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Security to All: Allocating the Waters of Euphrates and Tigris

Abstract

The highly contested and complex issue of transboundary water governance calls for rethinking fairness and equity in the allocation of water between sovereign nation-states. This paper provokes ideas about the problem of allocation and access as it is stated in the Earth System Governance Project. It starts out arguing that the problem of allocation in the Middle East is framed by both upstream and downstream countries through discourses of security based on national sovereignty. In a world where national borders define who gets what, each nation state prioritizes its own citizens and development goals over those of other nations. State-centric approaches also dominate the legal principles of water allocation. This paper argues, however, that a discursive transformation of the concept of security in water governance is taking place from state-centric to people-centric notion and that this change has begun to shape the perspectives on water allocation. By focusing on the Euphrates and Tigris River Basin, this paper explores the new perspectives on water allocation such as the single basin approach and benefit-sharing and analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of this change.

1 Introduction

The development of integrated systems of governance, from the local to the global level, ensuring sustainable development is not an easy task. The idea of integrated systems of governance raises important issues such as the problem of agency; who takes part in the governing structure and the problem of accountability; who is responsible for this governing and what legitimacy is it conducted? In this context, the idea of Earth Systems Governance is a political activity as well as a challenge because it aims to involve multiple interests and

political factors such as nation-states, multilateral institutions, lobby groups as well as non-governmental organizations.

The problem of water allocation and access are challenged by the natural unevenness. Currently, an estimated 1.1 billion people lack access to safe water, 2.6 billion are without adequate sanitation, and more than 4 billion do not have their wastewater treated to any degree (UN HDR 2006). Most of these people are situated in the poorest parts of the world illustrating the relationship between socioeconomic and political inequality and access to water. The lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation has serious implications on people's health and consequently access to water can be seen as a human right since it implicitly refers to the UN 1948 Article 25; "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, and housing" (Gleick 1993: 491).

On top of this inequality, the world's available freshwater supply is not distributed evenly through population and varies depending on the seasons and year. For instance, while representing 5% of the total world population, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region contains only 0.9% of global water resources (World Bank 1996). Three main rivers in the Middle East; Jordan, Euphrates and Tigris constitute fresh water supply for staggering 300 million people.

Apart from the uneven distribution of water resources, the issue of distribution is also a political subject because it is considered the distribution of 'common properties' such as water. The question of who gets what in what amount is very essential in the water allocation. While access focuses simply on the notion that all should have access to bare minimum needs, water allocation looks at how water resources are shared within and between societies (Earth System Governance Science Plan: 91). Although UN Water Development Report in 2009 emphasizes that issues related to water need multidisciplinary and multi-sector approaches, the state-centered approach is still dominant when it comes to the problem of allocation of transboundary water. Especially the upstream and downstream positions of the countries are crucial in determining the conditions of river water allocation. When population growth and industrialization converge with the water scarcity, sovereign

states equate the water problems with national security. Such national security framing defines security in terms of existential threats to the values and its territorial integrity (Ewan 2007). Most of the literature on water and Middle East emphasizes the conflicting nature of water and how it is securitized in the context of nation-states (Bilen 1997, Wolf 1997, Gruen 2000, Zeitoun and Warner 2006, Daoudy 2009).

Scholars like Barry Buzan argue for a wider interpretation of security so that it includes also non-military dimensions of security. A narrow understanding of security fails to address various insecurities arising from a range of other important issues such as disease, hunger, social conflicts and political repression (Buzan, Waever and Wilde 1998). Their inclusion as security concerns is referred as the widening of security studies. The state-centered understanding of security is criticized heavily due to the fact that it places human security as supplement of its existing terms. After the publication of the Human Development Report in 1994 (UNDP, 1994) the concept of human security has been introduced as an answer to the need for broader understanding of security by moving the focus from states to people and has attracted policy interest over the past decade (Duffield 2007: 111).

