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GLOSSARY

Below is a list of terms used and defined in this book.

Age of water insecurity: The period in world history that started a short while ago but will last for ever; it is an era in history where the insecurity about the future behaviour and flux of water – whether we live in the age of floods or in the age of droughts, whether the sea level will rise or not, whether the glaciers will disappear or not, etc. – will fundamentally influence public discourse and political and economic considerations and decisions.¹

Agro-water variability: This recognizes water variations as a factor of fundamental importance to the development of different food-producing regimes, at any given time and at any given place, creating possibilities and limitations that through human ingenuity have given birth to a wide variety of water management practices, rural and food adaptations and societal organisations.

Confluences between water and society: The fluctuating, ever-lasting and manifold meeting points between water and society on all levels, reflecting and impacting in multi-directional ways both nature and societies. Such confluences are a universal trait of societies, and thus all societies and their long-term and short-term development can be fruitfully analysed by focusing on them.

Eurasian raincoast states: States whose long-term history and patterns of economic and social development have been strongly influenced by being located on the raincoast of north-western Eurasia – a geographical area in north-west Europe characterised not only by abundant rainfall but year-round precipitation and modest evaporation.

Historical-geographical archaeology of water-society relations: A research strategy that aims to reconstruct past development of the role of water in society and the role of society on water in a geographically defined space and over long timespans.

Hydraulic calculations: Assessments of a water-society system's production capacity in a broad sense, including the recognition of its physical and hydrological capacities as well as its capacity to produce socio-economic results; it is an inclusive term formulated within an understanding of water management as an interdisciplinary subject.

Hydraulic design: Water management plans aimed at controlling and using water that will always reflect existing waterscapes and water-society interactions and relations, and that will always impact on existing waterscapes and societies as well as the interfaces between the two.

Hydraulic state: A state whose economy and geopolitical position is to a large extent based upon extensive control of water in some form or another. The term is thus here used in a purely descriptive manner, not carrying those normative connotations of despotism and autocracy that in general are connected to it.

Hydro-historical approach: A cross-disciplinary research approach and method that aims to utilise all kinds of data to reconstruct both deep-seated continuities and slow and abrupt changes in the waterscape and in water-society relations – from traditional archaeological method and climate data of the past, palaeontological data, geological science data in addition to all kinds of written sources, etc.

Hydrological cycle: This term is used here as it is normally used in the scientific literature, but with two qualifications: it is describing the continuous movement of water on, above and below the surface of the earth, thus being clearly distinguishable from water in general (since large amounts of water in the oceans and in the ice-sheets do not move around in the hydrological cycle). It is distinguishable from the hydrosocial cycle because large amounts of water in the hydrological cycle are not impacted by the social. The term hydrological cycle does not separate water from its social context, but underlines the fact that it is a physical process in nature.

Hydrosocial cycle: The never-ending flow of water in societies, capturing how water is socially used as well as constructed, impacted on by society as well as impacting on society. The hydrosocial cycle is defined in relation to the concept of the hydrological cycle, although it does not modify the term, but complements it.

Hydrosocial disturbance: A term that captures either changes in the hydrological cycle or in the hydrosocial cycle that significantly impact on the relationship between the hydrological and hydrosocial cycle.

Hydrosocial redistribution: A term that captures either changes in the hydrological cycle or in the hydrosocial cycle that significantly alter the relationship between the hydrological and hydrosocial cycle.

Monsoon states: States whose economy and social organisation are strongly influenced by the irregular regularity of the monsoon.

Scandinavian raincoast: The coast of western Norway, characterised by abundant rainfall and all-year precipitation (an area with an annual mean of above 2,000 millimetres per year and with more than 200 rainy days per year).

Social cycle of water: The never-ending flow of water in societies, capturing how water is impacted on by society and impacts on society.

Water cycle: The product or the result of a non-dialectical relationship between the hydrological and hydrosocial cycle over time. The water cycle should thus be understood in connection with the hydrological cycle and the hydrosocial cycle and be seen as a long-term, socio-natural process by which water and society make and remake each other over space and time. The workings of the water cycle can be reconstructed, and its study will offer insights into both natural processes, how human activity impacts the hydrological cycle, as well as the social construction and production of water with all their social implications.

Glossary

Water imperialism: A kind of imperialism whose expansionism is encouraged and stimulated by the prospect of controlling water for economic, military or political reasons.

Water management: An interdisciplinary activity which needs to be understood or defined not in terms of engineering alone or in terms of sociology alone, but in terms of its engineering, historical, economic, sociological, cultural and ecological dimensions.

Water Planet: A term used instead of the term 'the Blue Planet', since the latter focuses on colour while the first focuses on what makes life and social life possible on the planet. The 'water planet' term reflects and captures the importance of the enormous and greyish-coloured cloud-systems and ice-sheets that form crucial parts of the water planet, and is not concerned with the reflection of light.

Water structuration: An analytical term that can capture and analyse how waterscapes and water systems structure social production and reproduction and how different water-society systems make different actions and development trajectories likely or possible. This term is used in hydrological sciences in a very different way.

Water-society studies: Studies about the relationship between water and society, underlining that this research topic is a potential sub-theme of all disciplines and that it also flows across disciplinary lines thus continuously asking for new approaches and collaborative engagements between disciplines.

Water-society systems: A descriptive term of specific water-society relations that are so complex though so stable that they can be seen as kinds of enduring adaptive systems characterised by cycles and uncertainty, and where social systems and waterscapes are seen as fundamentally coupled and co-evolving.

Water-system approach: An analytical approach underlining the importance of studying water-society relations in a more systemic way, concerned as much with ideas, institutions, technologies and economic aspects as with natural aspects of the waterscape, at the same time as it includes a loose-knit web of analytical and conceptual propositions, some more central than others and some spun more tightly than others.

Waterblindness: A world-view and a view on society that analyse social development and fundamental historical processes as if they are unconnected to and uninfluenced by water and how it is controlled, harnessed or adapted to.

Waterscape: A water landscape created by nature or by human modification or by both. The term as used here underlines that it should be seen as something more than a cultural landscape, although it can also be a cultured waterscape. It also underlines that it should be seen as something more than a natural water landscape, although it can also be a natural water landscape.

Waterzone: A broad water-geographic division, based on distributional differences of precipitation and run-off characteristics that have a fundamental importance for biodiversity, flora and fauna and hence for the potential for rural organisation, and covering small or large areas depending on the characteristics of the waterscape of differential importance for societal development.