

Water in dispute in MENA and Asia: hydropolitics, inequality, and forced displacement

Água em disputa no MENA e na Ásia: hidropolítica, desigualdade e deslocamentos forçados

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1 INTRODUCTION

Climate change, intensified by the predatory logic of the Anthropocene, has placed, among other issues, water at the center of social, political, and territorial disputes in the twenty-first century. Historically, water played a central role in the formation of the first civilizations: rivers such as the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates not only provided essential water resources, but also enabled the transition from nomadism to sedentary lifestyle, fostering agricultural development and social organization.

Water, which originally transformed societies and allowed civilization to flourish, today presents itself again as an agent of transformation, now in a context of forced mobility, water scarcity, and strategic use as a tool for domination and bargaining.

Extreme droughts, floods and desertification are not only environmental manifestations of the planetary crisis, but are also structuring factors of social inequality, human mobility and forced displacement. In this context, hydropolitics, understood as the field of tensions, negotiations, and confrontations around the management, allocation, and control of water, reveals itself as an analytical key to understanding how the climate crisis becomes a social and humanitarian crisis (MÉNDEZ; MONTAÑEZ, 2018, p. 110).

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Water transcends its condition as a natural resource indispensable to life: it becomes a strategic asset inscribed in the power relations between States, corporations, local communities, and social movements. The worsening of water scarcity, combined with the advance of high impact production models, such as agribusiness, mining, and large infrastructure projects, such as Türkiye's South easterner Anatolia Project (GAP), intensifies disputes that often result in population displacements and social vulnerabilities (ASAH, 2015, P. 10-11; ZEITOUN; WARNER, 2006, p. 436-445).

The GAP, in particular, exemplifies how large infrastructures enable resource capture and significantly shift the dynamics of water competition in favour of the builder, exacerbating the water vulnerability of downstream countries such as Syria and Iraq.

In the Global South, the articulation between climate change, socioeconomic inequalities, and exclusionary water policies dramatically highlights the relationship between hydropolitics and environmental injustice. Studies on the Jordan Basin show that water is often transformed into an instrument of domination: Israel controls access to the aquifers of Palestine and the Gaza Strip, restricting its use for the Palestinian population and making its supply dependent on permits and transport by tanker trucks, while the impacts on health, sanitation and human development are severe (MÉNDEZ; MONTAÑEZ, 2018, p. 111-114). Water scarcity, therefore, is not only material, but also political, configuring the denial of voice and agency to the affected populations.

This article is based on the hypothesis that hydropolitics, when critically examined, goes beyond the classical interstate dimension, and reveals itself as a regime of power that structures human displacements and reproduces environmental injustices. The unequal control of water, intensified by the climate crisis, acts as a vector of forced mobility, forging migratory flows and scenarios of water vulnerability that transcend borders. By articulating the fields of hydropolitics, environmental justice and climate migration, it seeks to contribute to an interdisciplinary debate that illuminates the centrality of water in the configuration of contemporary crises.

The text is organized into four main parts: I. analysis of the climate crisis and water scarcity as catalysts for forced displacement; II. conceptual discussion on hydropolitics and hydro-hegemony, highlighting the use of water as an instrument of power; III. examination of cases in the Global South, with an emphasis on the MENA region and Asia; and IV. reflection on environmental justice, human rights, and strategies of community resistance in the face of the water crisis.

Thus, it is intended to demonstrate that water, more than a natural resource in dispute, constitutes a structuring axis of the contemporary

climate and migration crisis, highlighting the urgent need to rethink water governance models and formulate public policies that articulate sustainability, equity, and human rights.

2 WATER SCARCITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change has radically transformed the geography of water on the planet. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2022), the average increase in global temperature has already exceeded 1.1° C compared to pre-industrial levels, generating direct impacts on the hydrological cycle. The intensification of droughts, irregular rainfall, desertification, and the occurrence of extreme weather events configure a scenario in which water scarcity ceases to be an episodic phenomenon and becomes structural, especially in regions already marked by historical vulnerabilities.

This growing scarcity has been consolidated as one of the main drivers of forced displacement in the twenty-first century. Reports from the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2021) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2020) estimate that millions of people are forced to migrate annually due to water-related environmental disasters, such as floods, cyclones, extreme droughts, and land degradation. In 2022, an estimated 32.6 million new internal displacements occurred due to environmental disasters, most of them in countries in the Global South (IDMC, 2023).