In this paper, I argue that this discursive transformation of security from traditional state-centric to human security is manifested in altered perceptions of the governance of water allocation in the Euphrates and Tigris River (ETR) Basin. In other words, following the science plan of Earth System Governance, this paper is dealing with the question of how the principles that underline the water allocation are shaped. By scrutinizing different security concepts, I explore the different principles and practices of water allocation in the ETR. The riparians of the transboundary rivers of Euphrates and Tigris namely Turkey, Iraq and Syria have been through various conflicts because of their disagreements over ETR's water allocation. All of these have been shaped by the traditional security understanding focusing on national sovereignty. However, recently the focus on human security has begun to shape new perspectives on water allocation in the region. For instance, the emerging cooperation effort, Euphrates-Tigris Initiative for Cooperation (ETIC) can be considered of such a transformation. However, I argue that this new human based notion of security still needs to be developed further in order to address those problems of water allocation for non-state actors that influenced by differences on ethnicity, gender and tribal structures.

2 Water Allocation in the International System

The water on the surface of the earth is naturally organized by the river systems. These are fundamental as fresh water circulation and supply and support the ecology of the earth. Transboundary rivers are responsible for approximately 60 percent of the global river flow and meet the demands of 40 percent of the world's population. Today there are 263 transboundary rivers flowing from one country to another. The territory of 145 countries falls within transboundary river basins, and 33 countries are located almost entirely within these basins. Transboundary rivers have different importance for these countries since rivers are the key components of land productivity and food production as well as a source for industrial development through the production of hydro energy.

Water allocation of transboundary rivers is a complex task. How does one develop rules for allocating this vital resource which fluctuates in time and space and disregards the political boundaries? However, political boundaries do exist and define who controls the transboundary river flow according to the geographical location of countries as either upstream or downstream. In major parts of the world, then the current political system places nation-states as main actors and consequently the prevailing principles for water allocation of these rivers are shaped according to the state-centered interests. Moreover, states' various interpretations of these principles on water allocation make the issue more complex. Regardless of how detailed the body of law identifies the principles of allocation; the riparians will interpret the law for their own interests (Carkoglu and Eder 2001). Another difficulty is the uniqueness of each water conflict which makes generalized principles inapplicable in many cases.

According to Wolf (1999), despite the 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, there are as of now no internationally accepted criteria for allocating shared water resources or their benefits. So far international water law uses the term of equity as the basic criteria for water allocations. In 1966 the Helsinki Rules provide guidelines for `reasonable and equitable` use of shared waters, which was

subsequently adopted by the UN Convention in 1997 with some changes. According to this then the definition of reasonable and equitable use of water is based on seven relevant factors; a)geographic, hydrographic, climatic, ecological factors; b)socio-economic needs of each riparian state; c)population dependent on the water course; d) effects of use in one state on the uses of other state; e)existing and potential uses; f)conservation, protection, development and economy of use; g) the availability of alternatives (Ibid: 5). Based on these factors, each state is entitled to a reasonable and equitable share in the beneficial use of shared water while simultaneously also responsible for preventing significant harm to the other riparian states (Article 5-7, UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses 1997). However, the UN Convention hasn't been ratified by a sufficient number of countries to be in force as conventional international law showing how national interests delineate the issue of water allocation. [1]

Considering the water sharing agreements or treaties between the riparian states, some principles beyond from the international law have been adopted. These principles are defined according to right-based or need-based criteria. The right- based criteria is derived from claims to water rights either on the basis of hydrography or chronology. According to the hydrography idea, states can claim rights according to where rivers or aquifers originate from and how much of that territory falls within certain state boundaries. Moreover, the idea of chronology grounds basis for water rights according to who has been using the water the longest (Wolf 1999). However, the right based way of defining control over water allocation is ambiguous at best because each riparian assumes the right best suited to their interests. For instance, on the one hand, Iraq, which is a downstream country in Tigris basin, can claim water rights based on chronology since it has been using the river for much longer historically. On the other hand, Turkey, an upstream country, is favoring the hydrographical rights-based criteria since Tigris River originates from its territory. In other words, the rights-based approach is paralyzed when hydrographical and chronological rights claims clash.

