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# Transboundary Water Governance and Climate Change Adaptation

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### GCC and Security

- GCC discussions have become securitised; jumping the queue of normal political priorities,
- GCC is now presented as an existential threat globally linking developed and developing parts of the world,
- GCC has gained the attention of defence and intelligence communities
- USA Pentagon in its Quadrennial Defence Review identifies climate change as one of the "trends ... whose complex interplay may spark or exacerbate future conflicts"
- Studies by UNDP, World Bank and the OECD quantify economic losses due to GCC and their impact on development objectives.



#### Intersection of GCC and Water Management

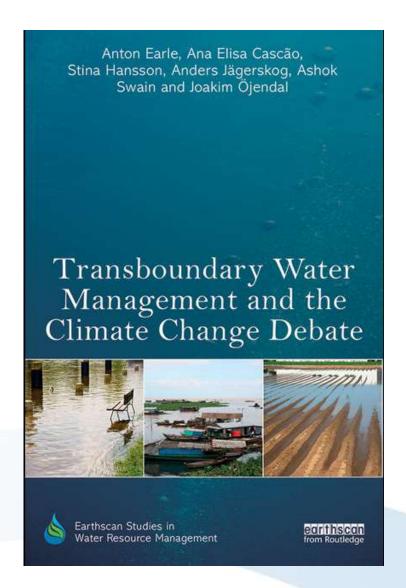
- The global water crisis is said to be a crisis of governance – there is enough water to go around,
- The problem lies with our economic, legal and management frameworks,
- GCC is likely to exacerbate this by increasing extreme events – floods, droughts and water-borne diseases
- Or is GCC a window of opportunity for introducing painful but necessary measures?



#### Intersection of GCC and TWM

- GCC may threaten the viability of international water agreements,
- GCC may affect the demand side (higher evapotranspiration) of the balance as well as the supply side – making agreements impossible to implement,
- Some agreements have measures to cope with changes in climate – but many do not
- Countries could be in breach of commitments creating conflict in the basin.





What is the impact of the discourse of climate change on transboundary water management?



### Responses to GCC at TWM level

Adapt: by adopting GCC-oriented concepts,

**Resist:** by refusing or contesting the fundamentals of the GCC discussion,

**Subvert:** by subverting the use of the GCC discussions' concepts,



# Adapt

- Taking steps to promote the resilience or robustness of the institutional framework; to counter the current and potential impacts of GCC.
- Actions at 3 levels:
  - Organisational (staff hiring and capacity building)
  - Systems (such as dam synchronisation; and early warning system)
  - Structural (building water storage or transfer & flood defense infrastructure)

#### Resist the GCC discussion

- Passive resistance would amount to avoidance of the issue, essentially seeking to wish it away through ignoring it (Orange-Senqu),
- Active resistance would be to question the legitimacy of the forecast impacts of climate change,
- Evident in 2 main areas:
  - Protecting investments made in existing infrastructure (and the water allocated to users) e.g. Aral Sea
  - International water agreements (avoiding complexity).



#### Subvert the GCC Discussion

- The initial meaning of the discussion is transformed in order to suit the interests of certain actors,
- Subversion through two main ways:
  - New climate change-oriented resource mobilisation strategies (new funding streams available so long as GCC is included) e.g. Nile & CRIDF; and
  - New discourse surrounding the construction of largescale water infrastructure (this infrastructure can help GCC mitigation as well as adaptation) e.g. Lake Chad.



## Concluding

- Important to be aware of the discussions around GCC,
- Should be able to analyse how GCC is possibly being used by various actors in a basin,
- Does GCC serve to maintain the status quo; or challenge it?
- Who will benefit from GCC adaptation measures & who will be negatively impacted?



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