



Water in Africa: Hydro-Pessimism or Hydro-Optimism?

Água em África: Hidro-pessimismo ou Hidro-optimismo

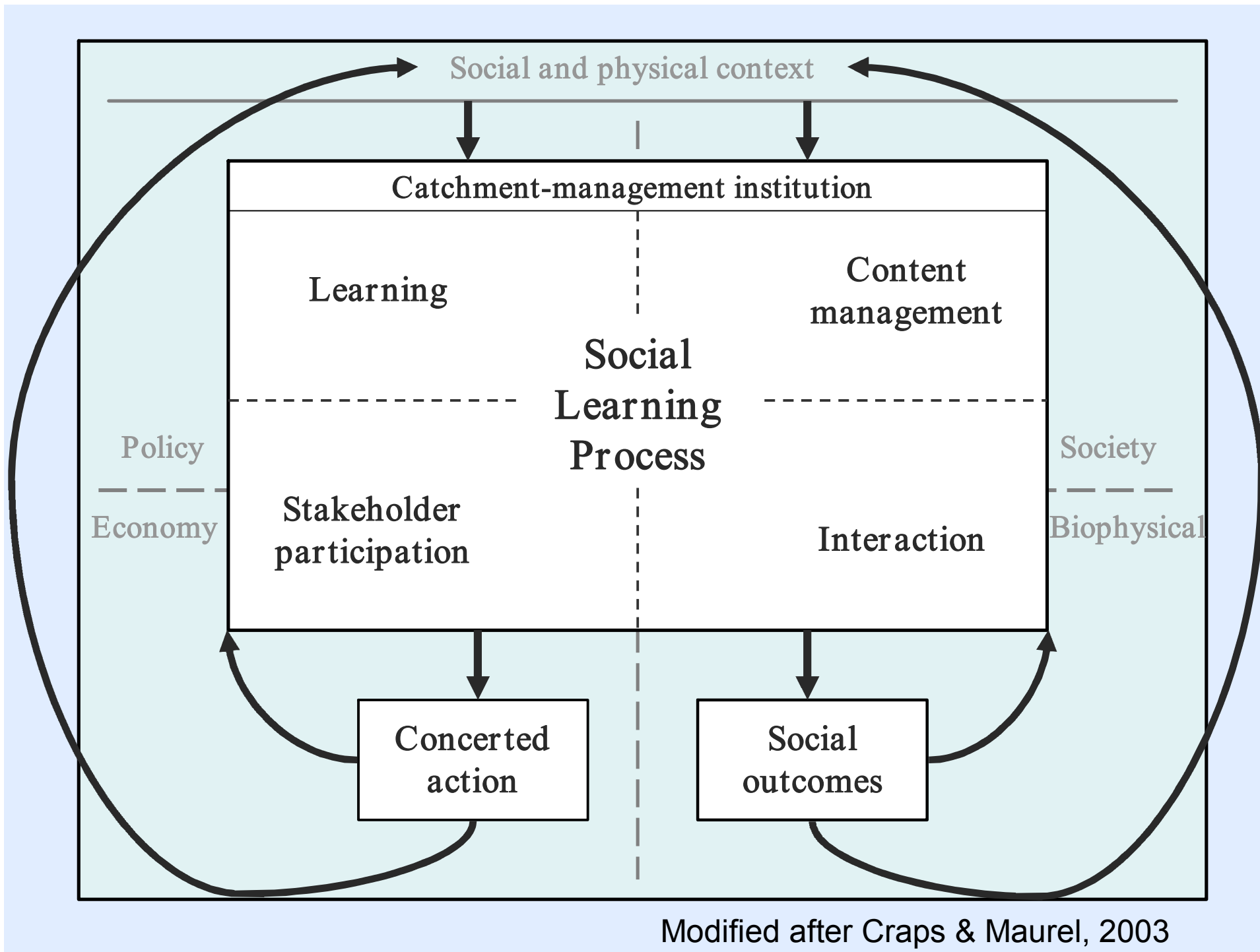
Centro de Estudos Africanos da Universidade do Porto
Porto, Portugal, 2-3 October 2008