According to the needs-based criteria, "needs are defined by irrigable land, population or the requirements of a specific project" (Wolf 1999: 10). In other words, on this approach,

[1] The Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses was adopted on 21 May 1997, 103 countries were in favor, 3 countries, Burundi, China and Turkey were against and 27 were absent.

each riparian state is still entitled to legal rights despite the allocations being determined by needs. However, like the rights-based approach it also fails to eliminate the upstream and downstream power asymmetry. One can argue that the needs-based approach gives more space for bargaining since it creates an opportunity for both sides to think about their needs and interests, and also forces both sides to meet the minimum requirement for each other`s needs. However, geographic location (upstream and downstream positions) will always give an upstream country more bargaining power over the determination of riparian needs. All these principles including the UN convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International watercourses are shaped according to the rights and responsibilities of nation-states. Therefore, water rights of groups and individuals are not included in these frameworks.

A sharing the benefits principle may then offers a more inclusive framework by embracing non-state actors in to the decision-making process. The principe of benefit-sharing refers to the equal allocation of benefits from the uses of the Transboundary River instead of the equal allocation of quantity of water. The benefit-sharing argument is based on an economic rationale that promotes the "positive sum outcomes associated with optimizing benefits rather than the zero sum outcomes associated with dividing water" (Qaddumi 2008: 1). Therefore, the values which are derived from water use in spheres such as the economic, social, political and environmental are calculated as benefits and shared by stakeholders. Here in this approach, a river basin is treated as a single unit rather than a place divided by national boundaries. Moreover, the major stakeholders are not only riparian countries, but also various government bodies, sectoral bureaucracies, regional, local governing structures, civil society, NGOs and individual users (Ibid: 5). One of the central idea is the 'basket of benefits' which broadens the scope of benefits beyond the water-related benefits . Linkages between water and politics, energy resources or data can be the subject of benefit-sharing approach. According to its proponents, in this model of allocation, benefits are shared in a manner that is perceived to be fair according to the stakeholder interests. The aim is thus consensus building according to the situational fairness where all stakeholders are satisfied. In other words, the underlying rationale behind this principle is that stakeholders would reach to an agreement if they feel they will receive a fair share of benefits (Ibid: 3).

However, all these principles of water allocation do not provide a consistent legal framework for a fair water allocation. Although there are 145 international water treaties in the world, more than half of them have no monitoring provisions and enforcement mechanism (Wolf 1999). Due to the lack of legal binding rules, water related conflicts do occur both at the national and sub-national level.

3 Security and Water Allocation

Due to the highly securitized nature of Middle East politics with the ongoing Palestinian-Israel conflict and the Iraq war, state-centric approach and traditional understanding of security is very dominant. Moreover, due to the fact that water security also influences the agricultural production, and thus, food security, water is very prominent in the national development programmes of many Middle Eastern states.

Most of the literature analyzes the issue of allocation of transboundary rivers from a geopolitical security framework that is motivated by the realist theory of International Relations. According to the 'realist' or 'real politik' theory of international relations "all states are all locked into the pursuit of their own interests… in defense of their own interests, states may resort to force in relation to each other, and force is a kind of ultimate test of power" (Buzan 1998: 388). States, in other words, prioritize to protect their sovereignty by securing their own territory and autonomy. Principles of sovereignty are essential since they are based on the assumption that states are the primary actors in determining their objectives within the international system. In this context, sovereignty entails a protection of the national territory including resources from that territory. In other words, protection of national resources can be seen as one of the fundamental rights of sovereignty. Owing to that, in the context of water allocation some states claim rights for the waters that are originating from their territory.

