
Description de l'atelier / Panel description

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Abstract (in French and English)

As so-called fugitive resources that frequently cross political boundaries, control of rivers have long posed critical and highly charged challenges to coordination across individual streams and entire complex drainage basins. From ancient times Asian societies organized a variety of local and regional organizations for resolving disputes, but the development of new materials (e.g., reinforced concrete), explosives and sophisticated power machinery in the post World War II era have increased engineers' ability to alter water flow so dramatically that residents over distances of hundreds of miles are affected across broad regions and national boundaries. The panel begins with Daniel Haines' discussion of the ways in which long-standing rivals/combatants still managed to resolve key issues in control of the Indus River, but not the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers. Vincent Lagendijk also examines the successful Indus River negotiations as a model for treating parallel issues in the Mekong River of Southeast Asia. Long-distance coordination of river use is not simply a problem for international concern, but remains a problem in domestic politics as well. Philip Brown takes up the extraordinary case of the Yamba Dam in the context of post-war Japanese river managements. Respondent Petra van Dam draws on the experience of her current comparative research on Dutch and Vietnamese water management to offer context and comment on the three presentations.

Keywords: control of rivers, resources, conflicts, water management

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