Social learning and catchment-
management institutions in Southern
Africa

Social Learning

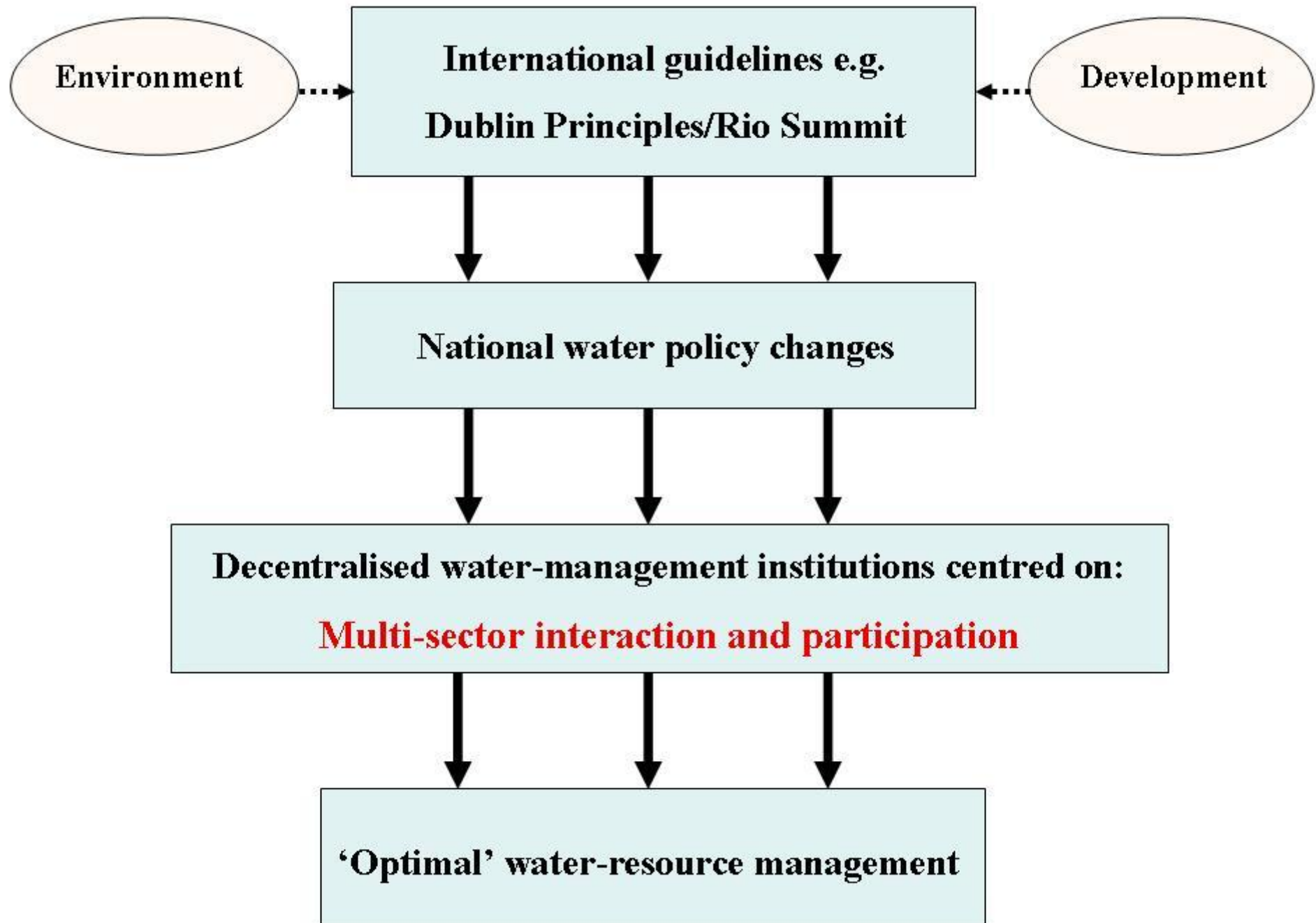
- Investment in a multi-stakeholder learning process to transform institutional or individual behaviour (Ison, 2004)
- An approach for the realisation of improved management of natural resources involving relevant stakeholders engaging in a learning process towards concerted action (Watson, 2007)
- Learning and knowledge production by a group of people who have a common interest and are engaged in a shared enterprise (Johnson, 2008)
- Learning our way together to a more sustainable future in dynamic multi-stakeholder situations of uncertainty and complexity (Blackmore, in press)

