

# Overcoming Obstacles for Reflexive Research Practices in Water Governance

## PERSPECTIVES FROM EARLY STAGE RESEARCHERS

### Who we are?

15 young researchers working on water governance, embedded in the NEWAVE - Next Water Governance Network.



### How did we get to this invitation?

In conversation with each other and our wider network, we have identified a **limited reflexivity in both academic and policy arenas on who is doing water governance, how it is being done, and for what purpose.**

Disciplinary silos, distrust, vested interests, and unequal power dynamics have resulted in a limited reflection amongst water governance actors

Dominant approaches and paradigms in water governance lead to the neglect of critical perspectives

Power dynamics between actors create imbalances in discourses and knowledge systems

Limited accessibility of water-related data impedes further research and decision-making processes

## OUR INVITATIONS FOR FOSTERING REFLEXIVITY

We outline seven proposed actions to reflect on for overcoming obstacles for reflexive practices towards more transparent, just, and accountable forms of water governance.

### Address the limitations of academic institutions

How do normative research methods replicate colonial and extractive approaches to knowledge production?

### Acknowledge and question biases of what research is considered useful, neutral, or legitimate

How are researchers being pushed to prioritize mainstream ways of knowing and doing in water governance?

### Acknowledge the connections of water and land

How can we re-politicize water to make the connection between the social and material visible?

### Critically engage with information collection practices

What are the limitations and challenges of data collection practices, and how/by whom is knowledge kept and controlled?

### Critically reflect on the limitations of institutions

How can legal frameworks be recrafted to meet today's water governance challenges?

### Complexify and challenge binaries in water governance research

How can we move beyond binaries to make space for emerging locally situated water governance approaches?

### Reflect on how metrics are designed and leveraged to promote certain policies or paradigms

How can we challenge what 'success' means as a normative aspect of water governance?



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