

**WATER ISSUES ARE WHAT STATES MAKE OF  
THEM:  
A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH TO CONFLICT  
AND COOPERATION OVER TRANS-BOUNDARY  
WATERS**

By  
Kinga Szalkai

Submitted to  
Central European University  
Department of International Relations and European Studies

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in  
International Relations and European Studies

Supervisor: Professor Emel Akçali

Word Count: 17,186

Budapest, Hungary  
2012

## ABSTRACT

It is generally acknowledged that water will be one of the most essential natural resources of the 21st century. Although the empirical analysis of the effects of water scarcity on conflictive and cooperative state relations is long present in the field of IR theory, there is not much theoretical research on this important issue. Furthermore, existing mainstream theories of neo-realism and neo-liberalism offer only rigid and narrow explanations about whether and how water distribution issues contribute to conflictive or cooperative state relations. One of the most apparent gaps in these theories is that neither neo-realism nor neo-liberalism can give a plausible explanation to the changes in the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues. In my research I argue that a constructivist approach can make a contribution to the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues. During the analysis of three constructivism-based core assumptions about the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues, I evaluate the possible contribution of constructivism on two case studies. From this analysis I draw the consequence that a constructivist approach has a significant added value in the analysis of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues, with which it goes well beyond the static explanations of neo-realist or neo-liberal approaches.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Elsősorban szüleimnek szeretném megköszönni, hogy áldozatos munkájukkal már oly sok éve támogatják tanulmányaimat.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Emel Akcali for her patience, guidance and unreserved support during the thesis writing process. Many thanks to Réka Futász for her invaluable suggestions and encouragement.

I owe special thanks to my friends Máté, Miri and Murodil, who many times sacrificed their free-time to help me to cope with language constraints and technicalities.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	III
LIST OF FIGURES.....	IV
INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY .....	5
1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW: MATERIALIST-RATIONALIST APPROACHES .....	5
1.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: CONSTRUCTIVISM .....	7
1.3 METHODOLOGY.....	16
CHAPTER 2. CASE STUDY 1: THE RELATIONS OF UZBEKISTAN AND TAJIKISTAN OVER THE AMU DARYA .....	19
2.1 BACKGROUND.....	19
2.2 HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION 1: SOVIET TIMES (1960-1991) .....	22
2.3 HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION 2: ERA OF THE REGIME CHANGE (1992-1999) .....	26
2.4 HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION 3: AFTER 2000 .....	29
CHAPTER 3. CASE STUDY 2: THE RELATIONS OF TURKEY AND SYRIA OVER THE EUPHRATES.....	34
3.1 BACKGROUND.....	34
3.2 HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION 1: FROM THE END OF WWI TO THE END OF THE 1960S .....	37
3.3 HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION 2: FROM THE KEBAN-TABQA ISSUE TO THE GAP (1970-1999).....	40
3.4 HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION 3: EMERGING COOPERATION BETWEEN 1999 AND 2011 .....	43
CHAPTER 4. INTERESTS AND IDENTITIES IN THE EXAMINED CASES.....	50
4.1 STATE RELATIONS AND ATTACHED MEANINGS .....	50
4.2 NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE MATERIAL SENSE .....	51
4.3 NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE CONSTRUCTIVIST SENSE.....	52
4.4 UNDERLYING IDENTITIES IN THE EXAMINED CASES .....	53
CONCLUSION .....	58
APPENDIX .....	61
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	63

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. The Amu Darya. ....	61
Figure 2. The Euphrates. ....	62

## INTRODUCTION

The question how trans-boundary water<sup>1</sup> issues may become core reasons of conflicts, and in parallel, how these issues can take a turn to boost cooperation among states, has been a frequent topic of IR. As there are 263 trans-boundary lake and river basins covering nearly half of the land surface of the Earth, while 145 countries possess territory within trans-boundary lake or river basins,<sup>2</sup> discovering the roots of the dynamics of conflict and cooperation in trans-boundary water basins is a highly important issue.

The emerging questions of conflict and cooperation over trans-boundary water issues induced the establishment of the research field hydropolitics at the end of the 1970s.<sup>3</sup> Hydropolitics is “the systematic study of conflict and cooperation between states over water resources that transcend international borders.”<sup>4</sup> Peter Mollinga, an influential expert on water issues, argues that “the statement that ‘*water is politics*’ hardly needs any defense.”<sup>5</sup> Databases such as the Water Conflict Chronology,<sup>6</sup> which lists more than 200 water conflicts between 3000 BC and 2008 to illustrate the conflictive nature of trans-boundary waters, or the Trans-boundary Freshwater Dispute Database,<sup>7</sup> which understands trans-boundary water

---

<sup>1</sup> In this research I use the definition of trans-boundary waters from the “Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes,” namely ““Transboundary waters” means any surface or ground waters which mark, cross or are located on boundaries between two or more States.”

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, “Water for Life Decade: Transboundary Waters,” [http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/transboundary\\_waters.shtml](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/transboundary_waters.shtml) (accessed May 19, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. David G. LeMarquand, *International Rivers: The Politics of Cooperation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1977).

<sup>4</sup> Arun P. Elhance, *Hydropolitics in the Third World: Conflict and Cooperation in International River Basins* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1999), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Peter P. Mollinga, “Water and Politics: Levels, Rational Choice and South Indian Canal Irrigation,” *Futures* 33, no. 8 (2001): 733.

<sup>6</sup> Peter H. Gleick, “Water Conflict Chronology,” *Database on Water and Conflict Water Brief*, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Aaron T. Wolf, ed., “Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database,” Oregon State University, <http://www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu/> (accessed May 19, 2012).

regimes as a means of conflict resolution, are outstanding examples to demonstrate that this statement is more than justified. In addition, theoretical frameworks established to explain conflict and cooperation over trans-boundary waters may also have important practical consequences for policy-makers.

However, hydropolitics is generally an empirical field of research, which means that there are many detailed case studies about trans-boundary water issues, while the number of theoretical contributions is not significant. The main reason for this is that the pioneers of hydropolitics were not political scientist or IR experts, but rather geographers, agriculture experts, civil engineers or law experts, who are typically unaware of IR theory frameworks.<sup>8</sup> The most well-known authors on trans-boundary water issues from the fields of political and social sciences, such as Peter H. Gleick,<sup>9</sup> Thomas F. Homer-Dixon,<sup>10</sup> or Tony Allan,<sup>11</sup> do not either outline distinct and explicit theoretical IR contributions and neither do they contextualise their discourses within a distinct IR framework.<sup>12</sup> In fact, the examination of conflict and/or cooperation over trans-boundary water systems typically lacks the explicit and acknowledged application of IR theories.<sup>13</sup>

Nonetheless, it cannot be stated that IR theories are totally excluded from the analysis of hydropolitical questions. Rather, the hidden presence of IR theories as an underlying

---

<sup>8</sup> Jeroen F. Warner and Mark Zeitoun, "International Relations Theory and Water Do Mix: A Response to Furlong's Troubled Waters, Hydrohegemony and International Water Relations," *Political Geography* 27 (2008): 802.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Peter H. Gleick, *The World's Water: The Biennial Report on Freshwater Resources* (Washington DC: Island Press, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases," *International Security* 18, no. 1 (1994): 5-40.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Tony Allan, *The Middle East water question: Hydropolitics and the global economy*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Anton du Plessis, "Charting the Course of the Water Discourse through the Fog of International Relations Theory," in *Water Wars: Enduring Myth or Impending Reality*, ed. Hussein Solomon and Anthony Turton (Durham/Pretoria: ACCORD/Green Cross International and the African Water Issues Research Unit, 2000), 10.

<sup>13</sup> Kathryn Furlong, "Hidden Theories, Troubled Waters: International Relations, the 'Territorial Trap', and the South African Development Community's Transboundary Waters," *Political Geography* 25 (2006): 439.

framework is typical, especially when researchers concentrate on the roots of conflict and cooperation.<sup>14</sup> Beside these hidden theories, there are some existing frames of explicit theoretical debate, even if the number of academic studies which openly use IR frameworks is low.<sup>15</sup> However, these pieces of research are typically constrained to the mainstream approaches of neo-realism and neo-liberalism accompanied by only a few critical analyses.<sup>16</sup> The overwhelming use of mainstream approaches leads to a rigid and narrow understanding of the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues. One of the most apparent gaps in these theories is that neither neo-realism nor neo-liberalism can give a plausible explanation to the changes in the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues.<sup>17</sup>

In my thesis I intended to focus on this gap and to make a contribution to the filling of it with using the approach of constructivism to explain and understand how the changes in the cooperative or conflictive nature of state relations over trans-boundary waters can be explained theoretically. In my research I argued that *a constructivist approach can make a contribution to the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues.*

To justify this statement, in my research I used the following structure: In the first chapter I outlined three core assumptions concerning the constructivist approach of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues. With the help of these assumptions, in the following three chapters I evaluated on two case studies, how constructivism can make a contribution to the understanding of these changes. The

---

<sup>14</sup> Furlong, 439.

<sup>15</sup> Warner-Zeitoun, 803.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Frédéric Julien, "Hydropolitics is What Societies Make of It (or Why We Need a Constructivist Approach to the Geopolitics of Water)," *International Journal of Sustainable Society* 4, no.1-2 (2012): 45.

conclusion was dedicated to summarizing and reiterating my claims and the found justifications.

# CHAPTER 1.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

### 1.1 Literature review: *Materialist-rationalist approaches*

In the theoretical debate concerning the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues, two main approaches can be identified, and both are connected to materialist-rationalist IR theories: the neo-realist or Malthusian, and the neo-liberal or Cornucopian approach.<sup>18</sup> Such materialist-realist theories attempt to apply the logic of rationalist economic theory in IR,<sup>19</sup> use a positivist toolkit,<sup>20</sup> and are built on two important assumptions. On the one hand, they generally deny the influence of social dimensions containing ideas, norms and values in the international system.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, they see actors of the international system as egoistic, purely self-interest-motivated, atomistic actors who follow the principles of instrumental rationality.<sup>22</sup>

The Malthusian approach<sup>23</sup> builds its argumentation on the fact that water scarcity leads to vulnerabilities. In trans-boundary water issues, where states cannot practice absolute and exclusive sovereignty over waters, rivalry for water can motivate one-sided state actions

---

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Susanne Schmeier, "Governing International Watercourses: Perspectives from Different Disciplines," *Hertie School of Governance Working Papers*, no. 53 (2010).

<sup>19</sup> Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Relations*, ed. Scott Burchill et al. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), 188.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Even if it is not justified to claim that newer material theories such as neo-realism or neo-liberalism do not take ideas, their construction and their effects into consideration, they still deny the core importance and significant relevance of them (Ian Hurd, "Constructivism," in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 301-302).

<sup>22</sup> Reus-Smit, 188.

