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WATER OF PARADIGMS, COOPERATION AND CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN POLITICS

Ortadoğu Siyasalarında Paradigma, İşbirliği ve Çatışma Unsuru Olarak Su

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ÖZ

Su, insan yaşamındaki vazgeçilmez niteliği nedeniyle jeostratejik bir doğal kaynaktır. Bununla birlikte, su bir noktada hayat kurtarıcı iken, diğer açıdan birçok çatışma doğuran bir olgudur. Suyun kıtlığı, tarihsel olarak dünyanın birçok bölgesindeki siyasi çatışmaların önemli bir nedeni olduğunu kanıtlamıştır. Bunun sonucu olarak, dünyadaki tüm devletler için suyun bolluğu veya kıtlığı, uluslararası siyasetin üstesinden gelmek zorunda olduğu çok önemli bir konu olagelmiştir. Uluslararası toplum ve hükümetler suyun yarattığı sosyal, ekonomik, politik ve çevresel sorunlarla yüzyıllardır yüzyüze kalmışlar ve başa çıkmak zorunda olmuşlardır. Bu nedenle, su siyasaları, daima güç ve hâkimiyetin su aracılığı ile sağlanmasına duyulan bir nevi susuzluk göstergesi olmuştur. Benzer şekilde, Ortadoğu'daki sular da, uzun yüzyıllardır paradigma, söylem, müzakere, işbirliği ve çatışma gibi unsurlarla bölgesel siyasaların aracı olmuştur. Bu araştırmanın ana amacı, Ortadoğu ülkeleri arasındaki ilişkilerindeki siyasal ve sosyal karışıklıkların temel nedeni olarak su siyasalarının önemini incelemek ve bölgenin zengin hidro-karbon kaynaklarına rağmen, suyun Ortadoğu siyasalarında gerçek bir oyun-değiştirici olup olmadığını ortaya koymaktır.

ABSTRACT

Water is a geostrategic natural resource due to its essential nature for human life. However, while water saves life at one point, it generates many different conflicting problems at another. Its scarcity historically proved to be an important element for political conflicts in many areas of the world. As a result of that, scarcity or abundance of water for all states around the world is a very significant issue to overcome through international politics. In the context of incidental politics, governments and the international community hold and deal with key problems related to the question of water which has to face at the social, economic, political and environmental level for centuries. Thus, water politics has always been sort of thirst for might and dominance through water itself. Likewise, water in the Middle East has been the means of regional politics regarding paradigms, discourses, negotiations, cooperation and conflicts for many centuries. The main aim of this research is to examine the importance of water politics as a real-wild-card for political and social unrests in the relations among the Middle Eastern states, and to explore whether water is the true game-changer in Middle Eastern politics despite wealthy hydro-carbon resources of the region.

1. INTRODUCTION

As being an essential element for living beings, water is the meaning of life. It is an indispensable means of life both for living creatures and communities on earth. This aspect surely makes water an issue of reel politics since, just like water, politics account for societies as well. Thus likewise politics, water seems likely to be the art or science of incident concerned with winning and holding control over it. Due to its essential place for life, while water is the basic element for life, it is always the most confronting and challenging element for relations of life. Since water flows from one to territory to another through various 'waterways', this characteristic of mobility for water incurs either common cooperative acts or mutual confrontive conflicts. Eventually this aspect comes out to be the plainest challenge of thirst in seeking might and dominance through water.

However, while water saves life at one point, it originates many different conflicting problems at another. As a result of that, scarcity or abundance of water for all states around the world is a very

significant issue to overcome through international politics. In the context of incidental politics, governments and the international community hold and deal with key problems related to the question of water which has to face at the social, economic, political and environmental level for centuries. Thus, water politics, or hydro-politics, is the systematic study of cooperation, crisis and conflicts between states over water resources that transcend international borders (Elhance, 1999: 3). Therefore, having acknowledged its importance, scarcity and sometimes full-absence, water holds the most significance place within communal traditions and international relations. Thus, the *right to water* was considered in thorough details because of the growing importance that the efforts towards its full recognition are assuming in the international negotiations, debates and conflicts.

