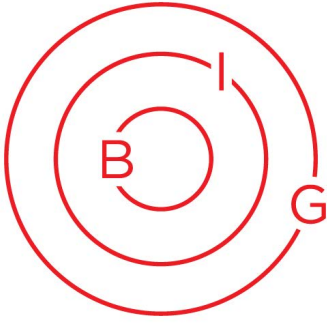




BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION





Borders in Globalization Research Project 38

**Columbia River Treaty and Governance
Innovation**

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BIG paper proposal for review: Columbia River Treaty and governance innovation
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Paper proposal outline:

The Columbia River Treaty offers a relevant and timely point of focus for research on governance innovation in transboundary water basins. A paper for the Borders in Globalization (BIG) thematic area of 'governance' would explore water governance in the Columbia River Basin from a 'then' and 'now' perspective. This approach would examine the evolution of water governance in the basin, from a traditionally state-centric perspective to one that is increasingly – though perhaps incrementally – multi-level, and explore how governance is being re-thought in recognition of the instability of climate change. The social and ecological impacts of climate change on freshwater resources – especially those that cross an international boundary – is a topic of increasing interest to scholars concerned with transboundary water governance challenges.¹

The paper would start with an historical analysis of governance frameworks for the Columbia River Basin, which were traditionally state-centric whereby decisions on river management were made primarily by national and provincial government institutions and state representatives, and establish how climate change was not part of discussions within the process of the development of the Columbia River Treaty in the early 1960s. However, as changes in the global climate become more pronounced physically (e.g. fluctuations in precipitation beyond historical variations), with implications for institutional arrangements for effective management of the river, and where pressures on socio-ecological systems are becoming increasingly apparent, the need to move beyond a state-centric approach to governance of the Columbia River and to include considerations of uncertainty and complexity surrounding climate change is paramount. The paper proposes to address these issues from a dynamic approach, using four theoretical frameworks for analysis. The four theoretical frames of analysis are:

- *Type I multi-level governance*: governance system organized hierarchically, with exclusive interaction between general purpose jurisdictions of government at a limited number of levels (i.e. local/municipal, state/provincial, regional, central/federal, international)

¹ See: Cooley, H., & Gleick, P. H. (2011). Climate-proofing transboundary water agreements. *Hydrological Sciences Journal*, 56(4), 711–718. doi:10.1080/02626667.2011.576651; Earle, A., Cascao, A. E., Hansson, S., Jagerskog, A., Swain, A., & Ojendal, J. (2015). *Transboundary Water Management and the Climate Change Debate*. New York, NY: Routledge; and Gerlak, A., & Schmeier, S. (2014). Climate Change and Transboundary Waters: A Study of Discourse in the Mekong River Commission. *The Journal of Environment & Development*, 23(3), 358–386. doi:10.1177/1070496514537276.

- *Type II multi-level governance*: governance system organized horizontally, with interaction between public and private task-specific actors at various and unlimited levels²;
- *Social constructivism*: an approach to social analysis that sees human interaction shaped by ideas, or widely shared beliefs, which construct the interests and identities of actors³; reality is constructed and reproduced by human actors through their daily practices; and,
- *Traditional state-centric governance*: centralized, hierarchical, narrow stakeholder participation⁴; focused on the use of state regulatory mechanisms⁵

The paper would ask the same thing of each framework (i.e. problem definition, solution definition, indicators of success, implications of views) using climate change as the issue in which these frameworks focus. A core issue will be to explore the evolution of water governance between a historical perspective to a contemporary perspective on climate change, and consider the social and ecological impacts of this evolution on the region.

The paper would be organized around a series of questions to guide analysis, and craft policy-relevant conclusions. The questions for consideration to help guide the analysis and discussion could include:

- How do each of these frames define the problem?
- How are solutions defined?
- What are the indicators of success?
- What are the implications of their views?
- Are there conflicts in perspectives? Is there consensus?
- Who is left out of the process? Are some voices/perspectives marginalized? Who?

These questions would help develop the policy-relevance of the paper that would be useful for policy makers, while fulfilling the goal of BIG to develop policy-relevant research and findings.

² See: Brunet-Jailly, E. (2005). Theorizing Borders: An Interdisciplinary Perspective. *Geopolitics*, 10(4), 633–649. doi:10.1080/14650040500318449; and, Hooghe, L., & Marks, G. (2003). Unraveling the Central State, but How? Types of Multi-level Governance. *American Political Science Review*, 97(02), 233–243. Retrieved from http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0003055403000649

³ Finnemore, M. & Sikkink, K. (2001). Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics. *Annual Review of Political Science*, (4), 391-416.

⁴ Timmerman, J., Pahl-Wostl, C., & Moltgen, J. (Eds.). (2008). *The Adaptiveness of IWRM: Analysing European IWRM research*. London, U.K.: IWA Publishing.

⁵ Akamani, K., & Wilson, P. I. (2011). Toward the adaptive governance of transboundary water resources. *Conservation Letters*, 4(6), 409–416. doi:10.1111/j.1755-263X.2011.00188.x