

# **Dilemmas and Learning Accounts around the Traveston Dam Proposal**



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# What is the goal/scope of the research?

An **emic** account of reality  
(an **insider's** view)  
To explore people's  
experience, understanding, knowledge  
after the dam proposal was announced

An **etic** account of reality  
(an **outsider's** view)  
To expose  
my experience and understanding

*It is **NOT** a Social Impact Assessment or Evaluation study*

*It is an **EXPLORATORY** qualitative research with a strong emphasis on **REFLECTION** from both the subjects' and researcher's side*

# What are the Research Questions?

- **Emic**

*What dilemmas have emerged after the dam proposal was announced?*

*What have people learnt (existing and emerging understanding-knowledge) and how (meta-learning process)?*

- **Etic**

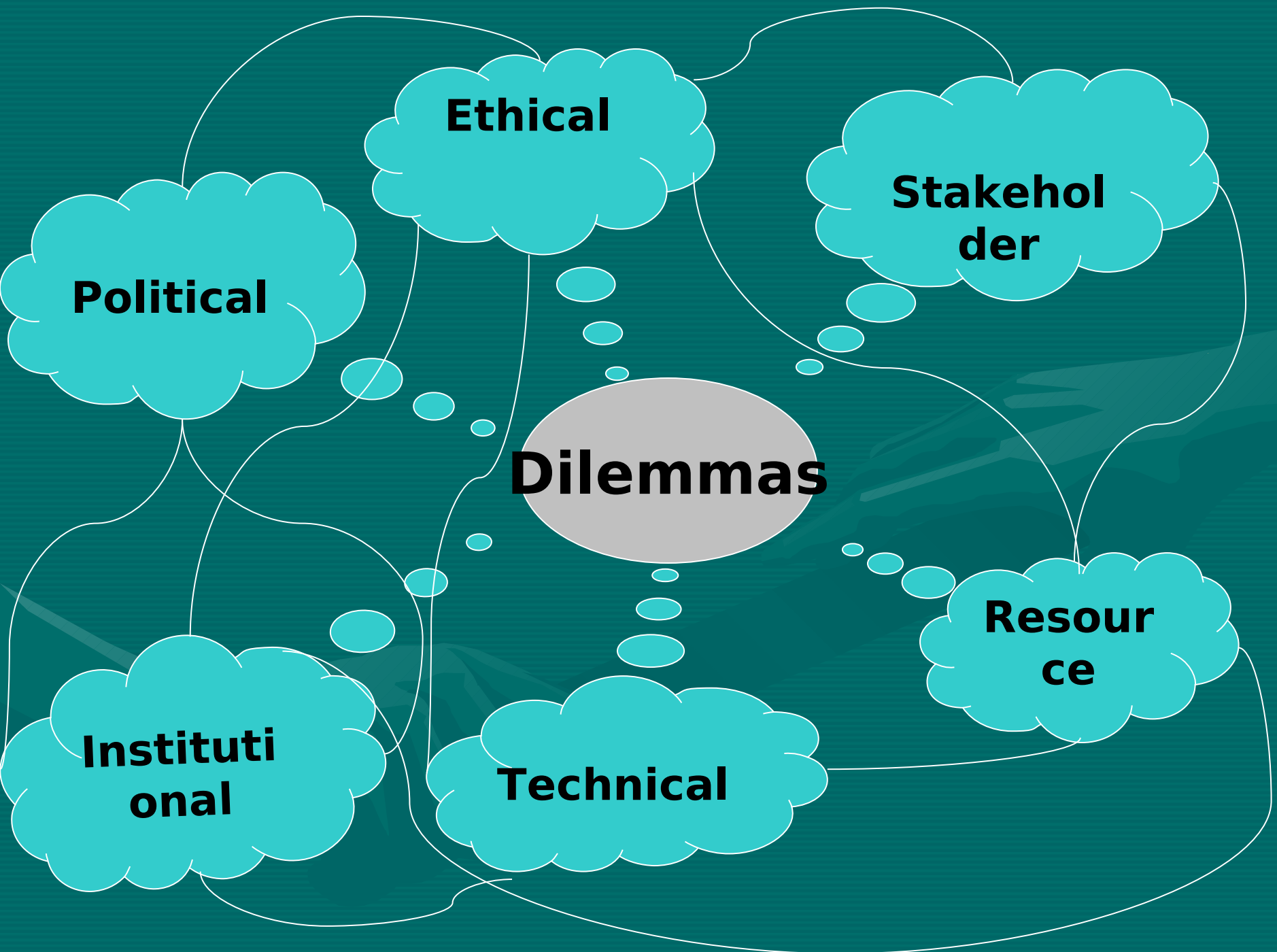
*What have I learnt?*

*Where do I stand as a researcher regarding the dam proposal?*



# Who?

- Local landholders, who either did not sell their properties to the Government or intended to sell it
- Affected or not affected by the dam proposal landholders
- People being involved in action groups as the STM RCC, the MR CCC, the GMA or other local associations as the MVI