Middle East is an arid region which has 10 out of the 15 most water-poor countries in the world. Water politics in the Middle East deals with control of the water resources of the region as a whole. Issues relating to water supplies affect international and inter-regional affairs, with disputes over countries' rights and access to water resources most often the cause of tensions in this arena. The contended nature of some water provisions has tended to mean that certain waters become more prone to political conflicts (those which are primarily prone to this in the Middle East and northern Africa are the Nile, Jordan and Tigris-Euphrates rivers). In order to secure reliable levels of water access for their populations, states must either have a large water supply in terms of economic availability, or their rights to such supplies must be established (Allan, 2002: 215).

Studies of water in the Middle East have also suggested that, in a sensitive hydrological location, a country's existing surface- and ground-water access should be protected as a first priority if it is to begin to address any water difficulties or shortages. Such measures as these can be seen as being the primary responsibilities of national governments or ruling authorities; and water is therefore closely tied up with statehood and geographical territory in international relations, and with the recognition and rights of nation states as the central actors in this field (Allan, 2002: 216).

In this context, this research tries to explore the place of water as a primary, strategic and hegemonic source of politics in the Middle East by investigating the phenomenon of cooperation and conflict over international water resources in the region. This research also aims to examine the link between water and security in the Middle East since its scarcity has historically been proved to be a primary element of political conflicts in many areas of the world for centuries. In this study, examples of water politics' conflicts from the Middle East are assumed to illustrate those critical analytic distinctions. Finally, this research shows the importance of political mechanisms regarding water management, and the rise of multilateralism supporting policy makers to manage transnational challenges and adapt to contemporary challenges.

Overall, natural resource management, or more specifically water resource management, has been chosen as an example given that transnational challenges are of increasing importance. Moreover, transboundary rivers break territorial sovereignty and challenge policy makers and scholars. Because of this, the findings in this research can be used to draw broader conclusions for other transnational challenges in a multilateral environment, such as haze pollution or the spread of diseases (Haefner, 2015: 5).

2. METHOD

This research was designed on a wide of range of literature search and review. So, the area of this study was launched with researching in the library at first. Thus, while research approaches were preferred in this study, methods such as content analysis, document and discourse analysis, historical review and causal-comparative model were also reckoned.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Water as a Commodity of Hydro-Hegemony: A Political Framework

Empirically, over 90 percent of the world's population lives in countries that share a river basin with others. Freshwater resources are scarce and different nations, actors and users compete for limited sources in transboundary river basins; often conflicting with others (Haefner, 2016: 1). Frey (1993: 55) defines 'international rivers' as rivers that form the boundary/boundaries between two or more nations and 'transnational rivers' that flow across international boundaries creating upstream and

downstream riparians. Along with land and air, water is the most vital human resource. It also is scarce, maldistributed and often shared internationally. Hence, it is frequently the focus of serious conflict among nations, especially the riparians of transnational rivers. Population growth and economic development exacerbate these conjlictual tendencies.

Thus, water is a resource with no substitute: it cannot be secured in sufficiently large quantities through long-distance trade deals; and, due to the interconnectivity of the hydrological system, the actions of one country in its water management have a direct bearing on the interests of neighboring countries (Hsing, 2011: 2). Conflict between and within states over freshwater resources poses challenges due to competing claims over water and the concept of territorial sovereignty, which is challenged by transboundary rivers. Overall, cooperation in transboundary river basins is possible in asymmetric power relations and that the argument that military and economic power is the only driver behind cooperation and decision-making has limited utility. Power is important, but material power is not the only form of power that can be used by states or actors within the state. Taking into consideration theoretical concepts of realism and liberalism, issue linkage and bargaining play a central role besides the power relation between the riparians (Haefner, 2016: 2). However, there are nuances between conflict and cooperation, and that this dynamic can change over time.