While climate change and hydropolitics may at first glance appear to be distinct phenomena—the former linked to natural processes and the latter to political and institutional disputes over water management—they are deeply interconnected. Water scarcity is often produced or intensified by human decisions, including the intensive use of water for irrigated agriculture, mining, and large infrastructure works such as hydroelectric dams and transposition canals. These processes aggravate climate vulnerability, generating forced displacement, and create an intersection between environmental crisis and power relations (ZEITOUN; WARNER, 2006).

Populations that depend directly on water for their survival — family farmers, fishing communities, indigenous and riverine peoples — are forced to migrate due to the unfeasibility of material and cultural reproduction. Global studies demonstrate that water-related conflicts do not stem from a single factor, but from the overlapping of environmental, demographic, economic, and political pressures (BRÉTHAUT et al., 2021, p. 464). Thus, man-made water scarcity can add to climate impacts, enhancing migratory flows and creating new vulnerabilities.

These examples show that water scarcity, when combined with socioeconomic inequalities and the absence of inclusive public policies, becomes a structuring factor of climate migration, and forced displacement. The process is not homogeneous: while some populations migrate, others remain immobilized in territories made unfeasible by environmental degradation, a phenomenon called *trapped populations* (BLACK et al., 2011). In both cases, a dynamic of environmental injustice is observed, in which the groups least responsible for the climate crisis are the most affected.

Given this scenario, understanding water scarcity as a driver of displacement implies recognizing that water is not only a natural resource in dispute, but a central element of global climate vulnerability. It is at this intersection between water crisis, inequality, and mobility that hydropolitics becomes an indispensable analytical tool: not only to explain interstate disputes, but to illuminate the daily mechanisms of exclusion and displacement that mark the experience of vulnerable populations. In addition, this approach allows us to understand how climate justifications can be used to legitimize migration control or exclusion policies, reinforcing the need for integrated regulation to address both man-made scarcity and the effects of climate change.

3 HYDROPOLITICS AND HYDRO-HEGEMONY: WATER AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POWER

The notion of hydropolitics emerged in the field of International Relations to designate the set of political, diplomatic, and power processes that are articulated around water, especially in border contexts, that is, “in many ways, Hydropolitics remains politics” (BRÉTHAUT et al., 2020, p. 465). In this sense, hydropolitics can be understood as the capacity of institutions with a geopolitical character to manage and manage shared water resources in a sustainable manner, avoiding conflicts related to their access (MARTINEZ, 2014 apud MARTÍNEZ; MONTAÑEZ, 2018, p.118).

The exploitation of water resources in recent decades has become a complex phenomenon, simultaneously involving economic, political, and ecological dimensions, whose interaction is crucial for the development and use of these resources, with democracy being the final element that consolidates its management (MÉNDEZ; MONTAÑEZ, 2018, p.110). The analysis of hydropolitics, therefore, transcends the study of rivers, basins, and hydrological data: it requires understanding discourses, power relations, and strategic interests that shape the regions in which water is distributed, used, and disputed.

More than a vital resource, water is a strategic resource, whose management occurs in a space permeated by inequalities of power, economic interests, and dynamics of territorial domination. Consensual operations in the exploitation of these resources are essential to ensure the equitable distribution of water, but the intentions of countries and corporations, often supported by external actors, can transform a fundamental right into an object of profit, converting water management into an instrument of power and exploitation (MÉNDEZ; MONTAÑEZ, 2018, p.110).

One of the most relevant contributions to this debate is the theory of hydro-hegemony, formulated by Zeitoun and Warner (2006). According to the notes raised by them, the asymmetry of power between the actors involved can be evaluated based on three variables:

- I. General economic, political, and military power
- II. Technological power
- III. Selective geographic position

Thus, the degree of hydro-hegemony achieved by a state must be measured by its position of power, its location in the hydrographic area, and its potential for resource exploitation. Zeitoun and Warner (2006, p. 451-452) demonstrate, based on examples of river basins in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, that these dimensions are determinant for the successful execution of water control strategies. The resulting asymmetry tends to limit the ability of weaker states to influence, leaving them with little or no decision-making power in the water-sharing regime, which directly affects both the intensity of conflicts and the outcomes of the dispute.