**Ethical**

**Stakeholder**

**Political**

**Dilemmas**

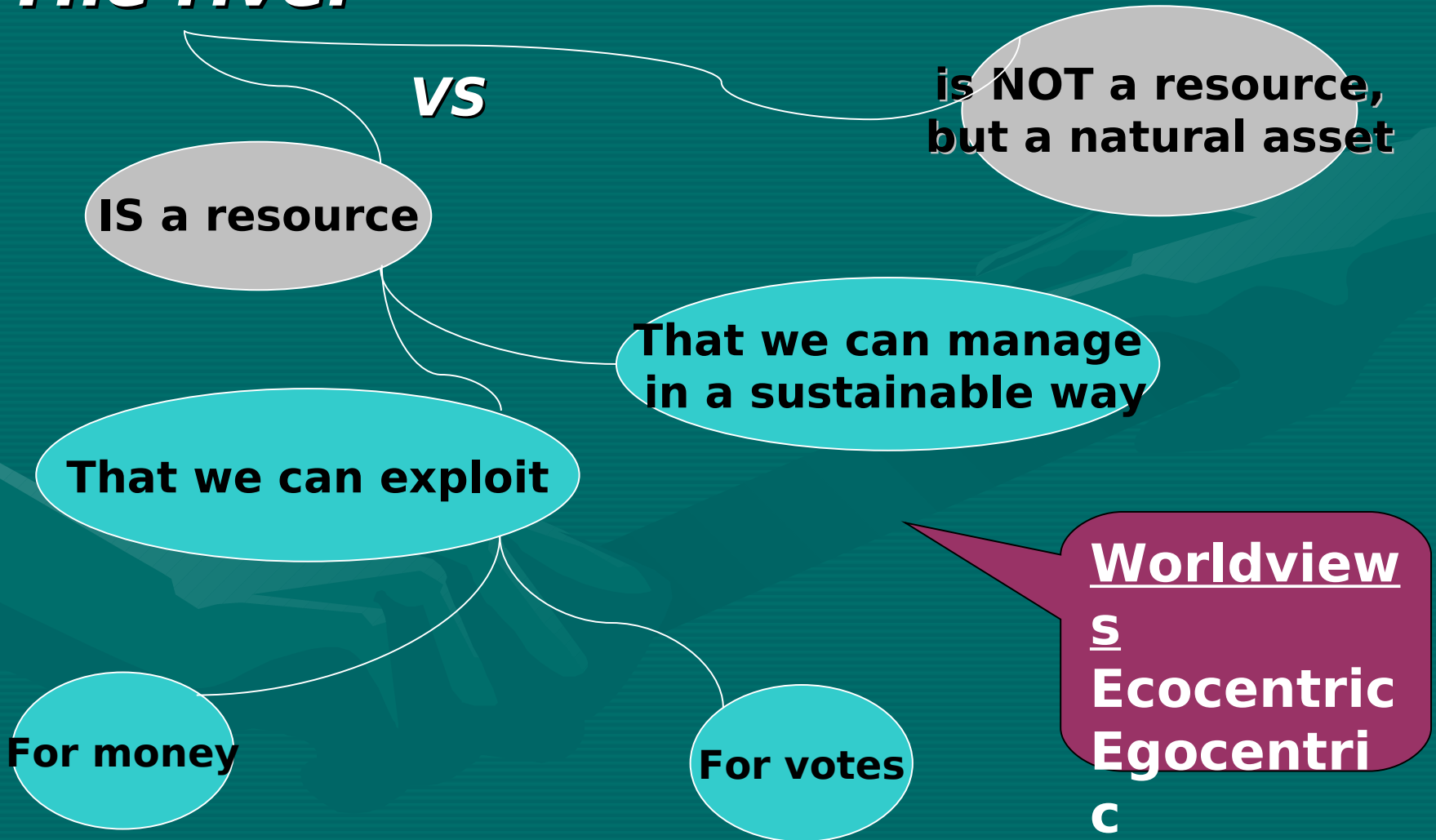
**Resource**

**Institutional**

**Technical**

# Resource Dilemmas

## *The river*



# Technical Dilemma

Worldviews  
Technocentric  
Holocentric

Traveston dam

vs

No Dam  
in Traveston

No Dams  
At All!



# Stakeholder Dilemmas

**Beneficiaries**

VS

**Interdependencies  
Controversy  
Conflict  
Uncertainty**

**Victims**

State Gvnt Candidates

SEQ people were promised water

Temporary renters in Kandanga

Businesses reform

Local landholders who sold + invested

QWI working for Gvnt

Construction businesses

- Local landholders who are pressured to
- Those who sold out and lost business, families and were emotionally, financially, mentally impacted by proposal
- Real Estate businesses and local market
- The Mary River and its creatures

# Institutional Dilemmas

**Bottom-up VS top-down  
governance**

**Disempowerment  
and local  
knowledge**

**Private water selling VS  
Self-sufficiency**

**Public Experts  
VS Expert Public**

# Ethical Dilemmas

**Neutral**

vs

**Anti-Dam**

**NIMBY**

**Environmental Concerns**

Become stakeholders  
Although not affected

- See the benefits out of this!
- Sell and move on with my normal life
- See the Valley prosper and develop
- Have to face it, cannot bury head under the

