

What is Water Security and Why it Matters to Gen Z?



Loughborough University

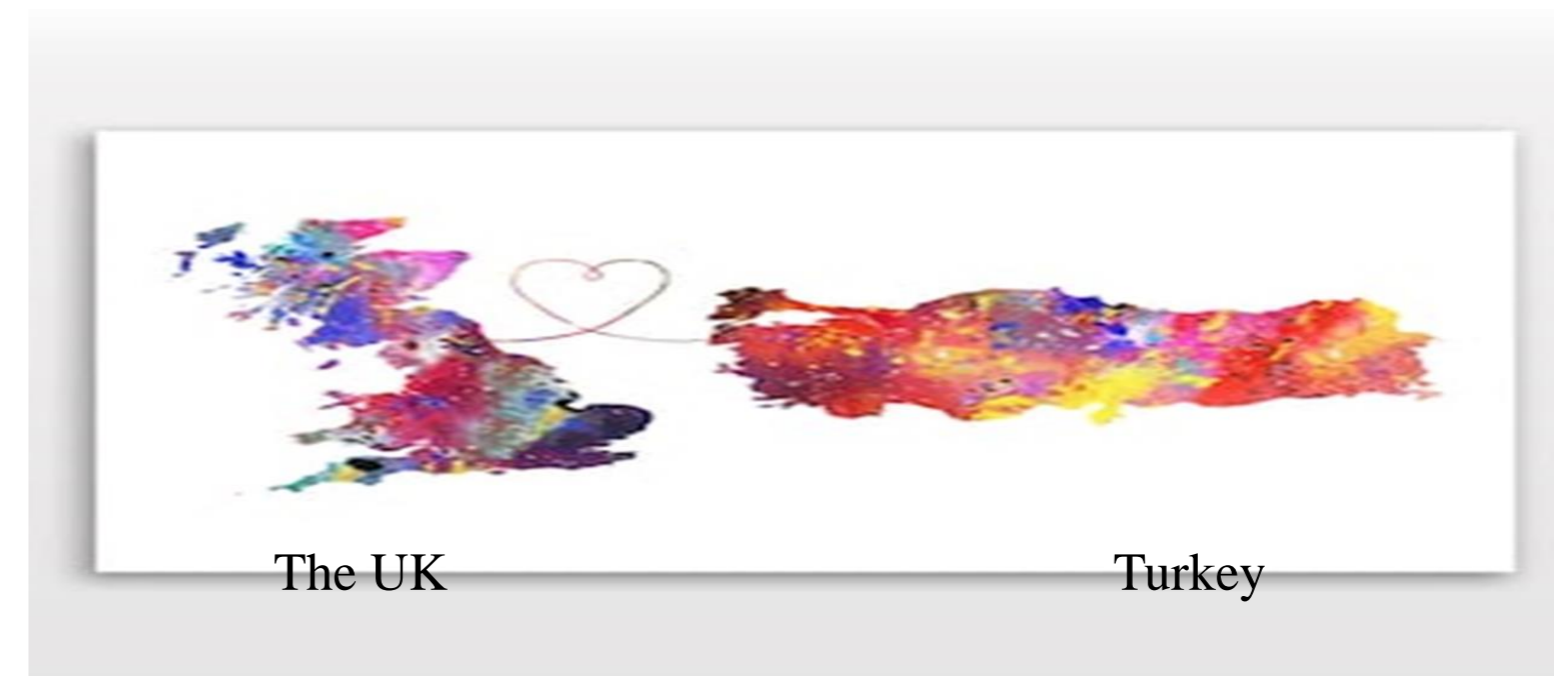
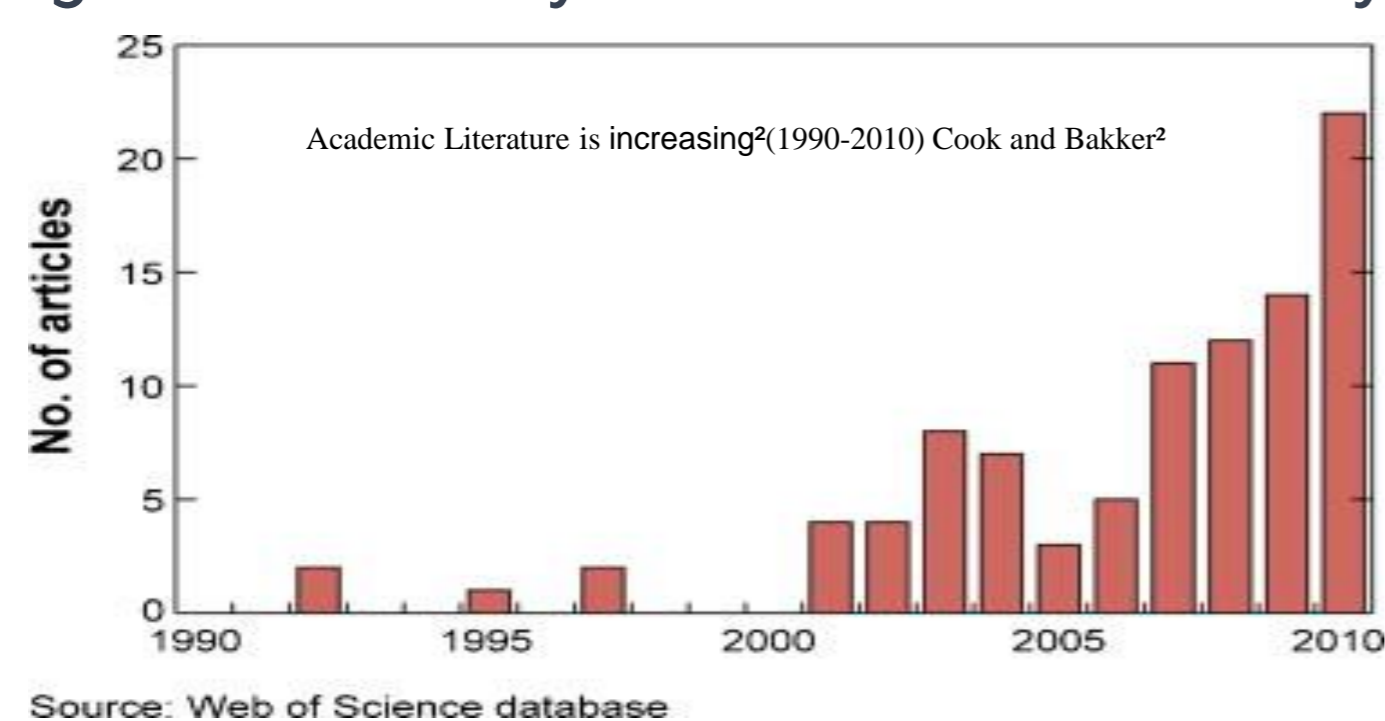
What is water security:

