

Water governance in transboundary basins: critical issues of political resilience

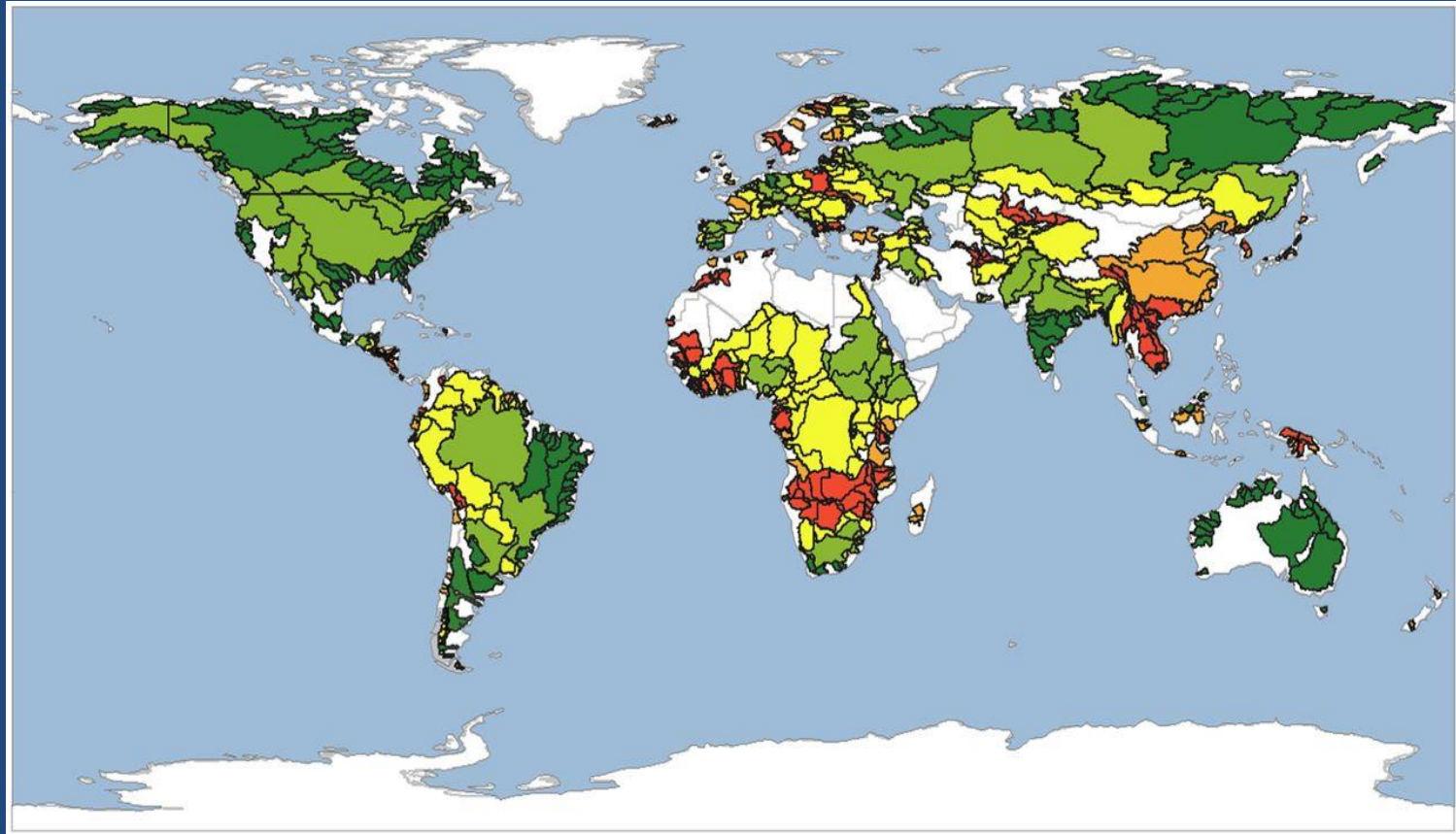
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Transboundary basins

- Over 50% of available freshwater resources in shared river basins and lakes
- 45% of the Earth's surface
- 145 countries riparians in shared river basins
- 166 out of 276 basins lack agreement
- 33 countries have 95% or more of their water in shared river basins

Transboundary and federal rivers



The challenge: collective action problems

- The spatial misfit: unidirectional upstream-downstream motion of externalities
 - Water (flow, shortage, flood, timing)
 - Pollution and ecosystems
 - Economic uses (energy, navigation, agriculture)
- Upstream-downstream asymmetry
 - Sentiment of exposure
 - Suspicion of unilateralism
 - Regional power positions
- Core elements of statehood such as sovereignty, territorial integrity and national security
- Core societal values and cultural constructions
- Climate change and other drivers have a strong potential to alter current hydro-political balances

How to ensure peace and cooperation in shared basins?

- Empirically: transboundary issues have led to more cooperation than conflict
- Yet, cooperation can also be difficult to achieve (co conflict - no cooperation)
- What are the ingredients of success?
- Empirical data suggests:
 - Institutions of transboundary governance
 - Capacity to adsorb new changes (nature/scale/speed)

Indicators of the resilience of tranboundary governance

- Legal framework
- Water quantity management
- Water quality management
- Variability management
- Dispute settlement
- Institutions (RBO)

Assessment of the resilience of tranboundary governance

Distribution of treaties and river basin organisation components by continent (%)

Individual treaty and RBO components	Basin continent				
	Africa	Asia	Europe	N. America	S. America
At least one water treaty	50	40	69	64	32
Allocation	25	25	33	42	14
Variability mgmt.	20	18	34	15	6
Conflict resolution	35	25	49	44	15
At least one RBO	40	19	32	56	22

Hotspots