The idea of ''security'' entails two dimensions; first, an outward dimension which refers to the idea that the state should function as a unified body, concerns in relation to other constituted states. Second, an internal dimension state has a responsibility to its citizens. The citizens of the Hobbesian state promise their loyalty to it in exchange for their own

security according to the social contract tradition (Burgess 2008). A national security framework in other words emphasizes the priority of protecting national citizens and sovereignty. In this sense people without citizenship or state falls beyond the sphere of protection. Moreover, international agreements and laws are products of processes or intergovernmental negotiations based primarily on the state sovereignty. This brings up the question on how we can solve transboundary water allocation problem when international law places sovereignty at the centre of politics.

Widening and Deepening the Security Concept

Many argue that although traditional understanding on security that based on sovereignty is very dominant in international politics, it fails to cover transboundary security problems such as environmental degradation. Furthermore with the process of globalization makes the distinction between what is national and what is international is disappearing. Consequently, the search for a non-military and interstate based notion of security emerged, known as the widening debate. In his book 'People, States and Fear', Buzan (1991: 3) asserts that "security is an underdeveloped concept" which has to be interpreted wider to include non-military dimensions of security such as environment, migration or development policies.

According to Graeger (1996) there are three linkages between the environment and security. First and foremost, there is a clear theoretical linkage; environmental degradation is in itself threat to human security and livelihoods. For instance, many argue that water scarcity might in the future lead to water wars or conflicts. Second of all, there is a normative linkage deriving from the interactions between political and environmental security, which entails that solving environmental problems may lead to cooperation and can be seen as security policy or peace-building. Thirdly, a cognitive linkage between environment and security has emerged because it is now legitimate for politicians to argue for an environmentally responsible security policy. In other words, environment has become one of the subjects of the so-called high politics. By employing a particular discourse and framework, issues have been securitized for purposes of policy-making and resource allocations.

However, others like Waever (1993) are skeptical about securitization of environmental problems. According to that securitization of the environment might lead to the militarization of our way of thinking to the environmental problems and create the 'Other'. As Deudney (1990) also argues the use of security language could introduce the "specific mindset" of national security language into environmentalist thinking. For instance, the debate around responsibility for climate change between industrialized countries and poor countries can be seen an example of creating 'Other' as it is formulated in this news issues such as; "China refused to set binding targets for greenhouse gas emissions, emphasizing that it was down to the world's major industrialized nations to take the lead in tackling a problem for which historically they bore the burden of blame" (Sussman 2007, CNN).

On the contrary, others have argued that widening security issues to non-military issues like environment facilitate demilitarization of security and politicization of the environment. In other words, securitization of environment leads to the recognition of environmental problems as urgent, requiring urgent attention at the top political level (Buzan et al.1995, Graeger 1996).

Deepening debate of security is based on the question regarding 'Security for whom and from whom?' Traditionally the referent object to security is the state, however the deepening debate is questioning this by including other referent objects such as individuals, human being, communities and society. Deepening the security concept requires a multilevel approach; it addresses different policy requirements and needs and therefore asks for the multi-actor involvement (Brauch 2009). In other words, in order to provide security, international division of labour is necessary, states, UN agencies, civil society groups should take part and work in an integrated approach to security.

Human Security

After the cold war, the need to secure humans rather than only states gain significant interest and developed an institutional strength through a number of publications and official reports. The UNDP Human Development Report in 1994 introduced the concept of human security with a goal of transition from a nuclear security to human security.

According to the report (UNHDR 1994: 22), for so long the term of security has been interpreted from a narrow perspective by focusing only on security of territory and protection of national interests, gains. The idea of security has been more related to nation-states rather than the people. However, as report argues, for most people insecurity means lack of food, water, shelter or subjection to political repression, gender, ethnic or religion related discrimination. Therefore, new understanding of security is needed in order to address the problems of the people. According to the report, human security is defined as safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression; and protection from sudden and severe disruptions in the patterns of daily life-whether in homes, in jobs or in communities. (Ibid: 23) By this report, human security concept takes place as a product of widening and deepening the security ideas. Moreover, the notion of human security has four essential elements. According to that, first it is universal because it is relevant to all people regardless of where they live; second, it is interdependent because insecurities such as drug trade, human trafficking, and famine are problems that are beyond borders. Thirdly, human security is easier to manage through early intervention and lastly it is people-centered because it concerns with people's living conditions such as their access to social opportunities (Ibid: 23).