<sup>23</sup> E.g.: Peter H. Gleick, "Water and Conflict: Fresh Water Resources and International Security." *International Security* 18, no. 1 (1993): 79-112., Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases," *International Security* 18, no. 1(1994): 5-40., Norman Myers, *Ultimate Security: The Environmental Basis of Political Stability* (New York: Norton, 1993), Arnon Soffer, *Rivers of Fire: The Conflict over Water in the Middle East* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

to defend resources and interests. Therefore, Malthusians claim that there is a high possibility of conflictive relations between states because of trans-boundary waters. The so-called Malthusian “water war thesis” is built on the assumption that water scarcity creates a zero-sum game that inspires self-interest pursuing states to fight for survival through the fight for water. This assumption contributes to high tensions and raises the possibility of armed conflicts. Therefore, followers of Malthusianism widely believe that water will be the natural resource that motivates wars and other, lower intensity conflicts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Cornucopian approach<sup>24</sup> accepts that political, environmental, economic and geographic interdependencies emerging along trans-boundary waters might lead to conflictive relations among the concerned states. However, they also state that as these interdependencies enable and urge states to solve or manage their common problems together, in the course of history they have led more times to cooperative attitudes than to conflicts.<sup>25</sup> Cornucopians follow the neo-liberal assumption that relative gains enabled by multilateral institutions have priority over the absolute gains from the fight for possessing water benefits, and argue that the establishment of a complex water management regime is the common interest of all concerned states.

Both Malthusians and Cornucopians assume that the materiality of trans-boundary waters in itself has a direct, unmediated effect and influence which determines the outcomes of international patterns and behaviours.<sup>26</sup> This approach, however, makes these theoretical branches subjects of criticism, especially as on the basis of the existing literature and empirical experience it is not possible to make exclusive claims either about the cooperative

---

<sup>24</sup> E. g.: Aaron T. Wolf, *Hydropolitics along the Jordan River: Scarce Water and its Impact on the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Tokyo: UN University Press, 1995), Arun P. Elhance, *Hydropolitics in the Third World: Conflict and Cooperation in International River Basins* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1999), Tony Allan, *The Middle East Water Question: Hydropolitics and the Global Economy* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001).

<sup>25</sup> Schmeier, 6.

<sup>26</sup> Hurd, 300.

or conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, as the central concepts of these materialist-rationalist theories are usually constant and stable in time and space,<sup>28</sup> neither the Malthusian nor the Cornucopian theory can plausibly explain the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues.

## **1.2 Theoretical background: Constructivism**

The critical approach towards hydropolitics unites a set of different critical-reflectivist<sup>29</sup> branches. These branches are united in challenging materialist-rationalist theories ontologically, epistemologically, methodologically and normatively. Ontologically, they reject the materialist view and the applicability of rational choice theory in IR.<sup>30</sup> In terms of epistemology and methodology, they question the positivist logic of inquiry, argue for the subjectivity of observations and claim the need for interpretive methods with post-positivist tools.<sup>31</sup> Normatively, they claim that theories are never neutral or objective; they are constructed in line with different interests and in many cases legitimize the existing order.<sup>32</sup>

From the viewpoint of these kinds of approaches, materialist-rationalist theories of neo-realism and neo-liberalism stand on shaky ground, and the reconsideration of the established knowledge of these approaches is necessary. Critical approaches are recently claiming a wider space in the so-called “water discourse,” e.g. with pieces of research about

---

<sup>27</sup> Ursula Oswald Spring and Hans Günter Brauch, “Securitizing Water,” in *Facing Global Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts*, ed. Hans Günter Brauch et al. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2009), 189.

<sup>28</sup> Reus-Smit, 206.

<sup>29</sup> Here I use a broad understanding of critical theories, referring to all theories that use modernist or post-modernist approaches accompanied by post-positivist methodologies from critical to radical interpretivists and from minimal- to anti-foundationalists.

<sup>30</sup> Reus-Smit, 193.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

the political-interest-influenced nature of theories concerning deterministic water wars or water peace,<sup>33</sup> about the securitization of water issues,<sup>34</sup> political economic issues<sup>35</sup>, theories of hegemony,<sup>36</sup> or about critical hydropolitics,<sup>37</sup> just to illustrate the diversity of the approaches.

I share the general claim of these diverse approaches to revisit the materialist-rationalist view on trans-boundary water issues, and I treat constructivism as a derivation of broadly understood critical theories. Constructivists, in general, share the critical approach towards materialist-rationalist ontologies, epistemologies and methods, and they are committed to critical tools as well, although sometimes with a certain reservation, utilizing post-positivist methods in a moderate way.<sup>38</sup> Against the claims of materialist-rationalist theories, constructivists emphasize the intertwined material and social construction of structures, the politics- and interest-forming role of identity, and the mutually constructed nature of agents and structures.<sup>39</sup> However, it is important to emphasize here that I do not treat constructivism as a universal theory such as neo-realism or neo-liberalism, and I hold the view that it does not and cannot aim to establish a solid, unquestionable basis embedding and compressing universal explanations and knowledge from the “right” point of view. Therefore,

---

<sup>33</sup> Julie Trottier, “Water Wars: The Rise of a Hegemonic Concept: Exploring the Making of the Water War and Water Peace Belief within the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict,” *From Potential Conflict to Cooperation Potential (PCCP): Water for Peace. UNESCO-Green Cross* (2002).

<sup>34</sup> Frédéric Julien, “Hydropolitics is What Societies Make of It (or Why We Need a Constructivist Approach to the Geopolitics of Water),” *International Journal of Sustainable Society* 4, no.1-2 (2012).

<sup>35</sup> Jan Selby, *Water, Power and Politics in the Middle East: The Other Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003).

<sup>36</sup> Mark Zeitoun and Jeroen F. Warner, “Hydro-hegemony: A Framework for Analysis of Transboundary Water Conflicts,” *Water Policy* 8 (2006), 435-460.

<sup>37</sup> Chris Sneddon and Coleen Fox, “Rethinking Transboundary Waters: A Critical Hydropolitics of the Mekong Basin,” *Political Geography* 25, no. 2 (2006): 181-202.

<sup>38</sup> Reus-Smit, 196-198.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

it should not be considered as a compact theory of the social world, but rather as a perspective to the understanding of social relations.<sup>40</sup>

As constructivism includes a very diverse range of approaches and assumptions,<sup>41</sup> I find it necessary to specify my understanding of constructivism here. Beside the mentioned ontological assumptions, I also share the epistemological standpoint that it is not possible to have “objective” knowledge about the “real” world. Beside the given material objects, the main part of the perceived reality is socially constructed and is based on inter-subjective processes that attach meanings to material objects. These meanings are often manifested as ‘knowledge’, and have very real effects on international and domestic politics.<sup>42</sup>

I followed here the more empirical branch of constructivism, and set aside the heights of the more philosophical approaches.<sup>43</sup> I integrated this approach with moderately post-positivist methodological tools. From the wide range of constructivist focus points that I could have applied to investigate into the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues, I concentrated on the intertwined material and social constructedness of certain representations of trans-boundary waters and on their relations to the interest-forming role of identity.

I formulated my core assumptions on the basis of the works of Alexander Wendt. I found the general framework and assumptions of Wendtian constructivism the most appropriate for my research, not only because of the fact that for many IR theorists his works

---

<sup>40</sup> Xymena Kurowska and Friedrich Kratochwil, “The Social Constructivist Sensibility and Research on Common Security and Defence Policy,” in *Explaining the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: Theory in Action*, edited by Xymena Kurowska and Fabian Breuer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 86-89.; Reus-Smit, 202.

<sup>41</sup> Hurd, 305.

<sup>42</sup> Kevin C. Dunn, “Historical Representations,” in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, ed. Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 78.

<sup>43</sup> Hurd, 299.

provide the main guidelines for constructivism,<sup>44</sup> but also because of his detailed framework of constructivist concepts, with the application of which I had a comprehensive toolkit to analyse changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues. However, considering the shortcomings of Wendtian constructivism, and the time and scope constraints that I had during this research, I had to make slight theoretical modifications during its application.

First of all, as I analyse state relations by research question, I can avoid here one of the most significant shortcomings of the Wendtian approach of constructivism, that is, the presumed state-centeredness of the international system. Wendt takes states as given, ignoring the constructed nature of states that contradicts the main message of constructivism. Although my narrowly focused research deals only with state relations (the definition of trans-boundary waters itself presupposes states as the most significant actors in such cases and ignores the constructed nature of them as well), I am aware of this shortcoming of constructivism, and I suggest that further and broader constructivist research on this issue should deal with this question as well.

Furthermore, Wendt applies a systemic theory of constructivism that excludes the analysis of domestic identities for the benefit of parsimony.<sup>45</sup> In the case of trans-boundary waters, however, domestic and structural effects have a simultaneous influence on the change of identities, interests and water-related meaning attachments. Therefore, none of them can be ignored for the sake of parsimony, as it could endanger the substantial understanding of the issue. Thus, I decided to apply a holistic view,<sup>46</sup> which integrates domestically constructed

---

<sup>44</sup> Reus-Smit 202.

<sup>45</sup> Reus-Smit, 199-200.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Reus-Smit 199-200.

identities with internationally created ones, treating them as “two faces of a single social and political order.”<sup>47</sup>

Finally, as the aim of my research to emphasize how a constructivist approach can make a contribution to the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues is very narrow, and as I have serious constraints of time and scope, I cannot deal here with placing the whole issue of trans-boundary waters and hydropolitics into a detailed Wendtian constructivist framework with specifying the relevant structure-agent roles and relationships. Here I only put emphasis on the intertwined material and social constructedness of certain representations of trans-boundary waters and on their relations to the interest-forming role of identity. Therefore I do not deal in detail with the international structure or the cultures of anarchy and their implications and shortcomings, although I am aware of their relatedness to trans-boundary water issues in general, and of the need for analysing them and their implications in trans-boundary water issues in further research.

The most relevant message of Wendtian constructivism regarding my research is that “people act toward objects, including each other, on the basis of the meanings those objects have for them.”<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues can be treated as the outcome of the meanings that are attached to these issues through social construction. As these meanings are constructed through inter-subjective processes, they are never permanently fixed but change over time and space. This contradicts the widespread assumptions of solid and predictable patterns of material-rationalist approaches<sup>49</sup> and makes it possible to explain the changes in the nature of trans-boundary water issues.

---

<sup>47</sup> Reus-Smit, 201.

<sup>48</sup> Wendt, 140.

<sup>49</sup> Hurd, 300.

Wendt also presumes that there are three elements in social systems: material conditions, interests and ideas. He states that the importance of material conditions depends on interests, and interests are constructed on the basis of ideas.<sup>50</sup> Therefore he recommends beginning to deal with questions of international politics with the analysis of the distribution of ideas in the system, and then moving to material forces, not the other way around.<sup>51</sup> All in all, the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues can be approached in this framework as “the result of how we have socially constructed the meaning and relevance that material objects have for us,”<sup>52</sup> and its changes can be explained on the basis of changing ideas.