The most practical definition is “securing water relations that recognise the wider relations through which water shapes people’s lives and contributes human flourishing and well-being as opposed to ‘securing water as a thing and end in itself (as H₂O)’³ Water security refers to the availability of adequate quantities and qualities of water for societal needs and resilient ecosystems in the context of current conditions and future global change. Achieving water security is directly linked to food and energy security, protecting and preserving ecosystems, and addressing key vulnerabilities and risks from climate change. Good water governance –including transboundary cooperation– is a critical feature of any effort to achieve water security.⁴

What on Earth is happening with Water?

Water insecurity has led to wars, humanitarian crises, tribal conflicts, ethnic violence and Mass Climate Migration. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon notes that “[a]mid the diverse social and political causes, the Darfur conflict began as an ecological crisis, arising at least in part from climate change.” (Burlinson, 2008, p.197)¹.

Over the past two to three decades, there has been a significant surge in research related to water security¹. The transdisciplinary literature focused on non-state global solutions for Water. Academic literature from 1990 to 2010 reveals a substantial number of articles discussing "water security" as the ‘ultimate security’.⁵



Involvement of Gen Z in water debates and Cross Continent Approach (Europe and Euro-Asia - The UK and Turkey):

Global collective actions with a non-state approach are needed to address water and environmental challenges and ensure equitable and sustainable access to water. Intensifying global awareness about the need for collective actions and the involvement of Gen Z in water debates from the UK and Turkey would be an added value to the research. Generation Z (those born in 1996 onwards) from two different continents (Europe and Euro-Asia) would be a landmark approach to address a global issue with a personal touch. In the last two decades, despite an urgent call from global researchers, international water lawmakers and financiers are not taking water into high cognisance with the highest priority investment i.e., trillion dollars.⁶ Gen Z with X and Y’s generational cooperation along with their social media and environmentally friendly exposure would contribute to a cascading impact on the non-state approach to collective actions for water security, and global peace and human flourishing as a consequence.

Generation X and Y inadvertently contributed to water security and environmental issues unknowingly and now knowingly leaving the challenges for Gen Z. Therefore, it is now their (Gen X and Y) responsibility to cooperate and pass the baton to Gen Z for resolution. The research objective is to see water as a global concern that demands collective efforts by global citizens beyond boundaries.

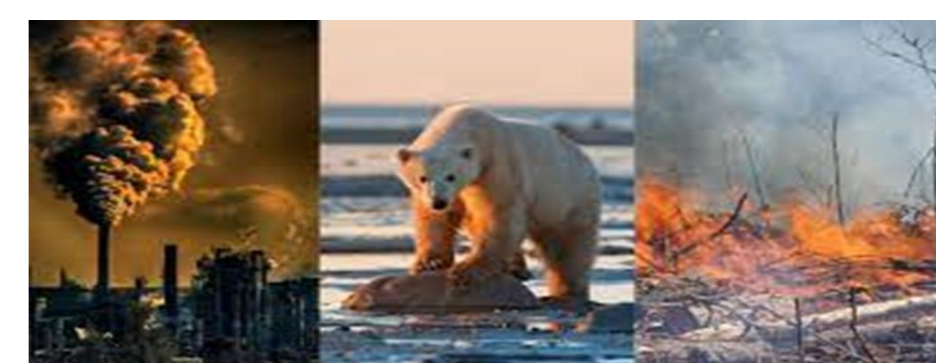
Proposed Solutions:

The cooperative and interdependent sovereignty of states is essential for managing water, food, environmental, and human development issues. For water issues, states should be interdependent without compromising individual freedom and dignity. Adopting the concept of a non-state invasive approach to seas, rivers, water bodies, and ecosystems, is crucial.

- ‘less sovereignty-invasive approach to water’¹
- ideas of collective action, interdependence,
- A community-of-interests approach²

A Non-Traditional Approach in International Law for Water Insecurity:

Debates on water security in international law should move beyond the conventional military security approach. Embracing a less sovereignty-invasive perspective, emphasizing collective actions and adopting a community-of-interests approach⁵ can lead to more effective water debates and investments. By addressing water challenges with a global perspective and including all generations in the pursuit of sustainable solutions, a peaceful world with ONE human family can be possible. The involvement of Gen Z would accelerate the water resolution before it is too late.



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