Human security approach is articulated in the new forms of water allocation models in the Euphrates and Tigris region. Emerging initiatives for cooperation make attempt to understand the problem of water allocation and access from a wider security perspective beyond state-centered solutions. They include this new form of security understanding in their frameworks by focusing on heath, gender equity and sustainable development. However, to what extent they transfer these ideas into practice without the involvement of states. These links of water allocation and human security are going to be discussed after introducing the case of Euphrates and Tigris Region.

3 Allocating Waters of Euphrates and Tigris

Following the widening and deepening of the security agenda, the way in which water allocation is governed has been going through slow transformation. Although traditional security understanding plays an important role in shaping the politics around water

allocation, new approaches like human security and environmental security are introduced into policies water with the emerging common projects.

Water allocation in the historical context

"No states have gone to war specifically over water resources since the city-states of Lagash and Umma fought each other in the Tigris-Euphrates basin in 2500 B.C." (Aron Wolf)

Figure 1. Map showing the Jordan River Basin, the Euphrates & Tigris River Basin and the Arabian Peninsula. (SIWI Report 2009, Water Resources in the Middle East)

Euphrates and Tigris rivers originate from the mountains of Eastern Turkey; they flow into Syria and Iraq and then join the sea at the Arabic-Persian Gulf. Both rivers were at the heart of ancient civilizations and contributed to the early development of irrigation practices dating back to the Sumerian and Akkadian periods around 4000-5000 BC (Daoudy 2009:362). They are considered by Turkey as a single transboundary watercourse system not only because they are merging at the gulf but also because there is a Thartar Canal connection between two rivers in Iraq. However, Iraq and Syria argue that Euphrates and Tigris rivers must be treated as separate basins. The total average annual flow of the Euphrates is 35.58 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year which Turkey contributes approximately 90 percent and Syria contributes around 10 percent of the flow (Gruen 2000). As for the Tigris river the

average annual flow is around 50 bcm, Turkey contributes around 40 percent, Iraq and Iran contribute 51 percent and 9 percent respectively (Kibaroglu and Unver 2000: 312).

Until 1960s the relations among countries was in agreement because none of the countries were involved in huge scale development projects that could create harm to other countries. Moreover, population growth and the level of industrialization were manageable and the climate change wasn't effective. According to Kibaroglu and Unver (2000) argued that water question emerged as a regional issue in Euphrates and Tigris Basin when all three riparians put forward their major development projects which aim to utilize these waters for energy and irrigation purposes.

Legal history between riparians goes back to the various protocols between France (as Syria) and Turkey in 1921, 1926, 1929, 1930 and 1946 Treaty of Friendship and Good Neighborly Relations between Iraq and Turkey. All of these treaties provide a legal framework for managing the waters regarding to Euphrates and Tigris River Basin. However, more detailed legal arrangements were needed after Turkey` s construction of the Keban Dam on the Euphrates for hydro energy purposes. Accordingly, first meeting was held in 1964 between Turkey and Iraq in order to discuss the quantity of water that could be released during the construction and filling of the dam. (Ibid) The first tri-partite meeting took place in 1965 for the data exchange and setting up a Joint Technical Committee (JTC) which "would determine the irrigation needs of the three countries through joint field studies" (Ibid: 314).

