

Hydrosovereignty: Israel-Palestine in a Warming World

Dr. Itamar Mann

This lecture will examine the relationship between the legal-political construction of sovereignty and the management of water. Taking as its test case the history of Israel-Palestine since the establishment of the Israeli state, it will identify three different understandings of this relationship. First, it will review how Israeli law generated collective state ownership over water resources, in an arrangement largely influenced by socialist ideals. Second, it will reveal how starting from the 1990s, water was understood in regional terms. As such, it a certain kind of political optimism developed around water: sharing arrangements pertaining to an increasingly scarce resource were viewed as the basis for peace agreements. Third, with the advent of desalination, and the concomitant rise in the realization of the region's climate vulnerability, water became a geo-strategic tool both for projecting regional power and for new kinds of profit. The lecture will end by asking what should be the normative basis for ownership of desalinated water in the context of looming climate catastrophes.