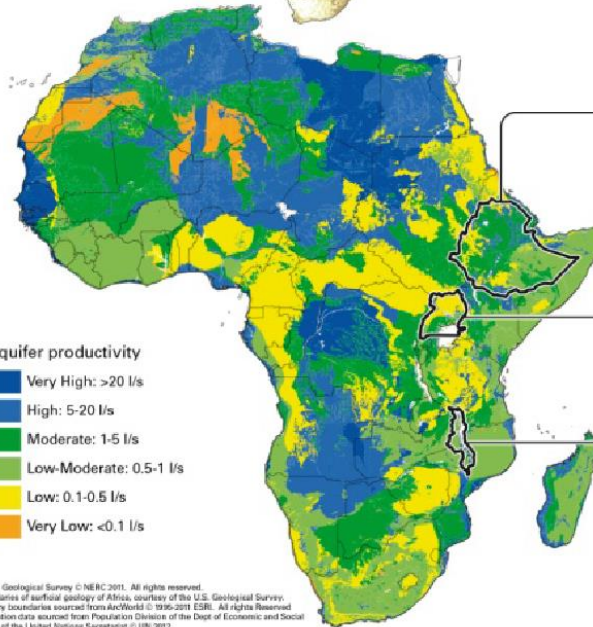
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Population density
(people per km²)



Aquifer productivity



Ethiopia

Population 87 million

38% coverage of improved rural water supply (JMP 2012)
(=36% increase in proportion of population with access since 1995)
Estimated **32% not functioning** or functioning with difficulties¹

Uganda

Population 34 million

70% coverage of improved rural water supply (JMP 2012)
(=45% increase in proportion of population with access since 1995)
Estimated **18% not functioning** or functioning with difficulties²

Malawi

Population 15 million

80% coverage of improved rural water supply (JMP 2012)
(=50% increase in proportion of population with access since 1995)
Estimated **34% not functioning** or functioning with difficulties³

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Boundaries of surficial geology of Africa, courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.
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Population data sourced from Population Division of the Dept of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat © UN 2012.
Access figure source from JMP 2012.

¹ based on data from Fatta and West Estrie region, Stawski 2012, and country-wide data from Denke & Haxoska 2008, and WaterAid functionality inventory data 2000.

² based on data WaterAid functionality inventory data 2000.

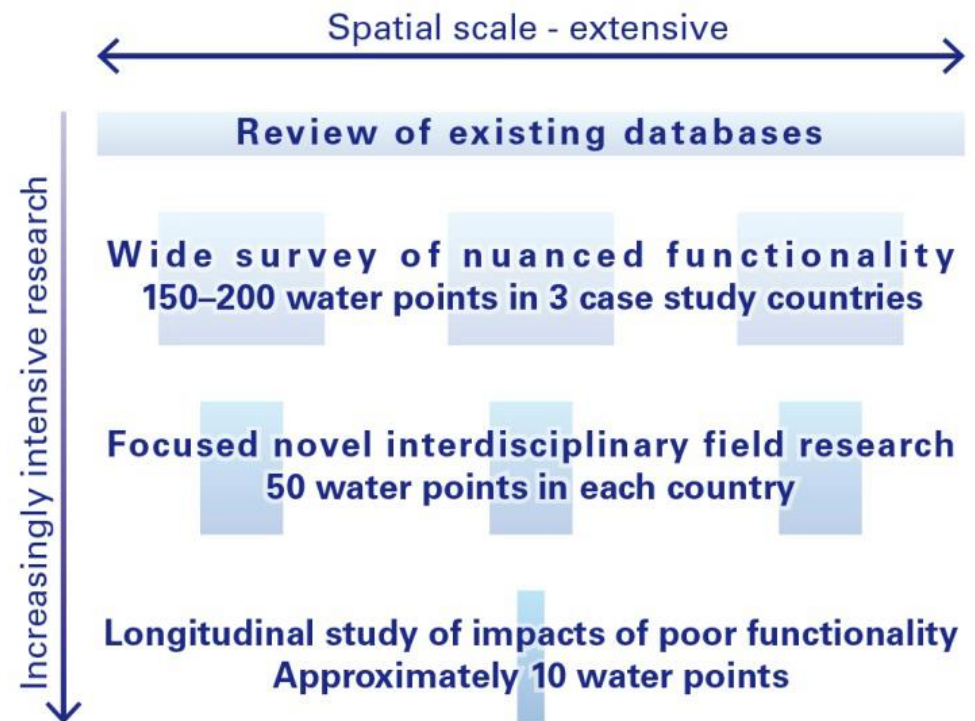
³ based on data from national surveys of 2000 MINCEP rural supply programme, Anonimie 1996, and WaterAid functionality inventory data 2000.

