

Milan, J. A. 1997. Strategies for effective international environmental conflict resolution: The case of the lower Colorado River Basin. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Miami. 281 pp.

The purpose of the present dissertation was to learn lessons about effective international environmental conflict management strategies dealing with water in the Lower Colorado River Basin and to test the relevance of the British school's structural realist model of international relations in such a context. I carried out an ethnographic case study in the region around Yuma, Arizona to test four research questions dealing with (1) the applicability of the structural realist model of international relations as an explanatory and predictive tool of international environmental conflict, (2) the importance of spirituality and religion in the problematic, (3) the relevance of other sources of explanation, and (4) the generalizability of the model to other contexts. I collected data by doing long interviews with informants from Mexico, the United States, and the Quechan Nation and conducting participant observation throughout the area. I transcribed and content analyzed interviews in order to code informants' speech according to the structural realist model and spirituality/religion. Then, I counted the frequency of those codes across the sample to determine the relevance of the concepts tested. Participant observation data was incorporated throughout the presentation of results. Overall, structural realism accounted for 37% of the coded speech. Spirituality and religion, although present, were not as salient across the sample. Economic factors such as "big U.S. corporations" and water marketing were the most frequent "other" categories. Aspects of the theory which can be generalized to other contexts where there is conflict over water included the importance of lower levels of analysis in problem solving and the changing nature of anarchy in the international system due to environmental influences.