

hensive and nuanced understanding for the reader. This book is recommended for reading by economics scholars and all academics

who are eager to gain a comprehensive understanding of Palestine and explore the roots of the colonization paradigm.

## Water and Conflict in the Middle East

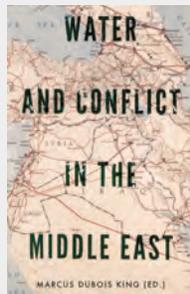
*Edited by* Marcus DuBois King

Oxford University Press, 2020, 268 pages, \$28.19, ISBN: 9780197552636

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The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) can be considered as one of the most water-stressed regions in the world. However, existing literature regarding the hydrogeopolitics of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) mainly deals with the transboundary waters such as Nile, Jordan, and Euphrates-Tigris and holds states as the main actors. However, groundwater resources, transboundary aquifers, and non-state actors constitute the new developments in the hydrogeopolitics literature. In this context, *Water and Conflict in the Middle East*, edited by Marcus DuBois King, contributes to the literature while discussing the newly emerging areas in the hydrogeopolitics of the MENA.

Beginning with a short introduction, in the first chapter, King underlines the basic features and content of the book. Criticizing the common approach regarding the water and conflict nexus, that water stress and shortages do not lead to conflict, King emphasizes that such arguments are challenged in the book since there is, in fact, evidence that water shortages and stress may precipitate conflict between actors. Besides, the authors agree that competition over scarce water resources and poor water governance are the main reasons for the region's water stress. However, fundamental



reasons that lead to the water question in the Middle East, such as civil wars, the emergence of failed states, and the rise of non-state actors, specifically in Syria and Iraq, such as ISIS, are underlined in the book.

Chapter 2, by Hussein A. Amery, deals with the potential water conflict zones in the Middle East through a Neo-Malthusian perspective. The author generally outlines the Euphrates-Tigris and Nile hydrogeopolitics within which the Southeast Anatolian Project (GAP) and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) are constructed. Food and water weaponization in armed conflicts such as Syria and Yemen are also examined. However, discussing the Atatürk and Ilisu Dams and their impacts on Turkish-Syrian and Turkish-Iraqi relations, Amery disregards how the Ilisu Dam negatively influenced Turkish-Iranian relations. On the other hand, regarding the GERD dispute, the author neglects several points, such as Omar al-Bashir's support to the GERD, the role of other Nile riparians, and Egypt's domestic troubles.

Chapter 3, written by Paul A. Williams, is mainly related to the impact of the GAP on the emergence of Türkiye's hydro-hegemony

in the Euphrates-Tigris Basin. While the author utilizes a few tables regarding the GAP dams and Hydroelectric Power Plans (HEPP), it would be better to use a map that would demonstrate Türkiye's dams on Euphrates-Tigris. Therefore, it is challenging to understand only textual narratives with several quantitative data. Besides, Williams primarily focuses on Turkish-Syrian relations and does not provide details about Turkish-Iraqi relations. Finally, the author deploys "hydro-hegemony" as a theoretical framework, based chiefly on the actors' power dynamics. And dam buildings on the river system, which can be considered one of the essential tactics for hydro-hegemon but are not detailed throughout the chapter.

Chapter 4, written by Marcus DuBois King, explains the hydropolitics of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) based on interviews, media reports, and academic resources. Addressing the emergence of the KRG in the historical context, he outlines the significant parameters of the KRG's politics, the water resources of Northern Iraq, and anthropogenic and natural factors that have contributed to the emergence of water stress in Northern Iraq. Although the framework of hydro-hegemony (FHH) is originally a state-centric realist approach, the author innovates by deploying the FHH to explain the KRG's hydropolitics. However, it would be better to underline what differentiates the sub-state actors from the states in hydropolitical terms, and to explain the contributions of the sub-state actors to the FHH literature.

Chapter 5, written by Mark Giordano, Katalyn Voss, and Signe Stroming, pertains to groundwater resources in the Middle East and North Africa. The authors mainly focus on the current knowledge of groundwater resources, the positive and negative impacts of

groundwater use and overuse, and the nexus between groundwater use, food security, and food prices. Since data availability is problematic regarding groundwater resources, they provide several databases and models, such as the Aquastat and the Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE). Furthermore, the authors focus on several problematic and disputed transboundary aquifers in the MENA. Accordingly, they claim that the Mountain and Coastal Aquifers shared between Israel and Palestine are the most problematic ones in the region. Whereas literature mostly focuses on the Jordan River dispute between Israel and Palestine, this chapter unorthodoxly touches upon the importance of the transboundary aquifer problem between them.

Chapter 6, written by Helen Lackner, concentrates on Yemen's community-based water management strategies, mostly based on the Islamic rules and law or *urf*. Several strategy documents and associations that are integral parts of customary water management are examined. Nevertheless, the most critical part of the chapter is the conclusion since it concentrates on the post-war priorities of water management in Yemen. The author does not believe the community-based approach will be "feasible" or "helpful" (p. 146) and proposes a complementary strategy that involves state intervention and democratic participation. Lackner also proposes substantially reducing water usage in the agriculture sector while prioritizing human drinking and domestic needs, which require strong state capacity. Moreover, since there is no sign of peace, Lackner also stresses the emergence of "climate/water refugees" in the neighboring countries.

Chapter 7, written by Tobias von Lossow, taking the so-called ISIS as a case study, discusses weaponizing water in the Middle East.

According to the author, the ISIS had weaponized water in three different ways: limitation of available water at the dams, release of excessive water through canals and barrages causing flooding, and contamination of water resources. However, the ISIS also utilized water as a legitimate instrument in which water and electricity services were used to show its ability to establish a state-like entity. It is also claimed in the chapter that nearly all the actors, including the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and Assad-backed groups, weaponized water in the armed conflicts. However, the author disregards how PYD/YPG, which mainly holds the water resources in the Syrian territory, weaponized water in the region.

Chapter 8, written by Nael Shama and Islam Hassan, mainly deals with the foreign policy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden regarding water-space and shipping lanes. According to the authors, the UAE has particular interests in the Red Sea due to the gaining economic and geopolitical influence, including trade, navigation, military and naval bases, and fighting against Islamism. Although these factors are significant to understand the UAE activism in East Africa and the Red Sea, the authors should also focus on the role of the UAE in

the GERD negotiations among Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia since the UAE is claimed to support the GERD, and it has agricultural solid trade connections with Sudan.

In conclusion, *Water and Conflict in the Middle East* have made several contributions to the literature on the hydro-politics of the Middle East. Firstly, it discusses concepts and subjects, such as transboundary aquifers, groundwater resources, and the weaponization of water from new perspectives. Secondly, it focuses on the newly emerging non-state actors that have influenced the hydro-politics in the region, such as the ISIS and KRG. Thirdly, it has concentrated largely on the current hydro-political developments in the Middle East, such as the Yemeni water crisis and GERD. In terms of criticism, it could be argued that the GERD dispute would have been explained more fully if it had been examined in a separate chapter. Furthermore, the Afghanistan-Iran dam disputes, Palestinians' water security and PYD/YPG as a non-state actor in the Middle East are significant subjects left out of the book. Despite these shortcomings, *Water and Conflict in the Middle East* does provide academics, researchers, and practitioners with new insights, perspectives, and opinions.