RESEARCH DESIGN



- Political economy analysis
- District sustainability assessments

- Survey 1: **WHAT** are the issues? →
- Survey 2: **WHY** do these issues occur? →
- Longitudinal studies: **HOW** do wider livelihood concerns relate to water management, access, and use over 1 year →



CBM: FROM FORM TO FUNCTION



Waterpoint committee

- Formal roles and responsibilities
- Composition
- Training(s)
- Devise and enforce rules
- Regular meetings
- Regular user fees
- Regular maintenance
- Repair works
- External support, spare parts availability

Water management arrangement

1. Funds
2. Maintenance and repair
3. Authority and leadership
4. Legitimacy
5. Equity
6. Decision-making, rules, and enforcement
7. Roles and responsibilities
8. Stakeholder linkages

OTHER ACTORS MANAGING WATER



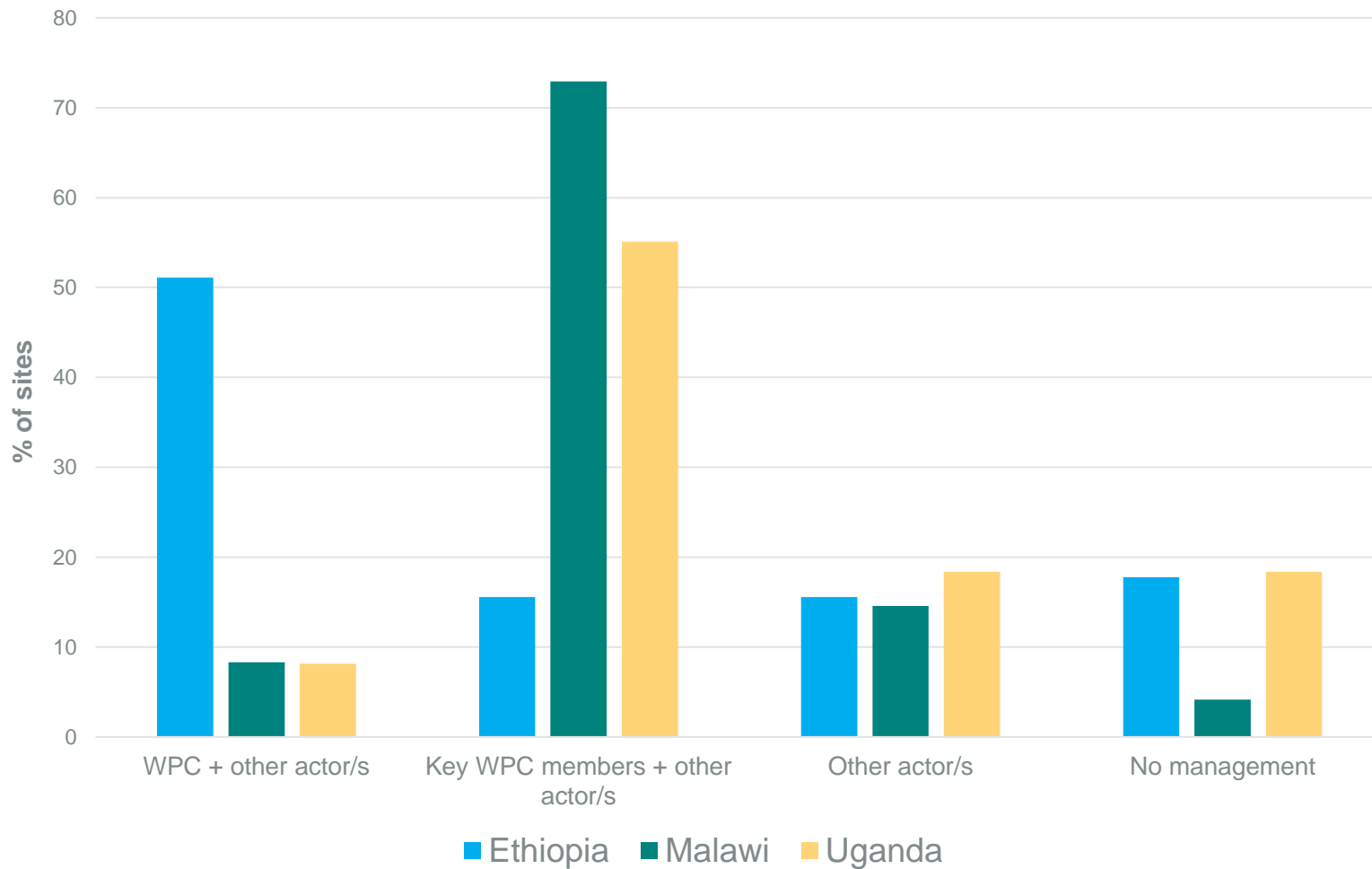
Country	Other actors
Ethiopia	Iddir , kebele, guard, church, NGOs, woreda water office, other community members
Malawi	Village chief , councillors, MP, NGOs, mosque/sheikh, health surveillance assistant, area mechanic, school/teachers, youth club, other community members
Uganda	LC1 chairperson , LC3 and LC4 chairs, MP, mayor, NGOs, school/teachers, sub-county chief, area mechanic, village health technician, health extension worker, other community members