In this sense, water, being a commodity of scarcity, is a basic means of international politics and relations. Thus, international relations and water do mix most of the times. Too often in international relations excessive focus is given to military and economic power, and there is an insufficient understanding of what constitutes other types of power (Haefner, 2015: 2; Dinar, 2009: 329). Water has been a commodity of life for millions of years. From the dawn of time, most human activities have relied on water as the vital resource, which is the prerequisite of any form of life and human activities. Nowadays, our social and economic development and our food security depend to a large extent on the availability of this resource in terms of quantity and quality. The Mediterranean Basin in general, and more specifically its southeastern part, is encountering rapid changes leading to huge water stress and the tiniest percentage of available drinking water per inhabitant in the world. Changes leading to water scarcity include growing population, with rates annually exceeding 2.8%, and excessive water demand for irrigation. Climate change exacerbates water droughts and risks. In this context, the Middle East countries are facing extremely serious problems of water shortages with tragic consequences interlinked with a series of complex geopolitical issues. In fact, overall national sovereignty, political, social and economic factors seem to be equally important to the scarcity of water resources, which may influence conflicts and violent clashes (so-called 'water riots'). This is the reason why water and hydro-diplomacy occupy a central space on the diplomatic agenda of the governments in the region, including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Egypt and Turkey. Water has thus become a source of cross-border and therefore interstate risk, not only for the major rivers such as the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates, but also for other main riverine systems such as those of the Jordan, the Orontes and the Nahr el Kebir (Ballabio, et.al., 2015: 11-12).

Thus, water is a crystal-clear source of hegemony as well, by being a commodity of hydro-hegemony. Zeitoun and Warner (2006: 435) define "hydro-hegemony" as "hegemony at the river basin level, achieved through water resource control strategies such as resource capture, integration and containment". Turton (2002) picks up on the distributive issue in his definition of hydro-politics as 'the authoritative allocation of values in society with respect to water'. We can add to this definition by explicit incorporation of the role that power plays as an essential feature of water conflict and cooperation in practice. The political framework of hydro-hegemony seeks to inform "who gets how much of the water, how and why" in transboundary water conflicts by addressing and understanding multiple forms of power and intensities and modes of conflict (Zeitoun and Warner, 2006: 436).

With increased wealth, population, climate change and globalization it is inevitable that water security is rising higher on the political agenda in many parts of the world. Transboundary Water Management (TWM) is not a new topic but there is now an increased urgency. Over the last decade there has been an expansion of press reports, books and academic papers that look at transboundary waters, indicating its growing importance and trying to contribute to understanding the challenges and finding solutions to this significant issue of future. The international dimension as well makes the problem particularly intractable, with valuable water remaining under-utilized because of the political complexities associated with their development and management. This blockage has to be resolved. In

order to that, we should steer a commendably sober course through the conflict-cooperation debate and avoid the rhetoric of 'water wars'. Thus we emphasize and stress the need for nations to cooperate effectively over the management of shared waters by managing power asymmetries, sharing benefits, the importance of international agreements and international water law since the nature of cooperation can have many meanings. Often 'cooperation' means stagnation or inaction, thus being a brake on development. Whilst historically there has been less conflict than some scholars had suggested, the past is no predictor of the future and as demand intensifies disputes are likely to increase (Kattelus, 2009: 339).

Therefore, water is quite significant for power and hegemony in international politics and relations. Thus, water as a commodity of international relations is also a critical commodity for hydro-politics. Hydro-hegemony, stemming from the management, control and balance of water, is hegemony active at the basin scale, and occurs where control over transboundary flows is consolidated by the more powerful actor. Four forms of power can be used to evaluate hydro-hegemonic situations: geography; material power; bargaining power; and ideational power. Explicit consideration of the perspective of the non-hegemonic actor(s) can provide valuable insight into the process and outcome of transboundary water interaction. Testing of the theoretical concepts by mid-level water managers suggests that not all forms of power are equal, with material and bargaining power counting more than geographic position or ideational power, for instance. It was also found that what is labeled as 'cooperation' is not always as intended and distinctions should be made between 'non-cooperation', limited or dominative-type 'cooperation', and comprehensive cooperation (Zeitoun and Cascão, 2010: 27). Thus hydro-hegemony could be concurred as a different tool of integrated water resources management in practice among states (Lenton and Muller, 2009).

