



Analysis of Path-dependency* of the Developmental State** of Korea and Water Governance



University of Bayreuth



Jin-Tae Hwang and Detlef Müller-Mahn

Contact: jintae.hwang@uni-bayreuth.de

Problem Statement

The distribution and use of water is not only determined by natural or economic conditions, but also by conflicts between different user groups. We conceptualize water governance as political contestations between actors at various geographical scales. We focus on its spatial differentiation, i.e. from a hierarchical structure led by mainly state actors to a non-hierarchical structure which is based on participation of non-state actors (see Perreault, 2005). Building on this position, we understand that water governance is determined by specific spatio-temporal settings (e.g. hierarchical *versus* non-hierarchical).

Objective

We will examine water governance and the path-dependency of water related policies of the Korean developmental state

Research Question

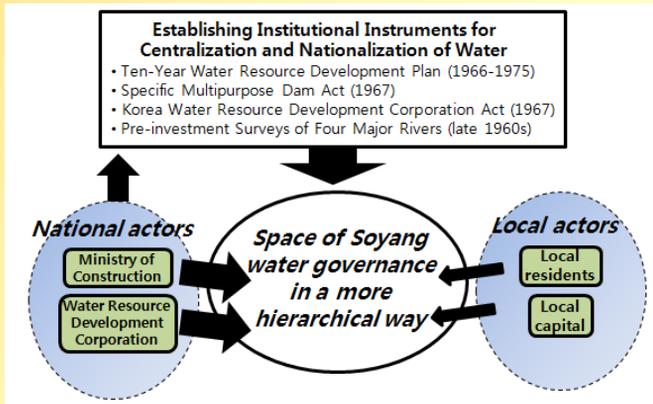
How is water governance in South Korea determined by hierarchical and non-hierarchical structures?

Methods

- **Study area:** Soyang watershed and Soyang Dam.
- **Data:** WAMIS (Water Management Information System), National Assembly Library, KOSIS (Korean Statistical Information Service), National Archive of Korea, etc.
- **Methods:** In-depth interview (national actors such as national bureaucrats, politicians, etc. and local actors like politicians, capitals, residents, etc.), fieldwork (Soyang watershed including Soyang Dam), participant observation, and analysis on materials and texts (government report, local newspaper (e.g. *Kangwonilbo*), and related academic articles, etc.).

Conceptual framework for research

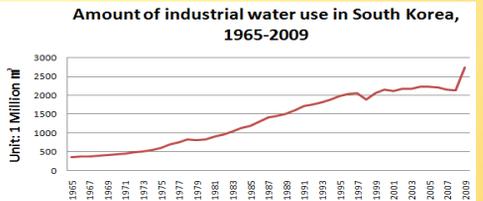
Conflict between national water policy and local actors



Water supply and Four Rivers Restoration Project



Rising water demand of Korean industry



Expected Results

1. Explanation for uneven development and spatial disparity between upstream and downstream regions such as Seoul Metropolitan Region vs. Gangwon Province.
2. Identification of disadvantages for local inhabitants caused by marginalization of national development at the local scale.
3. Analysis of path-dependency of the developmental state still influential in water governance in a more hierarchical way.

Contribution to TERRECO

This research emphasizes the inter-scalar relationship between the national and the local levels. It may apply to other TERRECO's research such as land-use of Soyang Watershed. Upstream regions are strictly regulated by the state because these regions have played a key role in providing water to Seoul Metropolitan Region. On the other hand, recently some regulations which hinder local economic development are partly removed at downstream regions by acting local territorial politics.

Reference

- Perreault, T., 2005, State restructuring and the scale politics of rural water governance in Bolivia, *Environment and Planning A*, 37, 268-284.
- * It explains how the set of decisions one faces for any given circumstance is limited by the decisions one has made in the past, even though past circumstances may no longer be relevant.
- ** The concept of developmental state means that the state can play a significant role in national economic growth, especially when it is composed of bureaucrats who are autonomous from social forces and act on the basis of developmentalism.