

HH10

The Power of Representation & the Representation of Power in Water Conflict and Cooperation

Hydro-Hegemony 10

4-5 October 2019, Humanity Hub, The Hague

Background

In 2004, the London Water Research Group initiated conferences on hydro-hegemony, forming a platform for scientists, policymakers, practitioners and students to share new insights and information on 'transboundary water interaction'. The discussions are based on the understanding that power matters and conflict and cooperation over water may happen at the same time or alternate. Participants in the conferences explore how a more sophisticated power analysis could make diplomatic efforts for conflict resolution between disputants more effective, contributing to both advancing scientific knowledge and informing policy makers and diplomats. An important value is sharing of knowledge between senior and junior researchers. Since 2018, the HH conferences are held in The Netherlands upon initiative of Wageningen University & Research.

2019 marks a jubilee: The 10th hydro-hegemony conference 15 years after its inception.

Information on transboundary water issues comes to us in various forms and shapes: from indicators and infographics to photos and films. Names ('friendship dam') and metaphors ('the water bomb') symbolise conflict and cooperation over water; they promote certain perspectives and marginalize others.

The HH10 conference is dedicated to the topic of power and representation in water conflict and cooperation, and provides a platform to discuss representation of interests and issues as well as representation through discourses, narratives and images. It will focus on the following two questions:

1) *Who and what is (not) represented in transboundary water decision making?*

The most apparent aspect of representation is the representation of stakeholders and interests in decision making: Who sits at the table and whose voices are heard? How effective are tools to foster stakeholder participation and track 2 and 3 diplomacy? Which line ministry represents the "national interests" in international water negotiations and how does this influence the process and outcomes? Which strategies can give weaker countries and actors a stronger voice? Are legal rights for rivers a useful tool to represent environmental needs? How are different scales (not) linked and which interests are at risk of being not/under-represented?

2) *How are transboundary water issues (re)presented?*

Discourses, narratives, and framings in media, politics and academia shape the perception of problems and possible solutions; like water wars as narrative in media, benefit-sharing as framing among donor agencies, or sanctioned discourses of securitisation of water issues by governments. Visual tools like photos, cartoons, maps, graphs and movies are key in supporting both hegemonic as well as counter-hegemonic narratives of water conflict and cooperation. How can we best analyse and understand the mechanisms of framing and designing narratives, and the actors involved? What are the (hidden) messages of such visual tools and metaphors in raising support or contestation? What is the role of different sciences in framing transboundary water issues? Can visual research methods enlarge the understanding of issues at stake, and insights in the power and interest of involved stakeholders?

Panels and papers

We invite researchers, students and practitioners to address these questions and submit:

- a (max) 500-word proposal for a 90-minute session including speakers, or
- a (max) 300-word abstract for a 15-20-minute paper presentation.

Please submit your proposal or abstract before 31 July via <https://forms.gle/q6MYKbzzi85yWk9w7>

Please register here:

<https://forms.gle/TW1ZEjfEMshpH5RC6>

For questions please email to hydrohegemony10@un-ihe.org.

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