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ON THE GLOBAL WATER CRISIS

A Taxonomy of Human–Water Challenges

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Abstract: The threat of an impending global water crisis has proliferated across water governance literature in the recent decades. However, defining the nature of this global water crisis remains a challenge, as a plethora of problems fall under this term. Simultaneously, contemporary waterscapes are hard to navigate due to the interconnected and wicked nature of water issues. Thus, to unravel this complex picture, it is fundamental to be reflexive about how water problems are identified, defined, and addressed. Conducting a systematic literature review and applying a constant comparative method, this Element identifies nine key human–water problématiques. Additionally, the analysis traces co-occurrences between diverse problématiques and their conceptual subclusters. Based on exhaustive literature, a reflection on the complex issue of 'what solutions?' is elaborated. Lastly, contributions to the ontological question of what a water problem is are offered, indicating a transition beyond an understanding of water issues as solely tangible.

Keywords: water governance, sustainability, water crisis, human–water problématiques, taxonomy of water problems

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