Bilateral and tripartite meetings continued until 1980 when a new JTC was established. The JTC was an important step in terms of facilitating the cooperation between countries. According to that, JTC had consent to determine the methods and procedures for determining reasonable and appropriate amount of water that each country need as well as to facilitate the exchange of hydrological and meteorological data and information about dams (Ibid: 317). However, JTC meetings didn't provide solutions due to the disagreement between countries on the duties of the committee and the common terminology whether or not Euphrates and Tigris is a single basin, transboundary or international rivers. Due to the disagreement on the terminology, three countries couldn't agree on the water allocation of the rivers. According to that, Turkey insisted on the equitable allocation of both rivers,

whereas Syria and Iraq argues for sharing the waters by treating each river separate and independently. Iraq has also put forward its `historic rights` claim although it wasn`t recognized by the UN convention on International Watercourses (Daoudy 2009). Consequently, by treating the rivers as transboundary and one single unit Turkey prevents downstream countries to have co-sovereignty on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers (Kibaroglu and Unver 2000, Bilen 1997).

Issue-Linkage

Transboundary water issues became the matter of high politics when non-water issues developed into factors that lead to tensions and disputes. Especially, water allocation has become very fragile problem after Syria's and Turkey`s water development projects. These projects were framed as the national development programmes which link water issues to broader national agenda. To illustrate, Syria initiated its Euphrates Valley Project with a number of objectives such as irrigation and generating electric energy for industrial development. Moreover, Turkey gave pace to its Southeast Anatolia Development Project (Guneydogu Anadolu Projesi,GAP). The GAP is a hydroelectric and irrigation project with a total of 22 dams on Euphrates and Tigris and it is also framed as a regional development programme that aims to improve the socio-economic standards of Southeast Anatolia region. Turkey's ambitious project led to the growing demand for waters and increased concerns for quantity and quality of water flowing to the Syria and Iraq. However, in Turkey, "the GAP become a symbol of national pride, which seems to receive not only unanimous support from political parties across all ideological orientations but also maintained its privileged position within governments' budgets" (Carkoglu and Eder 2001: 42). Moreover, Turkish governments hope to find a solution to Kurdish separatist activities with the desired benefits of the GAP such as economic growth and high flow of investments. As one can see, the GAP is motivated highly by national interests and sovereignty.

The linking other issues to water is not new in the policies of countries along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. During the construction of the GAP project, Syria supported PKK (Partia Karkaren Kurdistan or Kurdish Workers Party) in order to increase its relative power to make Turkey to reach an agreement on minimal allocation of the Euphrates waters. With this

issue-linkage strategy, water allocation issue is bargained for the sake of other interests or security issues. As a result, Turkey agreed to guarantee the minimal allocation of 500m3/second flow of Euphrates River in the Security Protocol of 1987 with the condition that Syria stops its support to PKK (Daoudy 2009). According to Daoudy (p: 382), "the securitization of water-related issues is of a dual nature, with threat perception as a key variable because of its capacity to link issues of national security with perceptions of growing water scarcity". Despite the agreement, the conflict between Turkey and Syria[2] continued until 1998 when Adana Protocol has been signed by Turkey and Syria for cooperation over national security.

Searching Ways for Cooperation

Nevertheless the relations between Turkey and Syria have been improved after signing up the Adana Protocol in 1998. The Syrian General Organization for land development (GOLD) and Southeastern Development Project Regional Development Administration (GAP RDA) began to cooperate at the technical level. According to Kibaroglu (2008) the GAP-GOLD cooperation is based on the common understanding of promoting sustainable development of region's land and water resources through joint programs. Moreover, the improved political and economic relations also facilitate the joint projects; two agreements on cooperation over health and agriculture have been signed. These agreements included water related issues such as waterborne diseases.

Such cooperation efforts help to facilitate the transformation of discourses from the nation-based security discourses to more regional wider understanding of security. The change in security discourse has implications in the way in which water allocation is governed. The idea of sharing the benefits instead of waters is derived from such a transformation in the understanding of security.