In the process of this meaning construction, ideas of national interests and identities play a distinctive role according to most approaches of constructivism.<sup>53</sup> According to Wendt, national interests are the “objective interests of state-society complexes.”<sup>54</sup> He argues that “[o]bjective interests are needs or functional imperatives which must be fulfilled if an identity is to be reproduced,”<sup>55</sup> and that the understanding of these objective interests constitutes subjective interests that directly motivate the actions of actors.<sup>56</sup> Emanuel Adler elaborates on the “objectivity” of these interests further. According to him, national interests are “inter-subjective understandings about what it takes to advance power, influence and wealth [...], national interests are facts whose ‘objectivity’ relies on human agreement and the collective

---

<sup>50</sup> Wendt, 231.

<sup>51</sup> Yucel Bozdaglioglu, “Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach,” *Review of International Law and Politics* 3, no.11 (2007): 127.

<sup>52</sup> Carol Atkinson, “Constructivist Implications of Material Power: Military Engagement and the Socialization of States, 1972-2000,” *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2006): 534.

<sup>53</sup> Maja Zehfuss, “Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison,” in *Constructivism and International Relations*, ed. Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander (Routledge: London, 2006), 92.

<sup>54</sup> Wendt, 198.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

assignment of meaning and function to physical objects.”<sup>57</sup> On the basis of this approach, trans-boundary waters are outstanding objects for the attachment of meanings related to national interests. This relationship between national interests and the meaning attached to physical objects goes well beyond the materialist-rationalist view assuming that the physical reality of trans-boundary waters in itself has a direct effect which determines the outcomes of international patterns and behaviours.<sup>58</sup>

Constructivism goes even further, explaining that “[t]he social construction of identities... is necessarily prior to the more obvious concepts of interests: a “we” needs to be established before its interests can be articulated.”<sup>59</sup> Identity, according to Wendt, is

a property of intentional actors that generates motivational and behavioral dispositions. This means that identity is at base a subjective or unit-level quality, rooted in an actor's self-understandings. However, the meaning of those understandings will often depend on whether other actors represent an actor in the same way, and to that extent identity will also have an intersubjective or systemic quality. [... ] Identities are constituted by both internal and external structures.<sup>60</sup>

Wendt made further sub-categories under the label of identities; however, as I find the application of the Wendtian categorization problematic, distinctions have to be made in this case. Wendt namely established a detailed framework for the understanding of identities that

---

<sup>57</sup> Emanuel Adler, “Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics,” *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 3(1997): 337.

<sup>58</sup> Hurd, 300.

<sup>59</sup> John A. Hall, “Ideas and the Social Sciences,” in *Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change*, ed. Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 51.

<sup>60</sup> Wendt, 224.

raises problematic questions. He makes a main distinction between the “anti-social”<sup>61</sup> corporate identity and other social identities, and treats only the latter as totally constructed and subjects of change, bracketing the influence of the possible changes in the corporate identity. I believe with Zehfuss<sup>62</sup> that this idea is problematic regarding the core of the main argument of constructivism, that is, the identities of actors’ are not given, but are established, maintained or transformed in interaction. I state that regardless to classification, all state identities are subjects to change, because the elements in the framework of constructivism are not stable but “inherently variable.”<sup>63</sup> As I find the typology of Wendt both theoretically and empirically problematic, in this research I only analyze how the changes in identities, regardless of their classification, influence the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues, and in the following I use the above-mentioned, simpler concept of identity.

Apart from the perceived nature and the accepted categorization of identity, constructivists in general work with the assumption that “interests presuppose identities because an actor cannot know what it wants until it knows who it is,”<sup>64</sup> which in turn depends on the social relationships of actors.<sup>65</sup> The general consequence can be drawn here that identities make the basis of national interests that influence the construction of state relations, while *vice versa*, state relations influence the construction of identities and interests. I presume that the changes in state relations are intertwined with the changes of meanings attached to their trans-boundary waters and that these changes of state relations are also intertwined with inter-subjective processes related to national interests and identities. In fact, I

---

<sup>61</sup> Wendt, 230.

<sup>62</sup> Zehfuss, 97.

<sup>63</sup> Reus-Smit, 202.

<sup>64</sup> Wendt, 231.

<sup>65</sup> Yucel, 132.

assume that there is a complex circle based on mutual construction and its inter-subjective processes that links identities, national interests and state relations;<sup>66</sup> and the meanings of material objects such as trans-boundary waters are constructed on the basis of this circle, in line with identities, following national interests and intertwined with state relations.

On the basis of these findings, I could identify three core assumptions on the basis of this slightly modified Wendtian constructivism about how a constructivist approach can contribute to the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues:

A. the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues is the outcome of the changing meanings that are attached to these issues through social construction,

B. the changes in the relations among the concerned states are intertwined with the changes of these meanings attached to trans-boundary waters, and

C. these changes of state relations are also intertwined with inter-subjective processes related to the concepts of national interest and identity.

In my research I explored the applicability of a constructivist approach through the analysis of two case studies, which analysis was based on these core assumptions, and consisted of two main parts. In the first part, I examined the two cases in detail to find out if the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues is really the outcome of the changing meanings that are attached to these issues through social construction (A). In the second part, after a short discussion on the connection between state relations and meanings attached to trans-boundary waters, I evaluated the applicability of the constructivist notions of national interest and identity and their inter-subjective connection with state relations on my cases, in order to observe, how the changes in state relations are related to the changes of meanings that are attached to trans-boundary waters, and how these changes of state relations

---

<sup>66</sup> Reus-Smit, 197.

are intertwined with inter-subjective processes related to the concepts of national interest and identity (B and C). After the assessment of the applicability of these core assumptions, I found justification that constructivism is a well-applicable tool for analysing and understanding the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues.

### **1.3 Methodology**

Departing from the above-described nature of my approach towards constructivism, in my research I used interpretive tools of analysis. I analyzed the historical representations<sup>67</sup> of trans-boundary waters on two case studies with the tool of textual analysis.<sup>68</sup> This methodology was a logical fit for my chosen approach of constructivism, as discovering the processes of meaning construction is closely linked to texts that conserve and reiterate representations of certain objects from certain eras. Moreover, as Wendt says, history plays an important role in the construction of state identities,<sup>69</sup> and therefore, history also has a great influence on the examined changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues.

The analysis of historical representations helps to understand “how meanings are produced and attached to various social subjects and objects”,<sup>70</sup> and “how an object of inquiry [in this case, trans-boundary waters] has been represented over time and space.”<sup>71</sup> In my research I chose three periods of history in both of my case studies, where the representations of trans-boundary waters were different. As these representations were constructed on the

---

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Dunn.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Margaret G Hermann, “Content Analysis,” in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, ed. Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash, 78-92. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Reus-Smit, 206-207.

<sup>70</sup> Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 4.

<sup>71</sup> Dunn, 79.

basis of the dominant meanings that are attached to trans-boundary waters, and appeared as ‘regimes of truth’ or ‘common knowledge’,<sup>72</sup> they can easily be found in different kinds of texts. Therefore, with the means of textual analysis I could identify the meanings of trans-boundary waters in different periods of time, and I could also trace the change of these meanings and their attachment to conflict or cooperation between these periods.

I analyzed the changes in meanings of trans-boundary waters and their attachment to conflict or cooperation by triangulating different texts, such as 1) academic sources,<sup>73</sup> 2) official agreements concerning trans-boundary waters,<sup>74</sup> 3) popular journal articles.<sup>75</sup> I presumed that these texts follow, conserve and reiterate the meanings of trans-boundary waters and their attachments to conflict and cooperation, which were accepted as ‘truth’ and ‘common knowledge’ in the specific eras, intertwined with their context of the mutually constructive processes from state identities to state relations.<sup>76</sup> During the textual analysis of these sources, I used a qualitative approach and considered the appearing meanings in texts as the representations of the dominant meanings of the given era. I found contingency analysis the most appropriate tool for exploring my research question; hence I focused on when the themes of trans-boundary waters and conflict/cooperation appeared in conjunction, to follow

---

<sup>72</sup> Dunn, 79.

<sup>73</sup> For both of my case studies I chose three kinds of academic sources (book chapters, reports/databases and articles), from all of which I took two-two often-quoted examples. I allowed overlaps between the sources in different periods of time.

<sup>74</sup> I examined water-related multi- and bilateral agreements, other joint documents, or (in a special period when the examined dyad of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan was part of the Soviet Union) domestic regulations from the given periods. I also considered the lack of agreements as the signifier of the lack of cooperation.

<sup>75</sup> I examined all water-related articles published in English by one-one mainstream, national agency-related news websites of the selected countries between 2011 and 2012.

<sup>76</sup> As I examined four different countries, language constraints were present during my research process. However, as I intended to examine the dominant meanings of trans-boundary waters and the dominant attachments of conflict and cooperation, the presumption that the sources that are written in or translated to English represent the perceived ‘common knowledge’ about the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues helped to cope with this constraint.

how their meanings became attached and how this attachment changed through the analysed periods of time.

In my case selection process,<sup>77</sup> I chose two cases that demonstrate change between conflict and cooperation concerning trans-boundary water debates. First I excluded all generally non-conflictive and non-cooperative trans-boundary water relations as non-cases, because I intended to explore the dynamics of change. To narrow the focus so as to have a viable research project, I also decided to focus on river issues. Departing from this, I could have chosen the case of all countries in a certain river basin with all the tributaries, or all riparian countries along a certain river. However, taking into consideration the time and scope constraints of my research and the clarity of the analysis, I decided to define cases as dyads of an upstream and a downstream country that are in tight interdependence with each other. With the help of The Trans-boundary Freshwater Dispute Database<sup>78</sup> I managed to identify the wide range of dyadic cases from which I chose two appropriate ones. In order to avoid having other independent or intervening factors that may lead to a conclusion without ground, I chose two similar cases in terms of relevant geographical, historical and political background. I also kept in mind that the cases should be independent from each other. This process led to the selection of the Turkey-Syria (Euphrates), and the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan (Amu-Darya) dyads.

---

<sup>77</sup> In spite of the detailed case selection process, I accept that case selection processes almost always contain arbitrary elements (Dunn, 85.).

<sup>78</sup> Wolf, "Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database."

## CHAPTER 2.

### CASE STUDY 1: THE RELATIONS OF UZBEKISTAN AND TAJIKISTAN OVER THE AMU DARYA

I devoted the following three chapters to find out empirically, how constructivism can make a contribution to the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues. For this, I applied my three core assumptions on two case studies. In Chapter 2. and 3., I examined the chosen two cases in detail to find out if the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary river issues is really the outcome of the changing meanings that are attached to these issues through social construction.

I explored here the historical representations of trans-boundary rivers in three historical periods to understand how meanings are attached to trans-boundary waters, and how trans-boundary rivers has been represented over time. With the analysis of the change in the meanings attached to trans-boundary rivers, I can refute the neo-realist and neo-liberal approaches that hold the belief that state relations over trans-boundary rivers are either conflictive or cooperative depending only on the materiality of the water, and I can confirm my claim that considering the social constructedness and attachment of these conflictive or cooperative meanings can lead the researcher to the deeper understanding of such situations. In the following analysis, therefore, I focused on when conflict or cooperation becomes attached to the meanings of trans-boundary waters and follow how the meanings changed through the analysed periods of time.

