

Bibliography

“Hydropolitics”

Introduction

Following is a selection of major peer-reviewed contributions that deal with water governance issues. It gives a specific insight into the concept of hydropolitics. A brief comment introduces each reference to facilitate users' reading.

The concept of hydropolitics (the geopolitics of water) first emerges in a book in 1979 (Waterbury, 1979). In the 1990s and 2000s the concept was further detailed but rare definitions were provided (Elhance, 1997; Turton, 2002). In the literature, the concept was applied to analyse conflict and cooperation in several transboundary river basins mostly in the South.

More recent literature focuses on developing critical hydropolitics theory to understand the full diversity exhibited by transboundary water interactions. Mostly academics use this concept to analyse geopolitics of a particular river basin and formulate policies recommendations to decision-makers.

The [bibliography “Water Conflict and Cooperation”](#) that you will find in the Geneva Water Hub's website complements this bibliography on hydropolitics as both issues are interrelated.

Allan, J. A., & Allan, T. (2002). *The Middle East Water Question: Hydropolitics and the Global Economy*. Ib Tauris.

This book addresses hydropolitics in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) where economies depend widely on water availability. Authors analyse the specific issue of conflicts in the region but argue that the solutions to these problems are not to be found at the local level, but rather at the global level, rendering water globally available for example. Therefore national water policies of the MENA region should be analysed making sure of adopting an international perspective.

Available [here](#).

Cascão, A. E., & Zeitoun, M. (2010). *Power, Hegemony and Critical Hydropolitics. Transboundary Water Management. Principles and Practice*, 27-42.

This book chapter aims to establish a “primer” critical hydropolitical theory to interpret the power at play that favour or block decision-making processes. To contribute to the theory, the authors suggest four key points: the distinction between transboundary waters and shared waters, the recognition of the different weight and dimension of power, the idea that conflict and cooperation coexist and that not all forms of cooperation are good. They also suggest several refining elements, such as the need to consider physical and political contexts.

Available [here](#).

Collins, R. O. (1990). *The Waters of the Nile: Hydropolitics and the Jonglei Canal, 1900-1988*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

This book addresses the history of hydropolitics of the Nile River Basin from 1900 to 1988. The author adopts an interdisciplinary perspective with insights from environment, politics, development, anthropology and economic history.

Elhance, A. P. (1997). Conflict and Cooperation Over Water in the Aral Sea Basin. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 20(2), 207-218.

Underlying the challenge to manage water resources without considering national borders, this article analyses the roots of interstate conflict and cooperation in the Aral Sea Basin. It gives one of the seminal definitions of the hydropolitics concept, defined as “the systematic study of conflict and cooperation between states over water resources that transcend international borders”.

Available [here](#).

Elhance, A. P. (1999). *Hydropolitics in the Third World: Conflict and Cooperation in International River Basins*. US Institute of Peace Press.

This book focuses on hydropolitics in transboundary river basins in the Third World which faces at the same time water scarcity and most remaining major exploitable sources of freshwater that come to increase the potential for acute conflict. This book addresses hydropolitics of six major international basins. The cases of the Paraná-La Plata, Nile, Jordan, Euphrates-Tigris, Ganges-Brahmaputra-Barak, and Mekong basins underline specific learnings regarding cooperative and sustainable development of transboundary waters.

Available [here](#).

Elhance, A. P. (2000). Hydropolitics: Grounds for Despair, Reasons for Hope. *International Negotiation*, 5(2), 201-222.

Considering that competition over transboundary water resources increases with economic development, the author highlights that developing the concept of hydropolitics in international rivers is of prime concern. This article aims to provide with a sophisticated and context-sensitive understanding of hydropolitics to support mediators, negotiators as well as national and international decisions makers to tackle the complex arena of transboundary interactions.

Available [here](#).

Julien, F. (2012). Hydropolitics is What Societies Make of it (or Why We Need a Constructivist Approach to the Geopolitics of Water). *International Journal of Sustainable Society*, 4(1-2), 45-71.

This article suggests that the implicit use of International Relations conceptual paradigms of realism and liberalism used in hydropolitics literature has prevented a wide theoretical exploration of the hydropolitics concept. The author suggests that to understand the full diversity exhibited by water-related interstate relations, constructivism with its securitisation theory is a promising alternative approach to hydropolitics.

Available [here](#).

Ohlsson, L. (Ed.). (1995). *Hydropolitics: Conflicts Over Water as a Development Constraint*. University Press.

This book shows that freshwater shortages are becoming the major cause of water conflicts at the domestic and international levels. Both Southern and Northern hemispheres are of concern. Pluridisciplinary scholars contribute to this book addressing the two crucial issues of water availability as a constraint for development and water scarcity as a source of international conflict. This book concludes on the need to conceptualize new approaches to the problem of freshwater scarcity by developing innovative strategies for water management.

Available [here](#).

Sneddon, C., & Fox, C. (2006). Rethinking Transboundary Waters: A Critical Hydropolitics of the Mekong Basin. *Political Geography*, 25(2), 181-202.

This article advances the notion of *critical hydropolitics*. The authors focus on underdeveloped aspects of transboundary water conflict and cooperation, such as the transformation of ecological understandings of river basins within transboundary institutional arrangements. To illustrate this approach, the authors present the case study of the Mekong River basin.

Available [here](#).

Trottier, J. (1999). *Hydropolitics in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*. PASSIA, Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs.

This book addresses the interactions between local, national and international hydropolitical constellations that affect the West Bank and Gaza Strip in Palestine. Adopting an historical perspective of the water situation and conflicts in the Jordan Basin, this book analyses the constellations regulating irrigation and water distribution and national and international hydropolitical constellations in Palestine. This book concludes on drawing different scenarios for the future of the water situation in Palestine.

Available [here](#).

Turton, A. (2002). *Hydropolitics: the Concept and Its Limitations. Hydropolitics in the Developing World: A Southern African Perspective*. Pretoria: African Water Issues Research Unit (AWIRU), 13-19.

This book is an important addition to the literature on hydropolitics as it contributes to show that hydropolitics is a discipline in its own right. Considering that most of relevant literature on hydropolitics shows a certain bias, this book seeks to widen the concept including the elements of scale and range. A definition of hydropolitics is given as “the authoritative allocation of value in society with respect to water”. This is illustrated with case studies from Southern Africa. This book concludes on a proposed research agenda to expand the hydropolitics concept.

Available [here](#).

Waterbury, J. (1979). *Hydropolitics of the Nile valley*. Syracuse University Press.

The first use of the term « hydropolitics » came in this book. With the case of the Nile, Waterbury analyses the relationships between hydraulics and policy and the results for the use of the resource. More particularly, he addresses the question of how sovereign states can pursue national self-interest and cope with the challenges of multinational coordination in the use of the common water resources.

Wolf, A. T. (1995). *Hydropolitics Along the Jordan River; Scarce Water and Its Impact on the Arab-Israeli Conflict (Vol. 99)*. United Nations University Press.

This book gives an overview of the interplay between the waters of the Jordan River Basin and state conflicts through which they flow. It describes the natural hydrography of the watershed and reviews with an historic perspective the water-related conflict and cooperation in the region. This book concludes on resource strategy alternatives for the future.

Available [here](#).