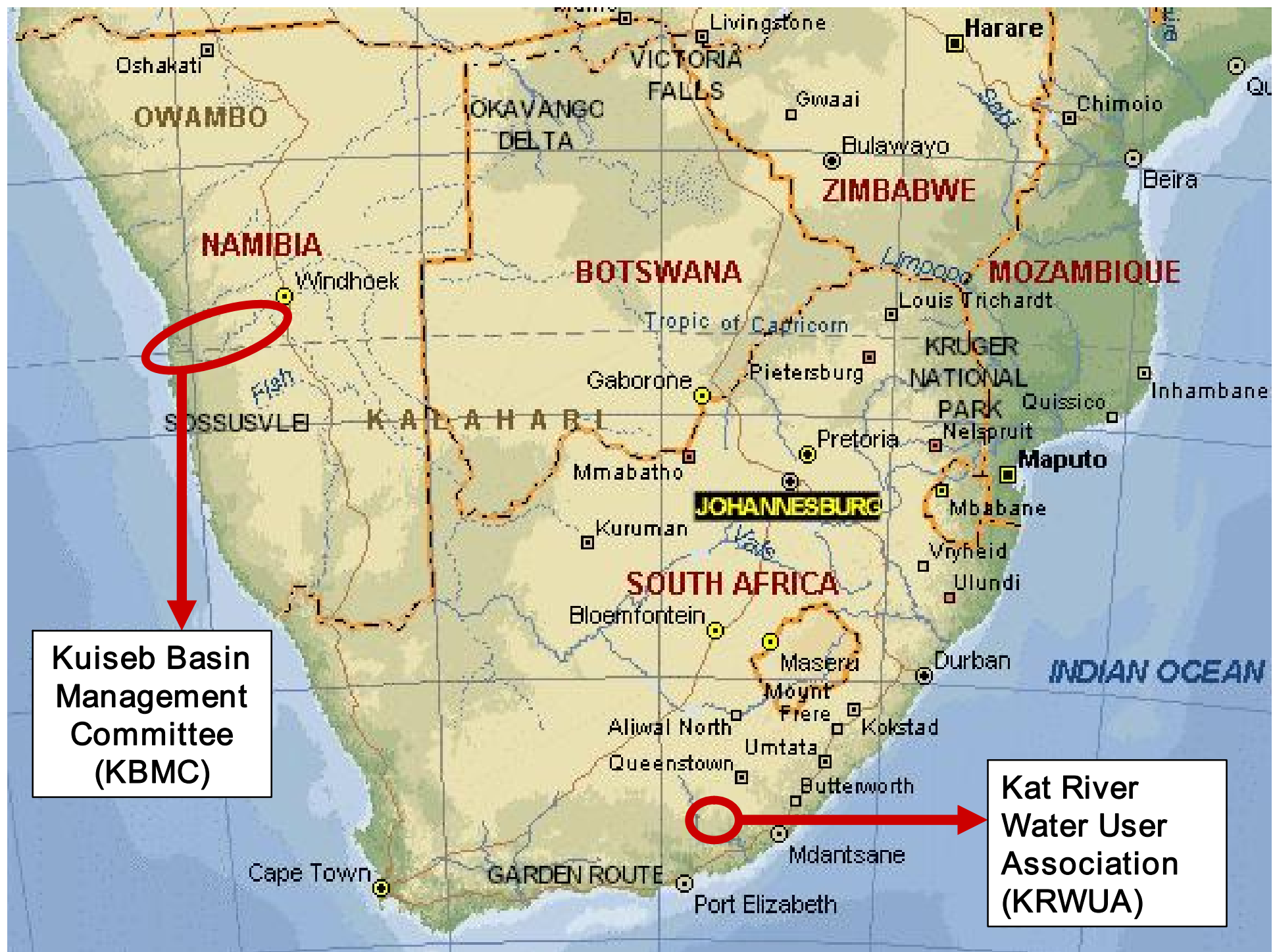


Modified after Craps & Maurel, 2003

Water management context

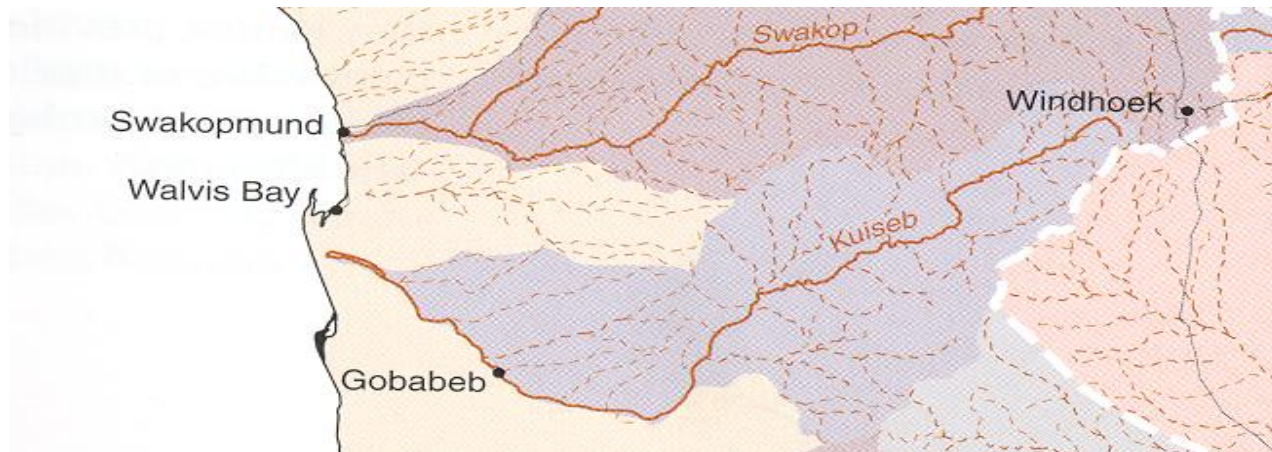
- National water Acts of RSA and Namibia influenced by the 'Dublin principles' of Integrated water-resource management:
 - Participation (multi-stakeholder, gender)
 - Decentralisation (lowest appropriate level)
 - Integration (vertical and horizontal)
 - Economic good (pricing, efficiency)





National Water Act GRN (2004)	National Water Act RSA (1998)
Water under State ownership – riparian principle overturned	Water under State ownership – riparian principle overturned
‘Duty-of-care’ towards the natural environment	Mandatory ‘ecological reserve’ for each river
Decentralised water-management institutions – basin management committees*	Decentralised water-management institutions – catchment management agencies (CMAs) and water-user associations (WUAs)*
Cost recovery	Cost recovery – after free basic 25l per citizen
Promotion of efficient water allocation Priority allocation to HDIs	Promotion of efficient water allocation Priority allocation to HDIs
Pollution control (polluter pays)	Pollution control (polluter pays)