#### **2.1 Background**

The climate of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is arid with hot summers and mild winters. Uzbekistan is mostly a mid-latitude desert with semi-arid grasslands in the East and with

oases and fertile valleys, while Tajikistan has a mid-latitude continental climate that is modified by high mountains all over the country.<sup>79</sup> However, the present water crisis in the two countries is not due to quantity problems, but to the imbalance of water allocation and distribution.<sup>80</sup> The main point of disagreement between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is the distribution of the water of the Amu Darya.

The Amu Darya (see fig. 1), the largest river of Central Asia, is 1,415 km long (2,540 km counting its upstream part of the Panj river that gets the name Amu Darya after joining the Vaksh), and its catchment area expands to 309,000 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>81</sup> Most of its main tributaries originate in the ranges of the Pamir Mountains, and their flow comes mainly (about 74%<sup>82</sup>) from the territory of Tajikistan. As these tributaries largely contain melted snow from the high mountains, the maximal level of water can be observed in summer and the minimal level in winter. The Amu Darya flows along the border of Afghanistan and Tajikistan then Uzbekistan, after that through Turkmenistan, returning again to Uzbekistan and discharging into the Aral Sea.<sup>83</sup> For most parts of its history, this river has been one of the two chief providers of water for the Aral Sea, but as a consequence of Soviet-time canalization and excessive irrigation, its runoff declined in a significant way, bringing tragic effects to the Aral Sea.<sup>84</sup> The downstream part of the river does not meet any tributaries, and as it crosses a

---

<sup>79</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2012: Uzbekistan*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html> (accessed May 25, 2012), Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2012: Tajikistan*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ti.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>80</sup> Jeremy Allouche, "The governance of Central Asian waters: National interests versus regional cooperation," *Disarmament Forum* 4 (2007): 45.

<sup>81</sup> CAWATERinfo Database, "Water resources of the Aral Sea basin." [http://www.cawater-info.net/aral/water\\_e.htm](http://www.cawater-info.net/aral/water_e.htm) (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8-9.

desert–semi-desert region, it loses the majority of its water due to evaporation, infiltration and irrigation.<sup>85</sup>

Irrigation has been of key importance for the economy of the region for thousands of years.<sup>86</sup> The current network of dams, reservoirs and canals of the Amu Darya is one of the most complex water systems in the world.<sup>87</sup> This system was developed in an extreme way under the Soviet Union, who intended to expand its cotton production at a radical rate.<sup>88</sup> The Soviet central management of the region’s waters significantly contributed to the present differences between upstream and downstream countries. Uzbekistan, and other downstream countries, where the features were favourable, specialized in the irrigation-based growth of cotton, while upstream countries supported the unified irrigation system through building huge reservoirs to regulate the amount of water.<sup>89</sup>

Uzbekistan was the focal point of Soviet cotton agriculture, and it maintained its leading role among cotton exporters of the world after the collapse of the Soviet Union as well. The cost of this leading role has been, however, that Uzbekistan became the largest water-consuming country in Central Asia, and, as it contributes only for a small amount of the waters of the Amu Darya (6%),<sup>90</sup> it is extremely dependent on upstream countries and especially on Tajikistan. In other words, the geographical location of Tajikistan ensures a significant strategic position to the country over the waters of the Amu Darya. However, its

---

<sup>85</sup> CAWATERinfo Database, “Water resources of the Aral Sea basin.” [http://www.cawater-info.net/aral/water\\_e.htm](http://www.cawater-info.net/aral/water_e.htm) (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>86</sup> Soucek, 4.

<sup>87</sup> Allouche, “The Governance,” 46.

<sup>88</sup> Zainiddin Karaev, “Water Diplomacy in Central Asia,” *The Middle East Review of International Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2005): 64.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Jeremy Allouche, “A Source of Regional Tension in Central Asia: The Case of Water,” *CP 6: The Illusions of Transition: which perspectives for Central Asia and the Caucasus?* Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva (2004): 93.

weak international political and economic positions do not enable for Tajikistan to use this strategic position to bargain over water efficiently and to articulate its interests such as building new hydropower plants to satisfy its energy hunger<sup>91</sup> successfully.<sup>92</sup> Although Uzbekistan is in a dependent and vulnerable situation, its regional power can compensate for this and allows Uzbekistan to vindicate its interests concerning the preservation and expansion of irrigated areas.<sup>93</sup>

In spite of the clearly observable and apparently constant material interests of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan concerning the Amu Darya, which come from their geographical location and economic features, historical representations of trans-boundary waters between the two states have been changing many times in the past decades. In the followings I introduce three main historical representations of the meaning of trans-boundary rivers in the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan dyad.

## **2.2 Historical representation 1: Soviet times (1960-1991)**

The first examined historical representation of the meaning of trans-boundary rivers in the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan dyad became dominant under the Soviet rule over Central Asia, especially since 1960, at the beginning of the strained cotton-based agricultural development. This representation was built on two main common features that determined the identities of both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, namely on the perceived unity of the whole Soviet Central Asian region, and on its embeddedness into the greater entity of the Soviet Union. Because of the perception of this dual unity, notions of cooperation became attached to the meanings of trans-boundary waters not only between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, but in the whole region.

---

<sup>91</sup> International Crisis Group, "Central Asia: Water and Conflict," *ICG Asia Report* 34 (2002): 23-24.

<sup>92</sup> Allouche, "The Governance," 46., "Central Asia: Water and Conflict," 19-20.

<sup>93</sup> "Central Asia: Water and Conflict," 6.

The general framework of the overarching Soviet water legislation was set in the document about the Fundamental Principles of Water Legislation of the USSR and Union Republics from 1970.<sup>94</sup> It treats the waters of the Soviet Union as one unified system that is “the exclusive property of the state that was only available for use.”<sup>95</sup> In this sense, water allocation was the exclusive right of central authorities as well.<sup>96</sup> This document of water management induced the attachment of a centrally managed all-Union cooperation to trans-boundary rivers. Beside the general Soviet framework of common water management, a regional cooperative attitude was also attached to the Amu Darya due to the perceived unity and the artificial job division of the Central Asian republics. The Protocol 566 of 1987<sup>97</sup> regulating water allocation quotas between Central Asian states expresses the emphasis laid on cooperation and job division over trans-boundary waters in the Soviet era. Centrally regulated quotas were namely applied differently to the Central Asian countries to boost cooperation between them in line with their role in their centrally managed job division. Thus, on the basis of all-Union and regional Soviet regulations, cooperation prevailed between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan over the Amu Darya in this era.<sup>98</sup>

Although the examined academic sources concerning trans-boundary rivers in the late Soviet Central Asia mainly concentrate on security issues and environmental problems following from the Soviet legacy, the then-dominant attachment of cooperation referring to

---

<sup>94</sup> “Fundamental Principles of Water Legislation of the USSR and Union Republics,” (Osnovy vodnogo zakonodatel'stva Sojuza SSR i sojuznyh respublik), December 10, 1970, *Vedomosti SSSR* 50 (1970), item 566.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 3., “Vody v SSSR sostojat v isključitel'noj sobstvennosti gosudarstva i predostavljajutsja tol'ko v pol'zovanie.”

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 41.

<sup>97</sup> Scientific and Technical Council, “Protocol 566: Improvement of the Scheme on Complex Use and and Protection of Amu Darya Water Resources,” Ministry of Land Reclamation and Water Management of the Soviet Union, September 10, 1987. Cf. Masood Ahmad and Mahwash Wasiq, *Water Resource Development in Northern Afghanistan and Its Implications for Amu Darya Basin* (Washington DC: The World Bank, 2004), 34.

<sup>98</sup> Philip P. Micklin, *The Water Management Crisis in Soviet Central Asia* (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1989), 13-14, 90.

the economic unity and the division of work in Central Asia is present in almost all of them, whether they date back to the 1980s<sup>99</sup> or to the recent past.<sup>100</sup> References to the highly centralized common nature of Soviet water management,<sup>101</sup> to the unified management of the whole Aral Sea Basin<sup>102</sup> and to the significant role of Moscow and its Ministry of Land Reclamation and Water Management in settling barter agreements and quotas for the Central Asian countries,<sup>103</sup> which are related to the attachment of cooperation and trans-boundary rivers in the region, can be followed frequently.

The examined academic sources also often refer to that the “rational” use of waters meant the highest possible exploitation of this natural resource in the Soviet practice.<sup>104</sup> They regularly connect this to the topic that the main cause of the unified treatment of the waters of the Aral Sea Basin was the forced expansion of irrigation and of cotton fields in order to secure self-sufficiency and competition with Western powers.<sup>105</sup> Cooperation in this era, thus, is generally accepted as a dominantly attached meaning to trans-boundary rivers, the reason of which was to support the economic interests of the managing Soviet state – and therefore was perceived as unavoidable and necessary, as a natural consequence of the water-based interdependency of the countries of the Aral Sea Basin.

---

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Micklin.

<sup>100</sup> Erika Weinthal, “Water Conflict and Cooperation in Central Asia,” *Human Development Report 32* (2006): 5-6.

<sup>101</sup> Karaev, 62.

<sup>102</sup> Daene C. McKinney, “Cooperative Management of Transboundary Water Resources in Central Asia,” in *In the Tracks of Tamerlane: Central Asia's Path to the 21st Century*, ed. Daniel L. Burghart and Theresa Sabonis-Helf (Washington DC: National Defense University, Center for Technology and National Security Policy, 2004), 188.

<sup>103</sup> Allouche, “A Source,” 99.

<sup>104</sup> Soucek, 8-9.

<sup>105</sup> Allouche, “A Source,” 96.

The examined popular journal articles referring to this era from the present are in line with these findings. They follow the above outlined representation, mentioning the then-functioning unified water distribution system.<sup>106</sup> Some articles mention that Central Asian leaders even currently refer to Soviet quotas when claiming an increased amount of water allocated to their countries,<sup>107</sup> which shows the deep embeddedness of the need of central common management of waters in the societies. The other main representation in present journalism about the trans-boundary rivers in the Soviet period is connected to the frequently blamed “irrational”<sup>108</sup> Soviet central management of waters. In spite of the blaming tone, these articles often refer to the complex irrigation system set up by Soviet authorities, built on the perceived unity and job division, that is, cooperation in the region.<sup>109</sup> All in all, popular journalism also contains references to that under the Soviet era, themes of cooperation and trans-boundary water issues emerged in conjunction.

I can conclude here that the examined materials represent that a cooperation-centred meaning, assuming the unity and interdependency of the whole Aral Sea Basin and accepting the necessity of common management, was attached to trans-boundary waters during the Soviet rule, and this representation was dominant during this period of history.