Application of critical hydro-politics is thus useful for interpretation of the power plays that grease or block the cogs of the decision-making machinery. Observing interstate interaction from inside and outside these processes on the Nile, Jordan, and Tigris and Euphrates River Basins, we argue that various riparian states are endowed with highly asymmetric capacity to use both overt and covert forms of power. As we will see, overt and covert forms of power are also commonly understood as, but not directly analogous to, 'hard' and 'soft' forms of power (Zeitoun and Cascão, 2010: 28). We assert that the power asymmetries determine to a significant (not total) extent the fundamentally political distributional issue of 'who gets what, when, where and why' (Lasswell, 1936).

Thus this is the politics in its broadest sense: 'who gets what, when, where and why?', especially in the Middle East since the bulk of academic hydro-political research has concentrated on basins in the Middle East and North Africa (e.g. Waterbury, 1979; Falkenmark, 1989; Wolf, 1998; Elhance, 1999; Allan, 2001). Hydro-politics has also been strongly associated with the 'water wars' concept, wherein interstate armed conflicts were expected to occur in any number of 'hydro-political security complexes' such as the Tigris and Euphrates (Schulz, 1995). The analytical dyads of 'water-conflict' and 'water–security' are among the major forms of bias in the hydro-politics literature. The consistent association of hydro-politics with conflict or security issues has led to an impoverished debate and hindered understanding of hydro-politics as a dynamic and ongoing process involving several other key dynamics -notably society, environment and culture.

3.2 Water of Paradigms, Conflict and Cooperation in the Middle Eastern Politics

Water is vital to not only an individual's survival, but to that of a nation's economy and society (Wolf, 1998: 252; Brochmann and Hensel, 2009: 394). With growing concerns for the environment and increasingly limited water resources, states are seeking stronger footholds to secure water resources for their survival. States sharing river basins and freshwater supplies are more sensitive to guaranteeing state access to shared river water resources, especially if they depend on water supplies that originate outside their borders. To manage shared rivers and water resources, interactions among riparian countries is inevitable. Scholars are interested in whether cooperation or conflict is more prevalent in these negotiations over transnational water resources.

Homer-Dixon (1994, 1999) argues that renewable resource scarcity and decreasing access to resources aggravates socio-economic frustration, resulting in violent conflicts. Urdal (2005) articulates a similar idea of relative deprivation associated with resource scarcity. These arguments, commonly called the 'resource curse', directly connect environmental issues and resource problems to human

and national security, covering broad aspects of a society (Bennet, 1991; Homer-Dixon, 1999; Kaplan, 1994; Myers, 1993; Renner, 1996; Suliman, 1998). The resource curse arguments suggest that worsening resource scarcity and environmental problems give rise to social and political instabilities and increase security risks for individuals and state leaders. The theory suggests that people and states will engage in conflicts with one another to secure their access to resources essential to their survival and security. Research on lateral pressure theory suggests additionally that increases in population size raise the demands for natural resources, which can also increase the likelihood for resource conflicts between countries as states seek to secure access to natural resources outside their borders (Choucri and North, 1975). This research shows that both demand side and supply side factors influence the relationship between resources and conflict (Lee and Mitchell, 2014).

According to Wolf, there is a history of water-related violence on a sub-national level, but for nation-states, the potential for violent conflict over water is actually relatively low (Wolf, 1999). A total of 1,831 water-related events that occurred between states in the years 1948-1999 were investigated, yet two-thirds resulted in cooperation and the vast majority of the remaining did not escalate to more than verbal arguments. Only 37 incidents reached an acute conflict level, 30 of which involved Israel and one or several of its neighbors (Postel and Wolf, 2001).

In the politics of water, conflict and cooperation actually co-exist, and perpetuate the paradigm that any conflict is “bad”, and that all forms of cooperation are “good”, meaning that there are different levels of conflict and varying levels of cooperation (Zeitoun and Mirumachi, 2008: 297-299). There are many different ways to approach the topic of cooperation and conflict in the water politics of the Middle East. Civil society, non-state actors and a variety of political actors in different political environments are of growing interest; however, the main focus of this research is on riparian states of the transboundary river basins of the Middle East (Haefner, 2015: 7).