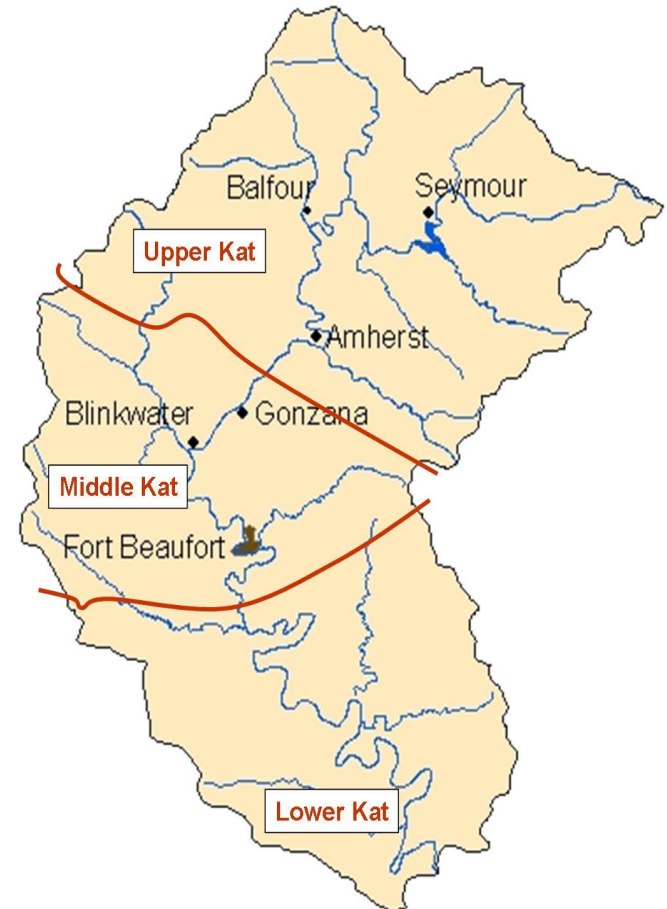
* must have ‘appropriate community, racial and gender representation’