---

<sup>106</sup> Khovar National Information Agency of Tajikistan, “Water Resources in Central Asia & Afghanistan,” March 22, 2012. <http://khovar.tj/eng/foreign-policy/2841-water-resources-in-central-asia-afghanistan.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>107</sup> Struan Stevenson, “President Emomali Rahmon Should Be Widely Supported by the West,” *Khovar National Information Agency of Tajikistan*, March 1, 2011. <http://khovar.tj/eng/archive/1912-s.stevenson-president-emomali-rahmon-should-be-widely-supported-by-the-west.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>108</sup> Madina Umarova, Iroda Umarova and Nodira Manzurova, “Uzbekistan has Rich Experience in Rational and Efficient Use of Water Resources,” *Uzbekistan National News Agency*, May 14, 2011. <http://uza.uz/en/politics/1932/> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>109</sup> Khovar, “Water Resources in Central Asia.”

### **2.3. Historical representation 2: Era of the regime change (1992-1999)**

The second examined historical representation of trans-boundary rivers in the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan dyad was present in the short decade right after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the core of this representation lays the poor political, social and economic situation of the newly independent Central Asian states, which, in their perception, necessitated the maintenance of Soviet-based patterns of cooperation, among others in terms of trans-boundary rivers as well.

The states were not prepared for independence due to the long Soviet dependency, therefore they took the opportunity almost unwillingly.<sup>110</sup> Their past as parts of a greater entity and a regional cooperation boosted the maintaining of the Soviet structures of politics, society and economy.<sup>111</sup> Instead of pursuing their long-suppressed rivalries that were present even during the Soviet times,<sup>112</sup> the states perceived the continuation of the Soviet-based cooperation as their main interest<sup>113</sup> and decided to sustain the water allocation mechanisms with barter and quotas. This was a period of large-scale multilateral agreements that carried the promise that the once forced cooperation between Central Asian states over trans-boundary rivers will continue on the basis of free will and national self-determination.

The most important document of this discourse was the Almaty Agreement of 1992.<sup>114</sup> It explicitly declared that the Central Asian countries recognize “the community and unity of the region’s water resources,” plainly following the earlier approach of the Soviet Union,

---

<sup>110</sup> “Central Asia: Water and Conflict,” 6.

<sup>111</sup> Allouche, “The Governance,” 46.

<sup>112</sup> There were confrontations over water in Central Asia in Soviet times, but all these initiatives were suppressed by Moscow (Karaev, 3).

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Weinthal 7-9.

<sup>114</sup> *Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republic of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan on cooperation in the field of joint water resources management and conservation of interstate sources, ‘Almaty Agreement’, February 18, 1992, TRE-153789.*

attaching cooperation to water issues. They also committed themselves directly to "respecting existing structure and principles [of] water allocation"<sup>115</sup> and to not allowing activities in their territories that could harm the interests of other countries in the region.<sup>116</sup> The interests of the whole region as a community apparently overwrote the interests of the individual states. For the implementation of this, then unanimously accepted rule, the Almaty Agreement laid the grounds of institutional cooperation as well with the establishment of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC).<sup>117</sup> The representation of unity and interdependency of the countries of the Aral Sea Basin that makes cooperation over water unavoidable and necessary is clearly present in this document. There are no initiatives mentioned (except for the case of Tajikistan who asked for a more just amount of irrigated land per capita<sup>118</sup>) to change the existing Soviet-based system of water allocation,<sup>119</sup> even if it was based on the former interests of the late Soviet Union and its artificial differentiation between upstream and downstream countries that forced barter over energy and water. Similarly, if we examine the meanings that are attached to trans-boundary rivers in other water-related agreements of the era, the assumption of the necessary cooperation and common management of water can also be followed.<sup>120</sup> Beside multilateral agreements, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan signed many bilateral agreements about water issues in line with the common attachment of cooperation to trans-boundary water issues as well.<sup>121</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> "Almaty Agreement," Preamble.

<sup>116</sup> "Almaty Agreement," Article 3.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Economic Commission for Europe and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Strengthening Cooperation for Rational and Efficient Energy Use of Water and Energy Resources in Central Asia* (New York: United Nations, 2004), 48-51.

<sup>118</sup> "Almaty Agreement," Preamble.

<sup>119</sup> Allouche, "A Source," 100.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. "Central Asia: Water and Conflict," 7-8.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

General knowledge formulated in the examined academic sources also contributes to the outlined representation of cooperation over trans-boundary rivers and welcomes the “very advanced water cooperation agreement”<sup>122</sup> of Almaty. Academic sources are keen on listing the agreements<sup>123</sup> and institutions<sup>124</sup> that they consider to establish a complex water regime,<sup>125</sup> regardless of their commitment to the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues. Many examined academic sources praise the continuation of the Soviet legacy of cooperative water management,<sup>126</sup> which is treated as an “instrument of crisis prevention”<sup>127</sup> in the region, contributing to the “silent peace in Central Asia.”<sup>128</sup>

In addition to these, the analysis of popular journalism articles also underlines the attachment of cooperation to trans-boundary water issues. Although the use of the concept of cooperation is mainly a rhetorical tool, references to the common past and the community of Central Asian states are present in their articles. The use of such sentences as “regional cooperation has been overused in Central Asia... [and] has been bandied about so much that it has become nothing more than a stale and worthless cliché”<sup>129</sup> refer to the examined period, when regional cooperation was not an empty notion or a mere rhetorical tool.

To sum up, the representation of trans-boundary rivers of the era of the regime change clearly ignored the conflictive possibilities of water division questions. Instead, it focused on

---

<sup>122</sup> Allouche, “The Governance,” 53.

<sup>123</sup> Weinthal, 7-9.

<sup>124</sup> Allouche, “The Governance,” 48.

<sup>125</sup> Allouche, “A Source,” 99-100.

<sup>126</sup> McKinney, 218.

<sup>127</sup> Julia Wunderer, “The Central Asian Water Regime as an Instrument for Crisis Prevention,” in *Facing Global Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts*, ed. Hans Günter Brauch et al. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2009), 742.

<sup>128</sup> Allouche, “A Source,” 100.

<sup>129</sup> Struan Stevenson, “Hydro-Power Stations Do Not Consume Water,” *Khovar National Information Agency of Tajikistan*, October 28, 2011. <http://khovar.tj/eng/energetics/2353-hydro-power-stations-do-not-consume-water.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

the cooperative development of the complex regional water allocation regime of Central Asia and on its significance in eliminating conflictive interests in the region, attaching cooperative meanings to trans-boundary rivers in the relations of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan as well.

However, without a strict and efficient central management, the consensus about the cooperative Soviet-originated water allocation system quickly faded in practice. Barter and quota systems failed when Tajikistan declared its need for more energy and more irrigated land, and Uzbekistan also decided to expand their irrigated lands and sell their energy at market prices.<sup>130</sup> The civil war in Tajikistan between 1992 and 1997 further worsened the situation, not only with breaking routine practices concerning water allocation but also with destroying important parts of the water management infrastructure.<sup>131</sup> Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, with the other Central Asian countries, soon recognized that a new space opened for the realization of their long-suppressed national interests, for which new national policies of trans-boundary water allocation can be a strong contributing tool.

### ***2.4 Historical representation 3: After 2000***

The third examined historical representation of trans-boundary rivers in the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan dyad has been dominantly present after 2000. The core cause of the formation of this representation and the reason for its radical turn from the cooperative past towards conflict was that the newly independent states have begun to pursue their own separate national interests over the interests of the regional community.<sup>132</sup> National sovereignty, nation- and state-building have become some of the most important concerns of

---

<sup>130</sup> Allouche, "The Governance," 48.

<sup>131</sup> "Central Asia: Water and Conflict," ii.

<sup>132</sup> "Central Asia: Water and Conflict," 1.

Uzbekistan and Tajikistan,<sup>133</sup> and the emerging interests of the competing new nation-states have been perceived unambiguously conflictive and non-reconcilable. A rivalry for the benefits of the region has begun, and the resources of the Aral Sea Basin have become objects of a radical dialogue about a perceived zero-sum game.<sup>134</sup>

Trans-boundary rivers have been an important stake in this game and the idea of cooperation over water has been more and more excluded from the real spheres of politics. While the agreements of the regional water regime faded into mere rhetoric, the parts of national constitutions concerning “sovereignty over resources” have become more and more significant.<sup>135</sup> Conflictive meanings became attached to trans-boundary rivers, which therefore have become a source of regional tension, especially between interdependent upstream and downstream states such as Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

The era after 2000 has generally been characterised by cooling and adversary relations between Tashkent and Dushanbe concerning water. In this period both the number and the significance of agreements declined. Although there are a few existing documents dealing with cooperation over the trans-boundary rivers of the Aral Sea Basin, such as the Programme of Concrete Actions on Improvement of Environmental and Socio-Economic Situation in the Aral Sea Basin for the Period 2003-2010,<sup>136</sup> the states of the region do not treat these commitments as legally binding and take every opportunity to break them when they hope for more benefits.<sup>137</sup> Bi-lateral agreements between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are not taken more

---

<sup>133</sup> Karaev, 3.

<sup>134</sup> “Central Asia: Water and Conflict,” ii.

<sup>135</sup> Karaev, 3.

<sup>136</sup> International Fund for the Aral Sea (IFAS), *Programme of Concrete Actions on Improvement of Environmental and Socio-Economic Situation in the Aral Sea Basin for the Period 2003-2010 (ASBP-2)*, (Dushanbe, 2003).

<sup>137</sup> Allouche, “The Governance,” 46-47.

seriously either; they are re-negotiated and ignored in an “ad hoc manner”<sup>138</sup> from time to time.<sup>139</sup> The texts of these water-related documents follow the former attachment of cooperation to trans-boundary rivers, but the declining number and the attitudes towards these documents show that the real meaning attached to trans-boundary waters has changed.

Academic sources from this era represent the changed conflictive meaning attached to trans-boundary rivers more directly than official documents. In the examined sources, the question of water between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan appears as a high-risk issue, as a “water ‘hot spot’”<sup>140</sup> that is very conflictive and highly likely to lead to an open or even armed conflict between the two states.<sup>141</sup> They frequently emphasize the material determinedness of the expected conflict<sup>142</sup> and desperately search and recommend ways to avoid them.<sup>143</sup> Colourful expressions about the increasing competition for water referring to the “alarming rate”<sup>144</sup> of “growing antagonism,”<sup>145</sup> when “unsustainable rates”<sup>146</sup> of water usage provoke “furious and hateful public statements”<sup>147</sup> intertwine with the sentences emphasizing the

---

<sup>138</sup> Karaev, 5.

<sup>139</sup> “Central Asia: Water and Conflict,” 9.

<sup>140</sup> Martin Kipping, “Can ‘Integrated Water Resources Management’ Silence Malthusian Concerns? The Case of Central Asia,” in *Facing Global Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts*, ed. Hans Günter Brauch et al. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2009), 711.

<sup>141</sup> Wunderer, 744-745.

<sup>142</sup> Dinar, Shlomi. “The Geographical Dimensions of Hydro-politics: International Freshwater in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia.” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 53, no. 1 (2012): 131-134.

<sup>143</sup> “Central Asia: Water and Conflict,” iii-iv.

<sup>144</sup> “Central Asia: Water and Conflict,” i.