Water Situation of Iraq after the occupation

[2] There were crises between Syria and Turkey in 1990, 1993 and 1996 due to the Turkey`s significant reduction of water flow to Syria or Syria`s continued support to PKK. Moreover, since 1993 Turkey had alliance with Israel with a joint agreement on military training, defense, industrial cooperation and trade and Israel started its investments on GAP. (Ibid.380)

All these developments emphasize the central role of nation-states in the water allocation. But what happens when the unitary of the nation-state is threatened? One of the major riparian of the Euphrates and Tigris river; Iraq has been under a serious change regarding its water management. Therefore, it is crucial to acknowledge the developments in Iraq after the war since definitely the situation of who controls and owns the water has changed. According to Kibaroglu (2008: 189), U.S Government, State Department, U.S Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) and research institutes and universities have played important role in reformulating the water management in Iraq. Following that, the U.S State Department gave priority to the provision and distribution of water resources in Iraq with an aim of managing waters of the Euphrates and Tigris in an optimum manner (Ibid: 190). However, in order to assert any river planning, data sharing with Turkey and Syria is necessary.

4 Shifting Security Discourses

With the occupation of Iraq in 2003, the regional interests and power relations have been under significant process of change. Turkey and Syria had shown increasing cooperation on the foreign policy and regional strategic interests also after Turkey´s denial of Anglo-American troops in its territory. Furthermore, in recent years more cooperative, benefit sharing understanding over water allocation issue starts to be the dominant discourse in the region. New initiatives like Euphrates and Tigris Initiative for Cooperation (ETIC) is emerging as an example of discourse change from state- centered to wider security perspective such as human security. How does this discursive change influence the water allocation?

The Euphrates-Tigris Initiative for Cooperation (ETIC)

In 2005, Euphrates and Tigris Initiative for Cooperation (ETIC) is established by academicians from Turkey, Syria and Iraq with the support of American and Turkish universities as well as UNESCO (ETIC 2007). ETIC is found as a multi-riparian initiative that facilitates cooperation for technical, social and economically sustainable development within the Euphrates-Tigris system. According to Kibaroglu (2008), ETIC has been exceptional in that its goals are beyond

water rights since it includes issues related to human security such as gender equity, environmental protection, water governance and grassroot participation. The ETIC frames itself as voluntary, non-binding, unofficial and non-governmental entity. To illustrate, Faisal Rifai, one of the members of ETIC defines it as harmless organization because it doesn't belong to any governments (Stockholm Water Week 2009). By placing the initiative away from any political influence, the founders of ETIC hope that cooperation is going to be easier. For that purpose, they even avoid the word 'data' and instead they use 'knowledge development' because issue of 'data' has been heavily politicized by Turkey, Syria and Iraq governments and seen as part of their national secrecy (Ibid).

The formation of ETIC can be considered as the sign of an emerging discourse shift from traditional security understanding to the wider perspective. The vision of ETIC illustrates the human security approach to a certain extent; "quality of life for people in all communities, including rural and urban areas, is improved, and harmony among countries and with the nature in the Euphrates and Tigris region is achieved". The ETIC aims for a single- basin, beyond state and cooperative approach but can ETIC embrace all the conflictual relations in the region at all levels? Can it function without politics?

Nonetheless, the shift in the understanding of security from a state-centered, military focused to people-centered, development focused understanding raises important issues. One of the main criticisms to human security approach is that it is shaped within the very structure of the system of nation-states. According to Duffield (2007: 121),"while speaking on behalf of people, freedom and rights, human security positions that state as the ultimate guarantor of those rights". In other words, human security is rewritten within the juridical-political architecture of the territorial nation-state (Ibid). According to that, in order to provide human security in the Euphrates and Tigris Region, ETIC or other cooperative institutions need a legitimate guarantor of rights and nevertheless that guarantor is state. However, the ETIC adopted a holistic view of the river basin with a cooperative understanding of water governance that undermines the political boundaries and places state-politics aside. Considering the fact that ETIC`s legitimacy is not grounded in a formalized institutional structure, it is uncertain to what extent it can ensure the human security without involving states.