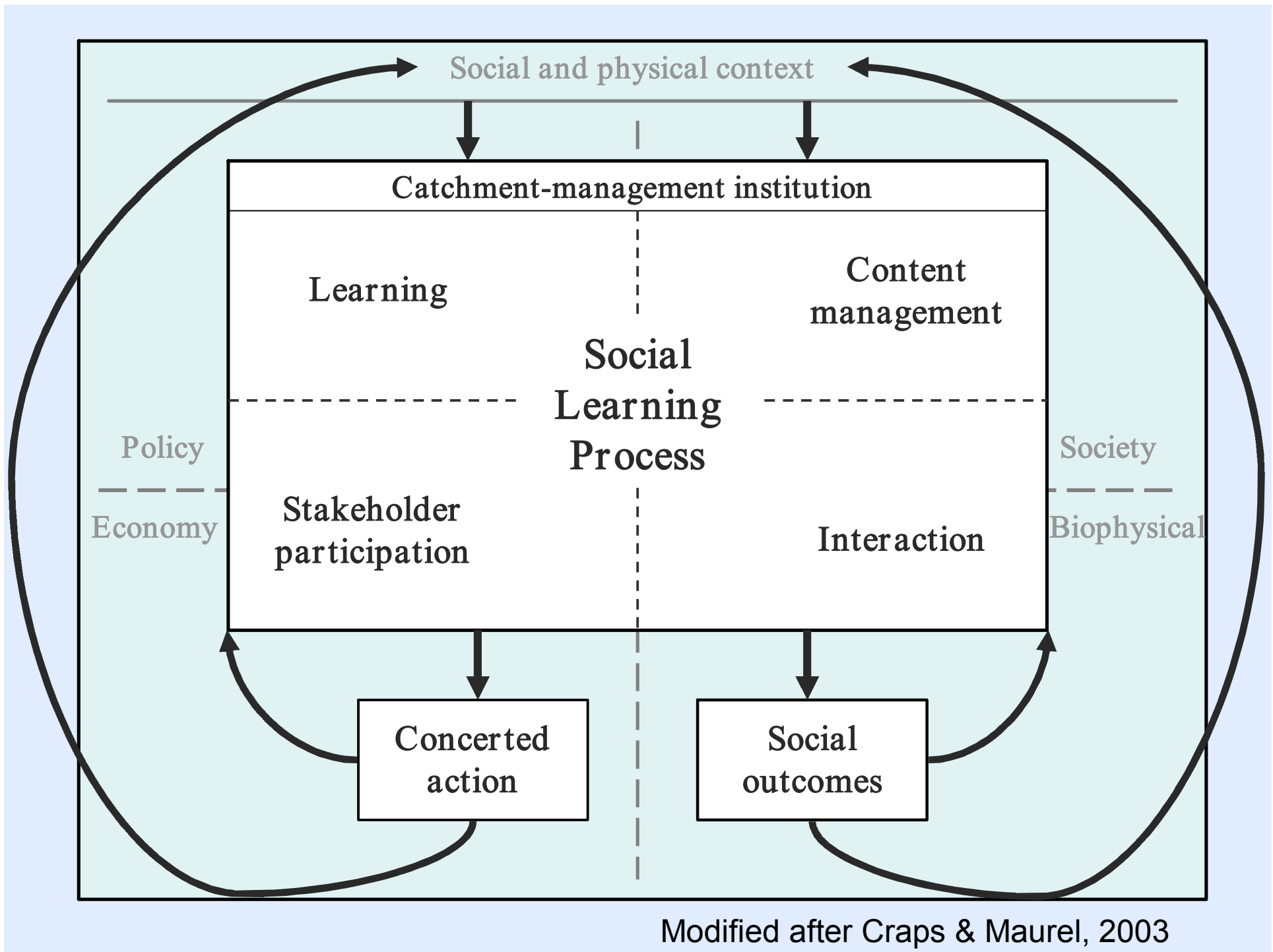


Physical Catchment	440km long ephemeral river 0-400 mm/pa rainfall 85% evaporation
Socio-economic	Very low population density Extreme socio-economic inequality Variable water use
KBMC history	EU-funded action learning project – multi-stakeholder learning platform Continued under DWA as a BMC to test the new legislation
Water Issues	Lack of information sharing [Over]abstraction from the lower aquifer Desertification and climate change High upstream-downstream mistrust



Physical Catchment	80km long perennial river Relatively high rainfall (dual season) High evaporation
Socio-economic	High population density in upper Kat History of dispossession and tension Ciskei homeland bisected Kat valley Agricultural land use
KRWUA history	Old irrigation board Commercial farmers approached RU Action research project
Water Issues	Water allocation of the Kat reservoir: new demand from ex-Ciskei, the environment, & unscheduled farmers





Constraints to social learning

- **Resources**

Institutions have no independent funding

- **Power relations and politics**

All agendas and suggestions must be approved by DWAF/DWA

Bureaucratic process for legal recognition as statutory body

Powerful stakeholders using stalling tactics

Inter government-department politics

- **Legislative mandates versus practical reality**

Role of BMCs too ambiguous and WUAs too clearly-defined

WUAs must empower HDIs but no funding for capacity-building

Water Acts promote 'efficient' and 'equitable' allocation

- **History of disenfranchisement**

Affects willingness and ability to participate and act

Implications

- Multi-stakeholder participation and, therefore, social learning by relevant actors has been difficult to enact
- Social learning processes have not led to action and tangible outcomes *to date* due to a lack of corresponding institutional empowerment
- ...However, processes have led to improved stakeholder relations (important given the history of social tension)
- Perpetuation of the status quo in terms of access to water resources...which in turn helps to maintain the socio-economic differential

Acknowledgements

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- ❖ Desert Research Foundation of Namibia
- ❖ Kuiseb Basin Management Committee (KBMC)
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