Reframing adaptive capacity attributes of organizations operating in the water sector

Guido Minucci

1 Architecture and Urban Studies Department (Polimi) – Via Bonardi 3, Milan, 20133, Italy, Italy

Abstract

Climate change is only one of several pressure and drivers, such as natural disasters, improvements in technologies and changing customers’ behaviours that water organizations have to relate and adapt to. The governance regimes in which organizations operate influence the capacity of organizations to change, to learn and to participate. Furthermore, without critical reflection and performance monitoring Technological or institutional panaceas have been applied aiming at solving all kinds of water issues around the world. Within this context, this paper proposes a shift from a governance centred analysis of the adaptive capacity of institutions towards an analysis focused on the attributes of adaptive capacity of organizations. On the base of a behavioural organization, institutional, governance and climate change literature review, this paper critically analyses and emphasizes gaps in how adaptive capacity of organizations were assessed in earlier frameworks. As result, it shows a new framework of the adaptive capacity attributes identified in the literature and the role-played by those to face various kinds of dilemmas (unexpected, current, and future). Moreover, the results emphasize the capacity of organizations to enable different tiers of adaptive capacity and embed different kind of uncertainties according to a different time scale (short- long-term).

Keywords: water organizations, adaptive capacity, uncertainty