It soon becomes possible for hegemonic actors to use water not only as an economic resource, but also as a geopolitical weapon. In some situations, the unequal management of water resources has served to consolidate processes of exclusion and vulnerability that directly affect local communities, resulting in forced displacement.

Examples such as the Lake Chad Bassin (LCB) are emblematic of hydropolitics. According to Stanley T. Asah (2015), the LCB is characterized by its political instability, due to intrastate disputes over water use, border conflicts, and civil wars in several riverine states. This instability threatens water security and reveals the need for interstate cooperation (ASAH, 2015, p. 37).

Also, according to Asah (2015), Lake Chad receives about 95% of water from the Chari-Logone River; Komadugu-Yobe River, on the other hand, has less hydrological relevance, but is still vital for local communities (p. 38). Biodiversity is also significant, but it is threatened by the reduction of flooded areas.

Therefore, in 1964, the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) was created, expanding over time to include members such as CAR (Central African Republic), Sudan, and Libya). Its function is essentially to promote the efficient use of resources, regional development, and conflict prevention. However, in practice AML has proven ineffective due to water overuse and weak cooperation among LCBC members (ASAH, 2015, p. 39).

Projects such as the Maga Dam in Cameroon in 1979 and the Southern Chad Irrigation Project (SCIP, Nigeria) were implemented with the promise of modernizing agriculture and ensuring food security. However, according to Asah (2015, p. 39-40), they resulted in: I. reduction of the flooded area; II. loss of biodiversity; III. displacement of communities; and IV. conflicts between farmers, shepherds, and fishermen. These projects, therefore, failed due to the lack of participation and inclusion of local communities.

In this context, Nigeria has resorted to a 'rhetoric of victimization' as a justification for expanding large-scale projects, articulating strategic interests under the humanitarian discourse. As Asah (2015, p. 41) observes, *"the rhetoric of victimization, as justifications for continuous large-scale water development, has been used to foster Nigeria's strategic interests and dependency on the water resources of the basin"*.

In a speech to the UN, then-President Olusegun Obasanjo stated: "Your vision for the people of Lake Chad must have at its core the security and well-being of the suffering masses as well as the unity of the member nations" (ASAH, 2025, p. 41).

Despite defending the diversion of the Ubangi River (CAR) on behalf of the "next generations", Nigeria bases its request for international support on a discourse of the suffering mass, when, in reality, it seeks to supply a modern agricultural investment that is already consolidated, without caring about the true "suffering mass": as summarized by Asah (2015, p. 42), *"the request for UN support for water diversion is argued on the basis of "suffering masses" and the "next generation" and not on Nigeria's strategic interest in modern agricultural development"*.

Finally, it is important to note that the LBC is also a Regional Security Complex where water issues interact with border disputes, insurgencies such as Boko Haram, cross-border banditry, and political instability in countries such as Chad, Niger, and CAR (ASAH, 2015, p. 42). Water security, therefore, is intrinsically linked to national and regional security.

In Asia and the Middle East, the Euphrates-Tigris basin is made up of three main countries: Türkiye, as an upstream country; Syria, in the middle course; and Iraq, downstream. According to Asah (2015, p. 8), It is estimated that Türkiye is responsible for two-thirds of the total flow, Iraq for about 20%

and Syria for less than 10%. As the author points out: *“Turkey also wields the most power, economically and militarily, in comparison to the other riparians”* (ASAH, 2015, p.8).

Regional tensions have intensified especially since the 1960s, when three countries began ambitious water projects. The most emblematic episode occurred in 1975, according to Asah (2015), when Syria withheld much of the spring flow to fill the reservoir of the Ath Thawrah Dam, drastically reducing the availability of water in Iraq: *“the situation grew hostile When Airline links between the two countries were broken and both dispatched armed soldiers to their borders”* (ASAH, 2015, p. 9). The conflict only did not escalate due to the mediation of Saudi Arabia and the then Soviet Union.

The institutional framework, however, remains fragile. The only formal instrument still in force is the Treaty of Friendship and Neighbourly Relations between Iraq and Türkiye (1946), which is still insufficient because it excludes Syria and does not establish arbitration mechanisms (ASAH, 2015, p. 10).

