

REDEFINING WATER VIOLENCE

Introduction

Climate change, urbanisation and the rise in the global population have seen the demand for clean water increase. However, infrastructure cannot cope with this demand, and as a result, incidents of water related violence are on the rise.

Problem Statement

The current definition of 'water conflict' excludes state, slow and structural violence.¹ Expanding 'water conflict' to become 'water violence' will improve understanding of the factors involved, and allow water services to be adapted to become more resilient against water violence.

Current Knowledge

The current categories of 'water conflict' are Casualty, Trigger, Weapon.¹ Factors and causes are not fully explored. As some types of water violence are excluded, when referenced in other literature, terms can be muddled.²

Research Approach

A systematic literature review will identify common themes and factors in water violence. Focused ethnography using observation will then be used to test the factors, causes and categorisations in selected case studies, following a case study protocol and strict framework.

Provisional Impact

Having clear categories and definitions aids with understanding issues and their origins. If factors and causes of water violence are known, then governments, NGOs and other stakeholders can adapt water services to consider this, and make them more resilient.

Conclusion

Accurate definitions are important to understanding concepts and occurrences of violence.³ Developing new categories of water violence with clear definitions will make factors and causes clearer. This offers greater potential for water violence to be avoided.