<sup>145</sup> Yusuf Makhmedov, Mamurjon Madmusoev and Suhkrob Tavarov, *Water and Energy Disputes between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and Their Negative Influence on Regional Co-operation* (RUSHD NGO: Tajikistan, 2012), 10.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

failure of the regional water management system.<sup>148</sup> In these texts, this perceived zero-sum game over water is often represented as a very dominant, highly conflictive issue in the relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan that contributes to the worsening of other debated questions between them, such as the issues of ethnic minorities or disputed borders.<sup>149</sup>

The analysis of popular journal articles can give more details about the attachment of conflict and water. They put an emphasis on the necessarily conflictive relations over trans-boundary rivers and also underline the zero-sum nature of the concerning debates.<sup>150</sup> For example, articles about the issue of the planned Rogun hydropower plant, which is treated as very important by both parties, reflect radically different standpoints.<sup>151</sup> The Tajik party namely argues that “this project is both safe and regionally essential”<sup>152</sup>, while Uzbek sources refer to the same project as “a suicide”<sup>153</sup> for the whole region. Both states complain about scarce water and try to represent their water interests as natural necessities and the only way towards their desired self-sufficiency,<sup>154</sup> referring to their rival as “enemy of the nation”.<sup>155</sup> They depict themselves as actors fighting for the “rational use”<sup>156</sup> of water, working for the benefit of the whole region,<sup>157</sup> either by building hydropower plants,<sup>158</sup> or by developing new

---

<sup>148</sup> Makhmedov et al., 11.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 10., 12-13.

<sup>150</sup> Khovar, “Water Resources in Central Asia.”

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Makhmedov et al., 8.

<sup>152</sup> Khovar, “Water Resources in Central Asia.”

<sup>153</sup> Umarova, Umarova and Manzurova, “Uzbekistan has Rich Experience.”

<sup>154</sup> Khovar, “Water Resources in Central Asia.,” Anna Ivanova, “Water Resources are the Basis for Sustainable Development and Future Progress,” *Uzbekistan National News Agency*, May 13, 2011. <http://uza.uz/en/society/1929/> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>155</sup> Makhmedov et al., 12.

<sup>156</sup> Nodira Manzurova, Iroda Umarova and Madina Umarova, “Rational Use of Water is an Urgent Task,” *Uzbekistan National News Agency*, May 14, 2011. <http://uza.uz/en/politics/1930/> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>157</sup> Khovar, “Water Resources in Central Asia.”

technologies<sup>159</sup> to expand irrigated land, in spite of the fact that they treat regional cooperation in general as a “worthless cliché.”<sup>160</sup> Beyond paying lip-service to that, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan reach for the help of the international community via these articles, in order to get support for articulating and fulfilling their interests.

All in all, the powerlessness of the agreements that reflect the former cooperative approach towards trans-boundary waters, the conflict-centred academic analyses and the tension-reporting news articles clearly represent the failure of cooperation, the strengthening rivalry and the pursuit for national interests; in short, the conflictive meaning that is attached to trans-boundary water issues of nowadays.

To sum up, a constructivist approach in this case reveals that the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues is really the outcome of the changing meanings that are attached to these issues through social construction. With this conclusion, the case of the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan dyad supports my main statement that a constructivist approach can contribute to the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues. In the followings I apply the same approach to gain further understanding of changing meanings attached to trans-boundary waters in a similar situation, in order to find evidence, whether this approach can further the understanding beyond this case as well.

---

<sup>158</sup> Khovar, “Water Resources in Central Asia.”

<sup>159</sup> Ivanova, “Water Resources,,” Uzbekistan National News Agency, “Uzbekistan's GDP Grows 8.2% in Nine Months,” Oct 20, 2011. <http://uza.uz/en/politics/2208/> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>160</sup> Stevenson, “Hydro-Power Stations.”

## CHAPTER 3.

### CASE STUDY 2: THE RELATIONS OF TURKEY AND SYRIA OVER THE EUPHRATES

#### 3.1 Background

In Turkey and Syria the climate ranges from dry to sub-tropical Mediterranean. In general, summers are hot and dry, followed by mild and wet winters, especially at the coastal areas. The interior parts of the countries are more arid, and most parts of Syria are occupied with deserts.<sup>161</sup> The perceived water scarcity in the region, however, is not inherently natural, rather depends on the water allocation and distribution mechanisms of the riparian countries.<sup>162</sup> The Euphrates river (see fig. 2) is one of the two main water sources of the region, and the allocation of its water have been from time to time problematic since ancient times.<sup>163</sup>

The Euphrates is 2,780 km long<sup>164</sup> and its basin expands to 444,000 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>165</sup> It originates in the mountains of Eastern Turkey from the flow of two tributaries, the Furat-Su and the Murat-Su, the water of which mainly contains melted snow from the high mountains, reaching maximal level in winter and the minimum in summer.<sup>166</sup> The Euphrates flows through Turkey, Syria and Iraq. Several tributaries join to it in Turkey, while in Syria there

---

<sup>161</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2012: Turkey*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).  
Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2012., Syria*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>162</sup> Jessica Barnes, "Managing the Waters of Ba'th Country: The Politics of Water Scarcity in Syria," *Geopolitics* 14 (2009): 515.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Gleick, "Water Conflict Chronology."

<sup>164</sup> Mustafa Aydin and Fulya Ereker, "Water Scarcity and Political Wrangling: Security in the Euphrates and the Tigris Basin," in *Facing Global Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts*, ed. Hans Günter Brauch et al. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2009), 605.

<sup>165</sup> Aysegul Kibaroglu and Waltina Scheumann, "Euphrates-Tigris Rivers System: Political Rapprochement and Transboundary Water Cooperation," in *Turkey's Water Policy*, ed. Aysegul Kibaroglu et al. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2011), 278.

<sup>166</sup> Nurit Kliot, *Water Resources and Conflict in the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 1994), 102.

are only two of them, and Iraq has no contribution to the flow at all.<sup>167</sup> It means that Turkey gives 90% of the waters of the Euphrates, while the remaining 10% comes from Syria.

The variance of the flow of the Euphrates is extremely high both seasonally and multi-annually,<sup>168</sup> which led to serious seasonal shortages in water and necessitated the building of technical facilities to control the amount of it. The water of the Euphrates is used mainly for irrigation and power generation nowadays, which are not favoured by this variance. The capriciously changing amount of water is at its lowest in summer, when it is the most crucial for both of them. Moreover, floods in winter may harm both irrigated fields and technical facilities, therefore the regulation of the amount of water was beneficial for all riparians at the beginning of the process in the 1960s.<sup>169</sup>

However, since then Turkey is expanding its dam system in an enormous rate, and both Turkey and Syria intend to extend their irrigated areas radically,<sup>170</sup> that has already made water scarce, and the riparians are classified as “water stressed countries”.<sup>171</sup> The inefficient use of water, especially in Syria, further increases the water stress. The upstream position and its contribution to 90% of the waters of the Euphrates favours Turkey and ensures a significant strategic position for it over Syria, which is also supported by the differences between the technological and economic development of the two states.<sup>172</sup> The agriculture of Syria is highly dependent on the water of the Euphrates. Agriculture still gives almost 20% of the Syrian GDP,<sup>173</sup> and the main cash crops are water-demanding, such as cotton and

---

<sup>167</sup> Kibaroglu and Scheumann, 279.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 278.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. Aydin and Ereker, 606.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 605.

<sup>172</sup> Kliot, 151-152, 170.

<sup>173</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook 2012: Syria*.

wheat.<sup>174</sup> Therefore, Syria worries that with using the ‘water card,’ Turkey could exert political control over it, using its superior position to take one-sided actions over the Euphrates.<sup>175</sup>

Water distribution is not the only one hot spot in the relations between Turkey and Syria. The fact that Syria was subject of the centuries-long “Ottoman imperialism”<sup>176</sup> had a cooling effect on state relations since its independence. On the other hand, Turks considered Arabs as traitors because of their role on the side of the Western powers against the Ottoman Empire in WWI.<sup>177</sup> The territorial issue around Hatay, which belongs to Turkey since 1939, further complicated the relationship between the two states.<sup>178</sup> In the recent history, the Kurdish question also became a key issue of hostilities, as Syria supported the PKK against Turkey to develop its bargaining position over trans-boundary waters.<sup>179</sup> Nowadays the events of the Arab Spring had deteriorating effects on the relations of Turkey and Syria again.

Similarly to my first case study of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the clearly observable and apparently constant material interests of Turkey and Syria coming from their geographical location and economic features do not determine one-sided conflict or cooperation between the states, and the historical representations of trans-boundary waters have been changing many times in the past decades. In the followings I introduce three main historical representations of the meaning of trans-boundary rivers in this dyad as well to

---

<sup>174</sup> Elhance, 131.

<sup>175</sup> Kliot 164.

<sup>176</sup> Meliha Benli Altunisik and Ozlem Tur. “From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations,” *Security Dialogue* 37, no. 2 (2006): 231.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> The Hatay issue is not directly connected to the Euphrates, but it contributes to the tension over water between the two countries with the debate over the Orontes river. Cf. Serdar Guner, The Turkish-Syrian War of Attrition: The Water Dispute, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 20 (1997): 108., Kliot, 165.

<sup>179</sup> Aydin, 610.

follow the changes in the attachment of conflict and cooperation to the meanings of trans-boundary waters.

### **3.2. Historical representation 1: From the end of WWI to the end of the 1960s**

The first examined historical representation of the meaning of trans-boundary rivers in the Turkey-Syria dyad was dominant before 1970. In this period, the beginning of which traces back to the frontier agreements between Turkey and Syria, state relations over the Euphrates were not conflictive. As water withdrawal was partial,<sup>180</sup> the resources of the Euphrates were appropriate for the less-developed hydropower and irrigation systems of the states. Syria was governed as a mandate by France until 1946, and after independence it had to focus on the stabilization of the state.<sup>181</sup> In the meantime, Turkey concentrated on the development of Western Anatolia.<sup>182</sup> The comprehensive development in the Euphrates Basin began in the 1960s, and it rapidly increased the need for water in both countries.

Since the 1920s, several agreements were signed about water regulations. The Ankara Treaty of 1921<sup>183</sup> contained the first explicit regulation over the Euphrates. The Lausanne Treaty of 1923<sup>184</sup> prescribed that “an agreement shall be made between the States concerned to safeguard the interests and rights acquired by each of them”<sup>185</sup> when the riparians plan to establish new hydraulic systems. Frontier agreements were also negotiated in the atmosphere

---

<sup>180</sup> Kliot, 161.

<sup>181</sup> Barnes, 520-521.

<sup>182</sup> Aydin, 607.

<sup>183</sup> League of Nations, France and Turkey, “Agreement with a View to Promoting Peace, with Protocol Relating thereto, Protocol Concerning Its Coming into Force, and Exchange of Notes,” October 20, 1921, *League of Nations Treaty Series* 54, no. 1284.