The favourable geographical position has allowed Türkiye, an upstream country, to assert the principle of absolute territorial sovereignty, treating the waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris as an exclusive resource, and developing the Southeastern Anatolia Development Project (GAP), which provides for the construction of 21 dams and 19 hydroelectric power plants (ASAH, 2015). Although officially defended as an engine of economic modernization the integration of the Kurdish population, the project tends to further aggravate the water vulnerability of Syria and Iraq (ASAH, 2015, p.10-11).

In this sense, the GAP has become a paradigmatic example of how large infrastructures can be mobilized as instruments of power, capturing resources, and significantly altering the nature of competition over water in favour of the construction actor (ZEITOUN; WARNER, 2006, p. 445). The issue, therefore, goes beyond mere geographical position: as the authors argue, in transboundary water relations “actors mobilize power to obtain more water” (ZEITOUN; WARNER, 2006, p. 436).

In the Middle East, in addition to the Euphrates-Tigris affair, another point of tension is the Jordan Basin, shared by Israel, Palestine, Syria and Jordan. In Palestine and the Jordan, water also became a tool of territorial domination. Studies show that the unequal distribution of access to water between Israel and the Palestinian territories goes beyond a technical issue: it is a political instrument of control, which conditions not only the survival of communities, but also their permanence in the territories. Here, hydropolitics is confused with practices of coloniality, in which water is used as a mechanism of subjugation and exclusion.

Unequal control of water has been central to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: while Israel ensures relatively stable access, Palestinian communities face severe restrictions. In many cases, forced water shortages contribute to the internal displacement of Palestinian families, unable to maintain traditional agricultural practices or remain in their territories. Water, in this context, is not only a vital resource, but also an instrument of colonial domination.

The literature points out that environmental decline can, in certain circumstances, lead to the emergence of conflicts, especially when scarce resources need to be shared by different state and non-state actors (COSTA; SANTOS, 2013, p.19).

Supported by the theory of securitization developed by the Copenhagen School, Costa and Santos (2013, p.20) state that threats are constructed from the social interactions that the environment offers, that is, water insecurity does not result only from the materiality of scarcity, but also from the way in which actors frame it politically.

Thus, regional security emerges in contexts of geographical interdependence, in which the fate of certain states is linked by the proximity and sharing of vital resources. It is in this case that the hydropolitics of the Middle East is inserted.

Shlomi Dinar (2003) analyzes how power dynamics and geographic position shape relations between countries in the region. In the case of the Jordan Basin, Israel exerts strong control over aquifers located in territories occupied since 1967, especially over the Mountain Aquifer (Golan), restricting Palestinian autonomy in water management (DINAR, 2003, p. 1618). The signing of the Oslo Accords (1993 and 1995) provided for cooperation and recognition of Palestinian water rights, but, as the author points out, implementation fell short of expectations, maintaining the status of dependence and vulnerability of the Palestinian Authority in relation to Israel (DINAR, 2003, p. 17-19).

This critical perception is corroborated by Vásquez Méndez and Ramírez Montañez (2018), when they state that, after Oslo, Israel maintained “*direct possession of water sources in the area and their exploitation must be through licenses granted by the Israeli army*”¹ (p. 111). This asymmetry of power translates into situations of human insecurity, such as the fact that “[...]90% of the network to which the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip have access is not drinkable”² (Palestina Libre, 2016, apud MÉNDEZ; MONTAÑEZ, 2018, p. 111).

While the Israeli law of 1959 established the privatization and monopolization of water by the Mekorot water company, the Palestinian legislation (Law 3 of 2002) sought to guarantee universal access to the

resource as a fundamental right (MÉNDEZ; MONTAÑEZ, 2018, p. 114). This institutional disparity reinforces the criticism that Israel has promoted a strategy of securitization of water as an instrument of territorial domination, while the Palestinians claim water as a human right and an essential component for their self-determination (MÉNDEZ; MONTAÑEZ, 2018, p. 114).

Therefore, water insecurity in this region must be understood both in its material dimension (the scarcity and dependence on shared resources) and in its political and discursive dimension (the way hegemonic actors use water as a strategic resource of power). As Dinar (2003) points out, the geographical position gives Israel the advantages of an upstream actor, but it also creates vulnerabilities linked to contamination and the risk of instability if the water issue is not equated in an equitable way.

In other words, the transformation of water into an object of security dispute can, paradoxically, hinder cooperative solutions, by consolidating power asymmetries and naturalizing inequalities in access.