- See the Valley the way it was, not fragmented

- See a unified, integrated catchment, revegetated banks
- See my grandchildren enjoy the river
- See organic

**Visions**

**Diverse Axiology**

# Political Dilemmas

**Political Systems  
that count heads**

VS

**Brisbane citizens  
who needed water  
and  
dam proposal  
as a pre-election  
promise**

**Political systems  
that safeguard  
minority groups**



# Lessons learnt after the dam proposal

## From **government**

- They are dishonest
- Not listening to people, dogmatic
- They are consulting=seducing people to sell, agree or Statistics make lies seem beautiful
- Left it to engineers-limited skills-dams are old-fashioned
- Shifting problems using technology
- Not competent to manage-care

## From **people**

- People are resilient , can adjust
- People in cities are ignorant, not water wise, believe water comes from tap
- Many invested became better-off

## Feelings and why?

- **Claustrophobic** bc of the population growth
- **Angry** bc it is political, bc they have not listened to sound science
- **Shocked -insulted** by the way it was announced
- **Mistrust**
- **Depressed** with what we are doing to the rivers
- **Disappointed** bc of the insufficient research before announce it
- **Afraid**
- **Mixed** (upset for the dislocated people, but have to see the benefits)

# But what about before the dam proposal?

- Community initiative in 1992

ICM project facilitated by a coordinator of the then Government!!

Stakeholder (community, industry, government had worked together)

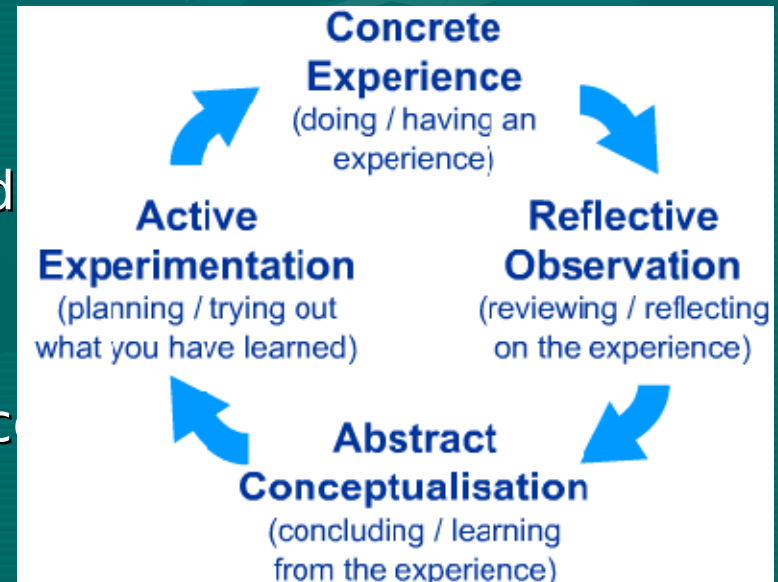
meetings to identify issues of the Mary, visualize future, take action

## Mary River Catchment Strategy

Action Plans for

### Experiential Learning Cycle

- Greater knowledge, research and education
- Better Land use planning
- Managing water quantity
- Improving land management practices
- Improving water quality
- Riverbank restabilisation
- Improving legislation and procedures



# Mary River Rehabilitation Plan

## Collective Learning Processes Shared community visions



# Flood Culture



# Community Action Groups emerged after the Proposal

- Save the Mary River Coordinating Group
- Greater Mary Association
- Brisbane Group

To overturn the proposal

- Mary Valley Incorporated

After the amalgamation of Councils we want to manage our own destiny, foster local business

Perception of CHANGE

# Save the Mary River Coordinating Group Information Centre



# Save the Mary River Coordinating Group

- It was formed a few days after the proposal was announced
- Probably a response-result of the extended awareness and community engagement in the ICM project
- Has provided the people about the feasibility of the strong.

**Learning has become enacted and institutionalized!**



# Save the Mary River Coordinating Group

- It is a diverse group (political, scientific backgrounds), that means diverse networking and skills
- Lobbying, rallying, putting pressure on politicians and feeding Federal Minister of Environment with knowledge in order to reject proposal through the EPBC Act.
- Learning through action and challenges (Senate Inquiry submissions, EIS submissions, State elections, Paradise dam Court Case)

# What have I learnt?

- *That I was interested in process but people were emotional*
- *That I was interested in the dam proposal and not the dam construction-was corrected not to say that*
- *That boundaries are not geographical, but value driven*
- *That people have put their personal life aside in order to overturn the proposal*  
*Why is it so important?*
- *That when people say that one is lucky to live in Australia, they say that because they think that the resources are unlimited??? Are we still settlers in this continent?*
- *That my preconceptions about Australia have changed, I thought it is so special in terms of protecting nature, but it is just as the rest of the world*
- *That my informants were all extremely well-informed*

That the river is a social  
construction

And

This has implication  
in water resources management

# Where do I stand?

Rally in Brisbane before elections



**A researcher does  
not have to be neutral**

Ευχαριστώ

Tack

Thank you

!!!!