Moreover, according to Mack (2002: 3), human security approach "is less an analytical concept than a signifier of shared political and moral values". If this is the case, then what values those human security concepts propose? Moreover, are the needs of the people same in different cultural settings? According to Burgess (2008:60), the subject of the human security is the needs that are relative to human security of the individual, each individual and their needs are distinct from each other. In other words, if human security embraces needs of all then it wouldn't be human security, it would be then considered as a collective concept.

Considering multiple identities in the Euphrates and Tigris Region, values and needs of different groups have to be taken into consideration in any cooperative effort for water governance. How does the adoption and implementation of different principles of water governance empower or disempower non-state actors (Earth System Governance Science Plan: 92)? Landlessness, tribal structure and ethnic strife complicate the human security issues in the region. In the first place, landlessness is an important problem in the region. In the Southeast Anatolia Region of Turkey, 61 percent of the farmers own less than five hectares, and 10 percent of the population own 75 percent of the land (Carkoglu and Eder 2001). This unequal land distribution influences power relations among groups. Moreover, tribal structure also stimulates this situation. These factors are prominent when participatory approach is facilitated. One example is that irrigation associations can't function properly due to the unequal power structures that are embedded in tribal and ownership structures (Kibaroglu, Baskan and Alp 2009). According to that participatory approach ignores the power relations between actors; "while the concept of stake (holder) is inclusive and presumably exhaustive, the actual concrete forms of governance are necessarily constrained and limited in terms of who can, is, or will be allowed to participate" (Swyngedouw 2005: 1999). Moreover, Harris (2008) states that the most effected group from the changes in the irrigation is poor women, however, they are underrepresented in irrigation associates in Southeast Anatolia Region. According to the survey in 1993, 84 percent of the male households believe that women`s irrigation training is unnecessary (Harris 2002, Aksit and Akcay 1997). These dynamics exemplifies the relations only in one part of the Euphrates and Tigris River basin and shows that initiatives like ETIC has to find

ways to decrease unequal relations in the region before establishing participatory mechanisms.

Another challenging issue to human security in the region is the Kurdish people. As it was seen in the historical issues about water allocation, Kurdish separatism is highly linked with the national security matters. Kurds as being one of the biggest ethnic group complicates the problems of water allocation by raising questions like who owns the water, who controls the water and to what extent they participate in the governance of water allocation? According to Hillel (1994) utilization of rivers through dams and irrigation channels have been interpreted by some as another form of colonization of Kurdish homelands (Harris2002). Therefore conflicts beyond state relations have to be acknowledged as well. Ethnic conflicts can be derived from the human insecurities that are related with water.

As can be seen, water governance and the problem of water allocation is a complex issue. Problems occur not only riparians have national interests but also the people living along the basin have multiple identities based on class, gender and ethnicity. Adopting a single basin approach can be seen as a solution to state-centered water politics but it might also create other problems related with human security issues such as the underrepresentation of certain groups in decision-making processes.

5 CONCLUSION

Principles underlie water allocation are heavily shaped by the state- centered system. Due to the uniqueness of water disputes and asymmetric power relations between riparians, these principles are manipulated if not ignored. Nonetheless there are principles like benefit-sharing that offers inclusive framework beyond state centered solutions. Together with the participatory approaches, these principles also need to deal with the problem of agency and legitimacy.

As it is discussed in this paper, various notions of security do outline the discursive and institutional bodies that influence the water allocation of transboundary rivers. Although

human centered notion of security is brought into discursive level in the water governance of Euphrates and Tigris Basin, there are significant challenges that have to be faced on the practical level. Due to the fact that the notion of human security is developed in the architecture of the nation-state system, the agent that provides human security is nothing but state. This is one of the reasons that cooperative initiatives like ETIC lack legitimacy and accountability.

Moreover, human security ideals are very often linked with needs, norms and values that are universal. However, it is seen that in the case of Euphrates and Tigris Region, different groups and communities have various values as well as needs. Therefore, adopting a single basin approach can be problematic because of the fact that multiple identities in the region complicate the regional power relations and may lead to inefficiency in governance mechanisms.

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