These cases reveal that hydropolitics should not be understood only at the level of disputes between states, but also as a regime of multi-scalar power, which articulates global, national and local interests. Water, therefore, can be both a source of cooperation and an instrument of conflict and exclusion. When instrumentalized by hegemonic actors, it contributes to intensifying structural inequalities and, consequently, to generating forced migratory flows or situations of immobility.

In this sense, analyzing hydropolitics from the perspective of environmental justice implies shifting the focus from mere water security to considering the social and human impacts of water control. Instead of restricting the debate to technical efficiency or interstate diplomacy, it is a question of questioning who has access, who is private and who pays the socioenvironmental costs of water management. This change in perspective allows us to understand that water, in contexts of climate crisis, is less a neutral resource and more a field of dispute crossed by power relations that produce and reproduce inequalities.

Despite the regional specificities, the three regions with their particular cases have common elements: I. Water as a strategic resource, disputed by different scales of power; II. The climate crisis as a catalyst for pre-existing tensions; iii. Vulnerable populations as the main affected, either by displacement or by forced immobility; IV. The instrumentalization of water as a mechanism of power, whether in infrastructure projects, in policies of exclusion or in geopolitical disputes.

These experiences demonstrate that, in the Global South, hydropolitics cannot be dissociated from a reflection on environmental justice and human

rights. Water-induced migration is ultimately an expression of historical inequalities and the inability of water governance models to ensure equitable access to a vital resource.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATIONS AND HYDROPOLITICS BEYOND THE SECURITY NARRATIVE

It is understood that most of the academic and political production on environmental migrations, especially when associated with water, is still strongly anchored in a security logic. This narrative is based on the premise that environmental degradation and water scarcity will inevitably lead to massive migratory flows, which, in turn, are treated as threats to stability, national security, and international order.

Such a perspective, in addition to being simplifying, reproduces an alarmist and reductionist view, in which migrants appear as “problems” to be contained, rather than subjects of rights.

The security narrative, moreover, reproduces a denial of historical responsibilities, the focus falls on the control of migrants, while little is discussed about the models of development, coloniality and structural injustices that reproduce both scarcity and displacement. Thus, migrants are seen as a threat and the view of them tends to associate them as an agent of national instability, reinforcing policies of containment rather than solidarity.

Overcoming this vision requires re-signifying the place of water and migration in the international debate. Instead of treating them as threats, it is necessary to frame them as issues of environmental justice and human rights. Therefore, respectively, it is to think of access to water as a fundamental right, questioning the asymmetries of power that define who control and who is deprived of the resource, and to recognize environmental migrants not as “surplus” or “second-class refugees”, but as subjects of legal protection. This requires pushing the boundaries of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which does not address environmental causes.

This article proposes, therefore, that the relationship between hydropolitics and environmental migrations be thought of from three theoretical shifts: I. from a threat to law, where migrating due to the loss of access to water should not be read as a risk to security, but as an expression of structural vulnerability that requires responses in terms of rights; II. From flow to process, that is, more than quantifying migratory flows, it is necessary to understand the political and economic processes that force displacements (e.g., dams, occupations, water colonialism); III. From global governance

to transnational justice, instead of technocratic cooperation mechanisms, think of justice devices that cross scales from local to international, ensuring reparation and protection for affected populations.

Finally, it is understood that the global governance of water and environmental migration reveals significant gaps between the existing normative framework and the reality experienced by affected populations. Although several international instruments recognize the human right to water - such as UN General Assembly Resolution 64/292 (2010) and General Comment No. 15 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2002), their effectiveness is limited. In practice, water continues to be regulated by logics of state sovereignty and market regimes.

Likewise, there is still no international legal recognition of environmental migrants, which leaves millions of people in a grey zone between internal displacement, international migration and refuge. The 1951 Convention on Refugees, a fundamental framework of international law, is restricted to persecution for political, ethnic, or religious reasons, excluding environmental causes, although current since its creation, still of extreme urgency and necessity. This demonstrates how international governance still operates under exclusion and selectivity.

In addition to the need for normative recognition, there needs to be thematic integration and an end to institutional fragmentation, that is, while water is treated in forums such as UNESCO and UNEP, migrations are treated in other spaces such as IOM and the Global Compact for Migration. This separation prevents an integrative approach with the aim of articulating water, climate, and migration policies jointly, avoiding fragmented solutions that ignore the interdependence of the theme.