Overall, transboundary water relations are complex and all basins are different because water resources’ endowments, terrain, and -most importantly- institutional infrastructure vary. While the nature of power relations is unique to each river basin (Zeitoun and Allan, 2008: 11), in arid or semi-arid regions such as Africa and the Middle East, all the above-mentioned factors are intensified (Daoundy, 2009: 359). Additionally, due to the conflict prone nature of these regions, water resource management is not high on the political agenda. Nevertheless, numerous studies focus on water resource management in the Middle East and Africa, including works on the following transboundary rivers: the Euphrates and Tigris (Frey, 1993: 59), the Jordan, the Nile, and the Senegal. For a detailed study about nature of conflict in South-eastern Turkey regarding the Euphrates and Tigris basin, see (Conker, 2014). This study analyses Turkey’s relations with states and non-state actors on transboundary water issues from Turkey’s independence to 2011. It offers a theoretical framework that integrates the role of non-state actors enrolled in hydro-political processes. Analyzing the anti-Ilısu dam activist networks, this study shows the relevance of including non-state actors in the analysis and draws the conclusion that such actors are able to use discursive power to meet their interests. See bibliography “hydro-hegemony” in the reference for detail.

Water as core of civilization and the principle resource problem of the world poses an issue of five hypotheses in the Middle Eastern politics: water as a security issue, water as an economic issue, water as a legal issue, water as a technical issue and water as an environmental issue. However, conception of water as a strategic issue seems overriding every other issue in the region. Because it is the main means of survival. Positionality in transboundary water affairs can likewise be expected to influence the topic and process of research. Practitioners of water policy and water politics will select those theories about the world that best suit and justify their agendas. Trottier (2003: 8) makes the point well in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli water conflict, showing how different groups benefit from their discourses of ‘water peace’ or ‘water wars’, to attract donor funds or domestic political support, respectively.

Water practitioners set out to solve the kind of problems that easily get ‘securitised’ as survival issues of food and energy self-sufficiency and water development, bestowing a considerable power position on managers and policy advisers. The discourse of water science-for-policy is seldom a critical one. Those in power usually do not like discussing power, as it would force them to justify their position (Guzzini, 2005) while those working in consultancy rarely bite the hand that feeds. See (Zeitoun and Warner, 2008) for detail. Most studies of water scarcity in the Middle East conclude that there is a

significant risk of imminent conflict, even warfare, between states in the region. However, the evidence does not always support this doom-laden prediction. Indeed, although water scarcity has occasionally played a role in disputes in the Middle East, it has much more often promoted co-existence between adversaries. The reasoning behind this hypothesis is that water is too critical to be put at risk by warfare (Dolatyar and Gray, 2000).

Water had always been the issue of politics and conflicts in the Middle East. More than any other region all over the world, the Middle East is plagued by instability and conflict. Conflict has traditionally been caused by political, military, ethnic and religious issues, but, in an increasingly complex world, potential causes of insecurity have widened and diversified considerably. Though traditional sources of conflict continue to play a major role, economic, social and environmental issues increasingly contribute to both causing and fuelling it. While 70% of the planet is covered in water, only 2.5% of it is fresh water. Of this, only 1% is easily accessible, as much of the world's freshwater is trapped in glaciers and ice caps.* Increasing scarcity and dire projections have made states of the Middle East view water both as a national security priority and as a political and economic lever. In this region, water, like oil, cannot be separated from politics. For example, Turkey, as an upstream state of the Tigris-Euphrates basin, has used its strategic position as a leverage to advance its national or regional interests. Egypt, on the other hand, is a downstream state, meaning its supply is more vulnerably and it had threatened to go to war to protect its so-called acquired rights over the waters of the Nile (Pedraza and Heinrich, 2016).