<sup>184</sup> League of Nations. British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Greece and Turkey. “Treaty of Peace.” July 24, 1923. *League of Nations Treaty Series* 28, no. 701.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 109.

of cooperation.<sup>186</sup> The Keban Dam, the first modern dam that was built on the Euphrates in Turkey was designed for single hydropower generation purposes. As a result, it did not harm the irrigation interests of Syria, as it was not intended to reduce the water level of the Euphrates.<sup>187</sup> However, consultations among the riparians began about the necessary flow for Syria and Iraq before the construction of the Keban Dam finished. Turkey (in line with a donor agreement with the USAID) guaranteed a minimal flow of 350 m<sup>3</sup>/sec, that was confirmed orally both by Syria and Iraq.<sup>188</sup> As the building of the Keban Dam was only the first step in a long process of dam building both in Turkey and Syria, further bilateral and trilateral meetings were held to maintain the cooperation over the Euphrates, with the aim of establishing a Joint Technical Committee. Although the establishment of this committee was not successful, technical meetings continued between the riparians.<sup>189</sup>

The examined academic sources also refer to a “relative cooperative scene.”<sup>190</sup> There are common references to the less-developed nature of the economies of both countries in comparison with the later periods, which supported the satisfying water allocation of the era, and kept water relations neutral.<sup>191</sup> Many of the examined academic sources write that the large-scale use of the water of the Euphrates began at the beginning of the 1970s,<sup>192</sup> and one of them explicitly mentions that “[i]t was not before 1970s that the use of water of the

---

<sup>186</sup> Aydin, 607.

<sup>187</sup> Kibaroglu, 225.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>189</sup> Aydin, 608.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> John Kolars, “The Hydro-Imperative of Turkey's Search for Energy,” *Middle East Journal* 40, no. 1 (1986): 57.

<sup>192</sup> Guner, 107., Case Studies, in *Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Resolution*, ed. Heather L. Beach (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2000), 88-89.

Euphrates-Tiger Basin has become an inducement of major disagreements.”<sup>193</sup> When they mention conflict between Turkey and Syria, they refer to other issues that are mainly connected to their historical antagonisms<sup>194</sup> or to their antagonistic positions in the Cold War.<sup>195</sup> On the whole, the examined academic sources do not put emphasize on this era when they examine trans-boundary water allocation issues, except for mentioning the documents that guaranteed cooperation over the Euphrates and other trans-boundary rivers.<sup>196</sup>

Present journal articles also refer very rarely to this era, and if yes, by mentioning conflictive issues they rather concentrate on the common Ottoman past or on the Hatay territorial issue, which were treated in general separately from trans-boundary water issues.<sup>197</sup> However, journal articles mark very clearly the end of this relatively cooperative period at about forty years ago, both in the Syrian<sup>198</sup> and Turkish press.<sup>199</sup> They all refer to that the long conflict over the waters of the Euphrates began around the 1970s, suggesting that the earlier historical period did not contain references of conflict attachment to trans-boundary rivers.

On the whole, this era is characterized by the lack of conflict. Cooperation over water was expressed in agreements, and until the interests of the two states did not turn towards the Euphrates Basin, the attachment of cooperation and trans-boundary waters prevailed in the region.

---

<sup>193</sup> Aydin,607.

<sup>194</sup> Zeki Kutuk, “The Marginalization of Water in Turkish-Syrian Relations,” in *Managing Blue Gold: New Perspectives on Water Security in the Levantine Middle East*, ed. Mari Luomi (Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2010), 36-37.

<sup>195</sup> Altunisik and Tur, 232.

<sup>196</sup> Kibaroglu, 221-223.

<sup>197</sup> Elizabeth S. Hurd, “Time to Stand up, Turkey,” *Today’s Zaman*, April 27, 2011. [http://www.todayszaman.com/news-242104-time-to-stand-up-turkey-by-elizabeth-shakman-hurd\\*.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/news-242104-time-to-stand-up-turkey-by-elizabeth-shakman-hurd*.html) (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>198</sup> Sarah Abu Assali, “Guarding the Stars,” *Syria Today*, December 2011 <http://www.syria-today.com/index.php/december-2011/932-life/17482-guarding-the-stars-> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>199</sup> Today’s Zaman. “Time of Turkey Under Water.” March 18, 2012. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-274563-time-in-turkey-under-water.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

### **3.3. Historical representation 2: From the Keban-Tabqa issue to the GAP (1970-1999)**

The second examined historical representation of trans-boundary rivers in the Turkey-Syria dyad emerged with the cooling of state relations over the Euphrates from the beginning of the 1970s, and became evident with the first open crisis over dam construction in 1975.<sup>200</sup> The need for development was a core issue for both Turkey and Syria in this period.<sup>201</sup> Turkey wanted to gain energy from new hydropower plants on the Euphrates and develop its least-developed South-Eastern areas to catch up with Europe in order to be able to join to the European Communities.<sup>202</sup> The Syrian government needed the support of the agricultural layers of the society, which it could guarantee with the development of irrigation systems.<sup>203</sup> Therefore, energy and irrigation supported by the flow of the Euphrates gained a high priority. The water issue became intertwined with other, high-priority security issues, such as the Turk-Arab antagonism, the territorial debate over Hatay and the Kurdish question.<sup>204</sup> The attachment of conflict and water made the poor state relations over water evident, even natural in the common sense.

The rare cooperative initiatives of this period were not allocated into a comprehensive agreement. The only initiative that seemed promising for a short time was the establishment of the Joint Technical Commission (JTC). The JTC was established by Turkey and Iraq in 1980, and Syria joined in 1983.<sup>205</sup> The greatest success of the JTC was the temporary Protocol

---

<sup>200</sup> Aydin, 608.

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Kliot, 151-157.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>203</sup> Cf. Barnes, 520-522.

<sup>204</sup> Guner, 107-109.

<sup>205</sup> Aydin, 610.

of Economic Cooperation signed by Turkey and Syria in 1987.<sup>206</sup> The Protocol dealt with several water-related issues; however, it was not appropriate for the long-term allocation of water. Actually, the commission could never work efficiently because of the conflictive atmosphere over water, and after 16 meetings, in 1993, after an outrage of Syria over the Turkish attitude towards the problem, it dissolved.<sup>207</sup> In this period, in spite of the shallow attempts to negotiate, Syria raised strong objections in every possible forum against the plans of further dams by Turkey, which contributed to the adversary relations.<sup>208</sup>

The examined academic sources clearly reflect the attachment of a conflictive attitude to trans-boundary waters in this era. They list the dates<sup>209</sup> of more serious collisions over water, willingly emphasizing that during the crisis of 1990<sup>210</sup> Turkey and Syria were on the brink of war because of the Ataturk reservoir. The topic of conflict over the Turkish GAP (Guneysdogu Anadolu Projesi, South-Eastern Anatolia Project, proposed first in 1983<sup>211</sup>) is always mentioned in the examined sources, and its consequences are often analysed in detail. The material approach to trans-boundary waters is clearly manifested in articles presenting a huge amount of data concerning the GAP,<sup>212</sup> or in emphasizing that the GAP will reduce the flow of the Euphrates significantly, which would have tragic effects on the agriculture of Syria and lead to open, even armed conflict with Turkey.<sup>213</sup> They mention “hard security”

---

<sup>206</sup> United Nations, “The Protocol on Matters Pertaining to Economic Cooperation Between the Republic of Turkey and the Syrian Arab Republic,” 17 July 1987, *United Nations Treaty Series* 1724, no. 30069.

<sup>207</sup> Aydin, 610.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 610-611.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 611-612.

<sup>210</sup> Gleick, “Water Conflict Chronology,” Joost Jongerden, “Dams and Politics in Turkey: Utilizing Water, Developing Conflict,” *Middle East Policy* 17, no. 1(2010): 137-138.

<sup>211</sup> Altunisik and Tur, 232.

<sup>212</sup> Kliot, 125-131.

<sup>213</sup> *Downstream Impacts of Turkish Dam Construction on Syria and Iraq: Joint Report of Fact-Finding Mission to Syria and Iraq*. (Kurdish Human Rights Project, The Ilisu Dam Campaign and The Corner House, 2002), 12.

issues concerning water,<sup>214</sup> and underline the unilateral efforts of riparians to increase their gains from trans-boundary waters regardless to the position of the neighbouring country.<sup>215</sup>

The examined academic sources also give a detailed picture about the attachment of trans-boundary rivers, territorial issues, terrorism and the Kurdish question. They report about that Syria gave shelter to the PKK since 1979.<sup>216</sup> The topic of Kurds also appear in texts writing about the designation of the GAP,<sup>217</sup> which even mention that the aim of converting Kurds into “modern Turks” was an important expected outcome and GAP was treated as a tool to reduce the support of the PKK and to break their support from Syria.<sup>218</sup> Even the Israeli conflict became attached to the Euphrates at one point in the sources, when they mention that in 1996 Syria wanted to gain more water from Turkey as a compensation for water negotiations with Israel.<sup>219</sup> References to the Turkish-Arab antagonism are also present,<sup>220</sup> mentioning that Syria tried to put the whole water issue into a pan-Arab framework.<sup>221</sup> All in all, the examined academic sources unambiguously reflect an extremely conflictive representation of trans-boundary waters in this period of time.

Current popular journal articles obviously reiterate this representation referring to the “very tense relations”<sup>222</sup> of the era. Although Turkey and Syria presently follow a very cooperative approach and try to avoid recalling the conflictive past, plenty of references to the

---

<sup>214</sup> Aydin, 603.

<sup>215</sup> Kliot, 121-122.

<sup>216</sup> Jongerden, 140.

<sup>217</sup> Kliot, 125, 165., Kolars 64.

<sup>218</sup> Jongerden, 140-142.

<sup>219</sup> Aydin, 612.

<sup>220</sup> Jongerden, 139.

<sup>221</sup> Altunisik and Tur, 233.

<sup>222</sup> Ali Serim, “Shallow Analyses of Syria Could Lead to Embarrassing Mistakes,” *Today's Zaman*, June 26, 2011. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-248537-shallow-analyses-of-syria-could-lead-to-embarrassing-mistakes.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

formerly characteristic conflictive meanings are present in the examined articles. In spite of the Syrian tolerance that is observable in these articles, the GAP still cannot be presented as beneficial for Syrians, and references about it as the main reason of the past conflict with Turkey are still often present.<sup>223</sup> The topic of Kurdish terrorism and trans-boundary rivers also emerge in conjunction in retrospective articles<sup>224</sup> about dam construction, referring to the Ocalan issue. Dam construction is sometimes still linked with preventing “the infiltration of Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) terrorists into Turkey.”<sup>225</sup>

On the whole, in this period the “water wars” approach of extremely conflictive zero-sum games became attached to the waters of the Euphrates, accompanied and made much more threatening by other conflictive issues, leading to the complete lack of permanent agreements, negotiations or other cooperative initiatives at the end of the era.

### **3.4. Historical representation 3: Emerging cooperation between 1999 and 2011<sup>226</sup>**

At the end of the 1998 crisis, Syria finally abandoned the support for Ocalan. The Adana Accord of 1998 officially ended the Syrian support for the PKK and removed one of the greatest burdens from Turkish-Syrian relations.<sup>227</sup> The following rapprochement dominated the representation of trans-boundary waters in the period after 1999, boosting the

---

<sup>223</sup> Abdulhamid Qabbani, “Q&A: George Soumi, Minister of Irrigation,” *Syria Today*, January 2011. <http://www.syria-today.com/index.php/january-2012/940-focus/17956-qa-george-soumi-minister-of-irrigation-> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>224</sup> Hurd, “Time to.”