A TYPOLOGY OF WATER MANAGERS



	State/formal/ Exogenous	Informal/ endogenous
Individual/s	e.g. chairperson of local council; village chief	e.g. village elders; religious leader
Association/s	e.g. waterpoint committee; school committee	e.g. mutual aid association; church group

WHO MANAGES WATER?



FLESH AND BONES OF WATER MANAGEMENT



- In Ethiopia, bodies for managing water more *fleshed* out
 - A formal body – the WASHCO - present in over 50% of sites
 - Typically in conjunction with other actors (e.g. iddir)
 - Formed under duress: “we must participate them!”
 - Some evolve into umbrella organisations; serve other functions
 - Gender inequality persists

- In Uganda and Malawi we often see the bare *bones* needed to manage water
 - Most common arrangement is a ‘skeleton crew’
 - Relies on key individuals – e.g. LC1 chair or chief – based on authority and proximity to waterpoint: “the borehole is not a madman”
 - The business of water management: “the borehole is my garden”

FEATURES OF WATER MANAGEMENT



- ‘Multiplexity’, norms, and moral orders
 - Water management is not only about water
 - Arrangements must typically conform to the ‘right way of doing things’
- Authority and involvement in wider village life
 - People with power and authority tend to be most active
 - These people often involved in other areas
- Proximity to borehole
 - Quite common for key individuals to live next to or near waterpoint
 - Sometimes this is because they have influenced siting
- Gendered dimension of water management
 - Gender discrimination and inequality fairly common
 - There are exceptions to this rule

WORKING WITH THE GRAIN?



- Making complexity legible
 - Despite complexity of real-world social dynamics, common features often exist and can be worked with
- Equity and working with the grain
 - Trade off between functionality and equity?
 - NOTE: Associational model does not address equity
 - Realistic – recognize what is possible
- Local government staff with the skills to negotiate social relations and work with local actors and institutions
 - Politically smart, locally led development
 - Importance of an enabling environment



20th AfWA CONGRESS

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