A country's strategy to deal with water scarcity depends not only on local conditions, but also on the available financial resources technical and institutional capacity, and the agreements in place to secure access to this resource. Resources in the West Bank, for example, include the Jordan River, which runs all along the eastern border of the West Bank, and the Mountain Aquifer underlying the West Bank and Israel. Both are transboundary -meaning that, under international law, they should be shared in an equitable and reasonable manner by Israel and Palestine. However, since Israel took over the West Bank in 1967, it has remained in full control over water resources in the area. This is the case for example for the Mountain Aquifer, the 1995 Oslo II interim agreement- which also defined the water-sharing arrangements between Palestine and Israel- came to consolidate the Israeli control that had been in place since 1967: Israel was granted access to over 71% of the aquifer water, while Palestinians were only granted 17 percent. While the agreement was supposed to last five years only, 20 years later, it is still in place (Shamir, 1998).

Control over water is also at the forefront of the Islamic State's (IS) strategy of creating a caliphate in Iraq and Syria. The major dams on the Tigris and Euphrates basin are seen not only as strategic targets but also as powerful weapons of war. Water matters as much as land in this region and IS's quest for hydrological control began in Northern Syria when it captured the old Soviet Tabqa dam in 2014, a major source of electricity and water for the country. IS has also launched repeated offensives to capture the Iraqi Mosul and Haditha dams, the two largest in the country. Considering that over 95% of Iraq's water comes from Tigris and Euphrates (Collard, 2014), anyone controlling both dams would have a stranglehold on water and electricity supply which would have a crippling effect on food production and economic activity in central and south Iraq (Pedraza and Heinrich, 2014).

In sum, we need to emphasize that water should be the commodity of regional cooperation and peace-building in the Middle East. Theoretically, the idea that cooperation over water resources could act as a pathway for building peace is feasible. We should deepen the understanding of how the peace-building effects of such cooperation can best be harnessed, supported and sustained through various initiatives promoting water cooperation in the region. In the semi-arid to arid climatic conditions of the Middle East, water resources management is a contentious issue between parties sharing the same water resources. On the other hand, solving water problems has been identified as a topic of common interest to Middle Easterners. Thus cooperation in water resources management, however, remains an important goal to pursue, as it is the only way to sustainably manage the scarce water resources in the region. Cooperation is important in order to provide water for health security and livelihood reasons, and because water disputes fuel existing conflicts (Kramer, 2008: 7).

* See http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/freshwater/ freshwater-crisis/ for detail.

Water-related issues as an entry point for dialogue and cooperation, and a pathway for peace-building. Sharing an ecosystem, such as river basins or other water resources, creates complex interdependencies between parties. Based on these interdependencies, environmental problems can provide incentives for cooperation and collective action across political boundaries and ethnic divides (Conca, 2001). In many instances, parties whose relations are otherwise characterised by distrust and hostility -if not open violence- have found that environmental issues, such as shared water resources, are one of the few areas in which they can sustain ongoing dialogue (Conca, et.al., 2005). This leads to the question of whether environmental cooperation could be harnessed for peace-building aims. There are several pathways along which environmental cooperation could contribute to peace. The environmental peacemaking literature has identified different mechanisms through which the link between environmental cooperation and broader forms of peace can be established. The most elaborate theoretical framework appears to be the one first proposed by Conca in 2001 and later used as a theoretical basis for the book Environmental Peacemaking. See (Conca and Dabelko, 2002). Working together on solving common problems can help replace distrust, uncertainty and suspicion with shared knowledge and a tradition of cooperation (Conca, 2001). The interdependencies created by shared water resources can further reveal mutual benefits of cooperation. In another ideal scenario, cooperation over environmental issues could lead to the internalization of shared norms, the creation of an (eco-)regional identity and regional interests.

Environmental cooperation could be introduced at different levels of society with the aim of contributing to peace. Social interest groups can take advantage of ecological interdependence across territorial borders to facilitate cooperation between academia and/or civil society actors. This can bring changes in the attitudes, values or perceptions of individuals. Over time, regular interaction at the societal level may translate into changes of behavior and help lay the foundation for changes at the political level (Carius, 2006). However, such spillover effects from the individual/personal level to the social/political level do not occur automatically, but require coordinated action to bring about the structural change that is necessary for peace (Anderson and Olson, 2003; Kramer, 2008).

The objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive, long-term and regional framework for thinking about water in the Middle East, which can be implemented with specific policy decisions, beginning in the immediate future, by individual countries or small groups of countries without waiting for all the countries in the region to move forward. Such a framework recognises the potential of water to deliver a new form of peace -the blue peace- while presenting long term scenarios of risks of wars and humanitarian crisis.

The study takes a long-term view. The countries that are friendly today may be antagonistic tomorrow and the ones which are enemies today may be friends' tomorrow. The history of merely last ten years in the Middle East demonstrates how quickly the geopolitical scene changes. The political equations of today cannot be assumed to remain constant during the next decade and beyond. Our vision, therefore, should not be imprisoned by the current context. We have to anticipate alternative political trajectories for the next couple of decades in order to find solutions that are sustainable in the long run.

The study provides a regional perspective. Since watercourses, both surface and underground, do not understand political boundaries, it would be natural to have a regional approach to water management. The nation centric approach is unnatural and therefore unsustainable. Thus this study is therefore as much about paradigm shifts in global thinking as about the specific details of seasonal variations in the discharge of rivers and demand management with new methods of irrigation and conveyance. It is as much about big ideas as about small actions. The "Blue Peace" approach puts forward an innovative approach to engage political leaders, the public and the media in harnessing and managing collaborative solutions for sustainable regional water management, make a path for the evolution of a regional political and diplomatic community in water and create new opportunities for resolving protracted water related conflicts.

Water-diplomacy is organized according to new political norms and processes, common and consensual policy, laws and institutions for managing the water resources. The centre piece of water diplomacy is to agree on the socio-economic, environmental and political benefits derived from the use of water. The "Blue Peace" approach could be a milestone in that endeavor. In many places, water could be a source of conflict but, at the same time, we believe that water will become a new common

challenge, which will bring people and governments together to find innovative solutions to this life-threatening situation. Fortunately in the Middle-East, good relations and mutual recognition exist among top level water and political actors across boundaries. We are convinced that in the "Blue Peace" approach, a concrete, realistic and consensual road map for a cooperative and productive management of water, including the shared resources take place (Waslekar, 2011).

4. CONCLUSION

In this study, we examine how water politics has always been sort of thirst for might and dominance through water itself. Attached to this hydro-hegemony, likewise, we analyze that water in the Middle East has been the means of regional politics regarding paradigms, discourses, negotiations, cooperation and conflicts for many centuries. We find that water issue in the Middle Eastern politics glitters at the dawn of a new paradigm. It is not conflict, but cooperation commodity in the future of environmental peace.

Detailed and collaborative collective work provides background information as well as relevant and practical aspects that could assist the improved integrated management of the shared transboundary water resources of the Orontes. It also offers useful input for addressing key questions such as: How to limit the climate change effects on the riparian countries? How to deal with poor hydraulic resources in the region? How to improve access to sufficient quantities of good quality water for vulnerable populations? How to improve water demand? In conclusion, this work facilitates the efforts to chase away the phantom of water riots in the region and assists governments in adopting policies of cooperation and participation in transboundary watercourse management issues. Conflict and cooperation in the Middle East frequently co-exist at various scales, from international to national, sub-national or even local, and in different forms, from silent conflicts to armed and violent riots. Water in transboundary basins must provide the means for cooperation, reconciliation and peace between peoples.

A new "Water Culture" must be developed, not as an abstract ideal but as the means to cultivate actual cooperation in the Middle East. Such cooperation should include technical and economic criteria concerning resources availability, current and future needs within the framework of integrated management and equitable sharing. We must give cooperation approach a serious boost if we wish to maintain peace. Learning to share water could encourage the peoples and the riparian countries to understand each other better and will help them to live together in a climate of confidence, respect, solidarity and prosperity (Ballabio, et.al., 2015: 1).

This study sheds light on new aspects of the likelihood of conflicts in dyads within shared river basins. By investigating the effects of energy resources on the chances of conflicts, we can achieve a more improved understanding of complicated mechanisms of cooperation in shared river basins. Future research will explore other possible resources that could be traded in riparian negotiations. We will also consider states' dependence on external suppliers for goods like oil and natural gas. Countries that are more vulnerable to outside suppliers may be even more likely to strike peaceful accords with their riparian neighbors.

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