

Transnational Waters: A look at their ability for cooperation

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With no concern for political boundaries, water flows throughout nations, regions, and continents while providing vital resources for social and economic growth. Currently, there are 263 international river basins, yet, not all have a concrete agreement over their rights, management, and usage. As populations continue to grow and water resources begin to deplete, it is becoming strenuous for states to secure the adequate amount of water resources for today and their future generations. Through the examination of selected water basins, I study five cases in various regions: United States and Mexico over the Colorado River and Rio Grande, Egypt-Ethiopia-Sudan over the Nile River Basin, Israel and the Jordan River, India-Pakistan over the Indus River, and Southern Europe over the Danube River. I evaluate the established treaties and agreements over the water basins to assess how these have influenced and impacted the relations among the participating states. Included in this analysis are also factors that play a role in the building of cooperation and conflict such as government type, population density, physical geography, and cultural history. With a total of 90% of states living within boundaries that are not equivalent to the water boundaries and increasing water scarcity, it is critical that water basin boundaries be acknowledged to allow states to prepare and act accordingly. A moderate level of scarcity leads countries to cooperate and share the rights over the water and its management. However, severe scarcity can discourage countries to cooperate due to the low outcome of water availability in comparison to what it is needed. Water is essential to the holistic development of civilizations, and thus securing its availability and management is vital to our existence.