Thus, it is understood that current international governance operates in a reactive and fragmented mode, prioritizing control over displaced people and the preservation of state sovereignty. This article suggests that a reconfiguration is necessary: to think of water as a common good of humanity and environmental migration as an emerging human right.

It is about shifting the axis from insurance management to a transnational environmental justice, capable of recognizing historical responsibilities, redistributing resources, and guaranteeing dignity to populations forced to migrate.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The analysis developed throughout this chapter shows that water, far from being just a natural resource, constitutes a central element in the dynamics of power, inequality, and contemporary human mobility.

Hydropolitics, understood as the field of tensions, negotiations, and disputes over water control, proves to be decisive in understanding how the climate crisis translates into social, humanitarian, and geopolitical crises. The cases studied, from the GAP in Türkiye to the management of aquifers in Palestine and the Gaza Strip, demonstrate that water is used both as an instrument of development and modernization and as a tool of domination, deepening of pre-existing vulnerabilities and exclusions.

The centrality of water in power relations shows that the effects of climate change are not distributed equitably. While water control policies and strategic infrastructure allow states and corporations to extend their hegemony over vital resources, local populations — often peripheral, indigenous, or economically vulnerable — suffer disproportionate impacts, including scarcity of drinking water, restrictions on agriculture and forced displacement. This scenario confirms that water security, often defended in international hegemonic discourses, does not automatically translate into social or environmental justice.

From this critical perspective, it is possible to conclude that water governance needs to be rethought in an interdisciplinary and inclusive way, articulating sustainability, equity, and human rights. The study of hydropolitics and hydro-hegemony shows that access to water, when unequal and instrumentalized, becomes a vector of forced mobility and reproduction of environmental injustices, requiring responses that go beyond interstate diplomacy, also incorporating the participation of communities, civil organizations, and international protection mechanisms.

Finally, the cases analyzed reinforce the need for public policies and cross-border cooperation strategies that consider not only efficiency in the use of water resources, but also social justice, environmental protection, and climate risk mitigation. Recognizing water as the structuring axis of contemporary crises means understanding that water sustainability is not only an environmental or technical issue, but, above all, a political and humanitarian imperative, capable of shaping the future of societies and their most vulnerable populations.

NOTAS

¹ Originally: “la posesión directa de las fuentes de agua en la zona y su explotación debe realizarse a través de licencias otorgadas por el ejército israelí”.

² Originally: “[...]El 90% de la red a la que tienen acceso los habitantes de la franja de Gaza no es potable”.

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ABSTRACT

Climate change, intensified by the predatory logic of the Anthropocene, has placed water at the center of contemporary disputes. More than a vital resource, water becomes a strategic asset embedded in power relations between states, corporations, and vulnerable communities. This article argues that hydropolitics—understood as the field of tensions, negotiations, and confrontations around water control—reveals how climate change translates into social, humanitarian, and geopolitical crises. Through cases from MENA and Asia, it examines how large infrastructure projects, exclusionary policies, and unequal access to water generate forced displacement and reproduce environmental injustices. By articulating hydropolitics, environmental justice, and climate migration, the study highlights the urgent need to rethink water governance models and design policies that integrate sustainability, equity, and human rights.

Keywords: Hydropolitics; Environmental justice; Forced displacement; MENA and Asia; Climate migration

RESUMO

As mudanças climáticas, intensificadas pela lógica predatória do Antropoceno, colocaram a água no centro das disputas contemporâneas. Mais do que um recurso vital, a água torna-se um ativo estratégico inscrito nas relações de poder entre Estados, corporações e comunidades vulneráveis. Este artigo defende que a hidropolítica, - entendida como o campo de tensões, negociações e confrontos em torno do controle da água - revela como a crise climática se traduz em crises sociais, humanitárias e geopolíticas. A partir de casos no MENA e na Ásia, examina-se como grandes projetos de infraestrutura, políticas excludentes e o acesso desigual à água geram deslocamentos forçados e reproduzem injustiças ambientais. Ao articular hidropolítica, justiça ambiental e migrações climáticas, o estudo destaca a urgência de repensar os modelos de governança da água e formular políticas que integrem sustentabilidade, equidade e direitos humanos.

Palavras-chave: Hidropolítica; Justiça ambiental; Deslocamentos forçados; MENA e Ásia; Migrações climáticas