

Domestic and Regional Dimensions of Transboundary Water Relations in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East

" Water is becoming one of the scarcest and most critical resources in the twenty-first century. The growing global demand for water due to rapid growth in population and consumption, climate change, energy production, human-made environmental changes, and unsustainable development is expected to push many societies into a new and uncomfortable territory. In addition, significant shares of water resources are located in transboundary watercourses where large-scale water impoundments created by dams, irrigation networks and other structures have increased water stress. In fact, many basin states do not have any institutional mechanisms in place for regional cooperation, sharing water, or even sustainably managing their own water resources. As a result, growing competition over water has become a major contributing factor to growing discords and tensions within and between the countries. If anything, this illustrates the need for multilateral collaborative and cooperative approaches to avert conflict that is being exacerbated by rising nationalism, trust deficit, and unstable development policies.

What are the issues and policy challenges shaping water politics, perceptions of insecurity over water availability, and hydro political trajectories between countries in transboundary river basins? How do geopolitical and historical circumstances shape regional cooperation over transboundary water resources, particularly those aimed at dealing with pressing transboundary environmental issues such as pollution and water quantity and quality management? How do foreign investments in land, water and hydropower shape hydro political configurations of different river basins? Keeping in mind these questions, the papers in this panel draw empirical evidences from river basins in Southeast Asia, East Africa, and the Middle East and look for possible regional cooperation prospects in these regions.

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