<sup>225</sup> Ercan Yavuz, “‘Water Wars’ Threat Gone with 18 Transborder River Dams,” *Today’s Zaman*, January 11, 2011. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-232099-water-wars-threat-gone-with-18-transborder-river-dams.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>226</sup> This is the most controversial historical representation of all the examined ones. Some sources expect the quick return to conflict, while others are convinced that negotiations lead to the long-awaited tri-lateral agreement over the Euphrates. In spite of their expectations, however, all examined sources accepted the emergence of cooperative attitudes between Turkey and Syria after 1999.

<sup>227</sup> Kibaroglu and Scheumann, 290.

de-attachment of conflictive meanings from the waters of the Euphrates and urging initiatives for the cooperation over trans-boundary rivers. Without the attached issues of Kurdish terrorism, the problem of the GAP has become negotiable, as the new agreements between Turkey and Syria show.

The first joint document showing the signs of rapprochement was the Joint Communiqué between the GAP Regional Development Administration (RDA) of Turkey and the General Organization for Land Development (GOLD) of Syria in 2001.<sup>228</sup> It was significant because it transferred the issue of water from the spheres of security and politics back to the technical sphere where it became handled by technocrats, who focused on the commonly achievable, sustainable relative gains and “a positive-sum, integrative approach”<sup>229</sup> instead of the unilateral exploitation of the Euphrates.<sup>230</sup> In 2007, the JTC was brought to life again. It focused not only on technical issues as in the 1960s, but also dealt with complex issues ranging from water quality management to agricultural research and the well-being of the population,<sup>231</sup> allocating “not the water but the benefits.”<sup>232</sup> In 2009, Turkey and Syria signed four official protocols regarding water issues declaring joint initiatives to utilize their trans-boundary waters efficiently, to fight against drought and for the remediation of water quality. They also decided to build a new joint dam and a pump station.<sup>233</sup>

---

228 Kibaroglu and Scheumann, 290-291.

229 Ibid., 298.

230 Ibid., 290.

231 Ibid., 290-291.

232 Ibid., 297.

233 *Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of Syrian Arab Republic in the field of efficient utilization of water resources and combating of drought.* December 23, 2009. LEX-FAOC103269. Official Journal No. 27947 (Mukerrer), 28 May 2011., *Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Turkey and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on establishment of a pumping station for withdrawal of water from Tigris River.* December 23, 2009. LEX-FAOC103283. Official Journal No. 27947 (Mukerrer), 28 May 2011., *Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Turkey and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic for a Construction of a Joint Dam on the Orontes River Under the Name “Friendship Dam.”* December 23, 2009.

These documents and the growing number of bilateral meetings on complex issues created an atmosphere that the examined academic sources label as “a noteworthy climate of cooperation,”<sup>234</sup> that “went beyond good neighborliness”<sup>235</sup> and led to a perceived “significant progress.”<sup>236</sup> Some of these sources claim that trans-boundary waters became a problem between Turkey and Syria because of other deteriorating issues in the state relations between them.<sup>237</sup> In spite of this observable positive approach, another important feature of the examined documents is that regardless of treating the situation “extra-positive,”<sup>238</sup> being undecided about the issue,<sup>239</sup> or seeing the dangers of escalation looming,<sup>240</sup> all academic sources draw the attention of the reader to the uncertainty of the future of this newly emerged cooperative attitude.

Departing from the new, radically changing political scenery of the Middle East, I decided to draw the end of this historical period in 2011, when the Turkish support towards the events of the Arab Spring and the violent, suppressing anti-protest measures of the Assad regime in Syria led to the radical cooling of Turkish-Syrian relations.<sup>241</sup> Current popular journal articles from the Turkish side clearly reflect this change in the relations; however, they

---

<http://web.ogm.gov.tr/birimler/merkez/egitim/disiliskiler/Dokumanlar/mutabakat%20zabıtlari/Suriye/Asi-Ing.pdf> (accessed 25 May 2012), *Memorandum of Understanding in the field of remediation of water quality between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic*. December 23, 2009. LEX-FAOC103198. Official Journal No. 27947 (Mukerrer), 28 May 2011.

<sup>234</sup> Aydın, 612.

<sup>235</sup> Altunisik and Tur, 229.

<sup>236</sup> Kibaroglu and Scheumann, 291.

<sup>237</sup> Aydın, 613.

<sup>238</sup> Aydın, 612.

<sup>239</sup> Kutuk, 44-45., “Case Studies,” 90.

<sup>240</sup> Jongerden, 139-140.

<sup>241</sup> Today's Zaman.com – Reuters, “Turkey Readies Sanctions against Syria,” *Today's Zaman*, September 28, 2011. <http://www.todayzaman.com/news-258204-turkey-readies-sanctions-against-syria.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

do not contain new references to the attachment of water to this issue. Rather, they refer back to the cooperative nature of state relations in the examined period, and often mention that Assad was the “one-time friend”<sup>242</sup> of Turkey, or that how extraordinarily disappointing this break with the Assad regime is.<sup>243</sup> Moreover, in the interpretation of the Turkish news, Turkey does not turn its back to Syria,<sup>244</sup> going back to the conflict that characterized their relationship for a long time, rather stands up for the Syrian population against its leader, saying “the sanctions will target Assad's government, not the Syrian people.”<sup>245</sup> These approaches obviously reiterate the dominant status of the cooperative approach in the examined period of time. The Euphrates is mentioned in them many times as the target of tourism<sup>246</sup> and as a means for development,<sup>247</sup> but never as a source for conflict. According to the examined articles, Turkey wants to “disprove the thesis of ‘water wars,’”<sup>248</sup> therefore it supports the building of joint dams “to cooperate with its neighbors.”<sup>249</sup> The topic of the Friendship Dam, which is established in cooperation with Syria, also occurs more times, as articles treat it as an evidence of strong ties between the two neighbours,<sup>250</sup> which will “end speculation that the depletion of water resources might bring the two countries to the brink of

---

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Todayszaman.com. “Erdogan Supports Syrian People’s Right to Self-Defense,” April 1, 2012. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-276003-erdogan-supports-syrian-peoples-right-to-self-defense.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>245</sup> Todayszaman.com – Reuters, “Turkey Readies.”

<sup>246</sup> Theresa Day, “Kate Clow: Winds of Change in Turkey’s Tourism Policy,” *Today’s Zaman*, January 12, 2012. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-268424-kate-clow-winds-of-change-in-turkeys-tourism-policy.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>247</sup> Yavuz, “‘Water Wars.’”

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Yavuz, “‘Water Wars.’”

<sup>250</sup> Ercan Yavuz, “Minister: Water War No Longer a Possibility in Turkey’s Region.” *Today’s Zaman*, February 21, 2011. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-236174-minister-water-war-no-longer-a-possibility-in-turkeys-region.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

war and that it will result in far-reaching positive effects in the long run.”<sup>251</sup> As for the linking of the Kurdish question to the waters of the Euphrates, popular journals report that the ceased Syrian support significantly contributed to the suppression of the PKK and to the success of the de-attachment of water and terrorism.<sup>252</sup>

Present Syrian news articles similarly avoid the question of conflict over trans-boundary rivers. In spite of the fact that water and food scarcity is a very central issue in the presently domestic-conflict-ridden Syria,<sup>253</sup> only one examined article referred directly to Turkey in connection with water, and only in connection with the construction of the Friendship Dam.<sup>254</sup> Instead of emphasizing the conflictive situation or the zero-sum game over water with Turkey, government officials emphasize the positive outcomes of cooperation with Turkey<sup>255</sup> and instead of proposing war for water, they highlight the need for an agricultural reform to increase the efficiency of irrigation<sup>256</sup> or to reduce the amount of extremely water-demanding crops.<sup>257</sup> On the whole, although present articles state that nowadays Turkey and Syria are heading back to the times of insecurity,<sup>258</sup> they also accept and constantly reiterate that relations have become very close over the past decade.<sup>259</sup>

---

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Today's Zaman, "Turkey No Longer has Kurdish Issue, says PM Erdoğan," February 21, 2011. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-242523-turkey-no-longer-has-kurdish-issue-says-pm-erdogan.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>253</sup> Abdulhamid Qabbani, "Going Hungry." *Syria Today*, January 2012. <http://www.syria-today.com/index.php/january-2012/940-focus/17953-going-hungry> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>254</sup> Syria Today, "Syria and Turkey Reconcile Water Dispute with Friendship Dam," March 2011. <http://www.syria-today.com/index.php/march-/753-business-news/14498-syria-and-turkey-reconcile-water-dispute-with-friendship-dam> (accessed May 25, 2012).

<sup>255</sup> Qabbani, "Q&A."

<sup>256</sup> Qabbani, "Going Hungry."

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Serim, "Shallow Analyses."

<sup>259</sup> Qabbani, "Q&A."

I can conclude here that the examined materials unequivocally represent that a cooperation-centred meaning was attached to trans-boundary waters between 1999 and 2011, and this representation was dominant during this period of history.

To sum up, the detailed analysis of the changing historical representations of trans-boundary rivers in the examined two different cases showed that the conflictive or cooperative nature attached to trans-boundary rivers is far from being constant. As the materiality of the examined rivers is constant, and as the rationalist approach would prognosticate the constant pursuit of the concerned states to gain as many (absolute or relative) benefits from the situation as they can, the consequence can be drawn that materialist-rationalist approaches cannot explain the changes in the conflictive and cooperative nature attached to trans-boundary rivers in the examined cases. On the basis of the examined cases, it seems obvious that the materiality of trans-boundary rivers does not have in itself a direct, unmediated effect and influence, which would determine the outcomes of international patterns and behaviours.<sup>260</sup> The constructivist approach, on the contrary, draws the attention to that beyond the materiality of trans-boundary rivers, the inter-subjective processes of the attachment of socially constructed meanings influence the perceived conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary rivers. During the analysis of the examined case studies, these inter-subjective processes of meaning attachment and their influence on the perceived conflict or cooperation over trans-boundary rivers were clearly observable. All in all, on the basis of the examined cases, it seems justified that the perceived conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary rivers is “the result of how we have socially constructed the meaning and relevance that material objects have for us.”<sup>261</sup> Departing from this, I can conclude here that my first core assumption, that the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues is the

---

<sup>260</sup> Hurd, 300.

<sup>261</sup> Atkinson, 534.

outcome of the changing meanings that are attached to these issues through social construction, reasonably contributes to the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues through a constructivist approach.

## CHAPTER 4.

### INTERESTS AND IDENTITIES IN THE EXAMINED CASES

In the previous two chapters I gave empirical justification to argument that the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues is really the outcome of the changing meanings that are attached to these issues through social construction. After the application of my first core assumption, in this chapter I concentrate on the observation of the applicability of my two other core assumptions. Namely, after a short discussion of the connection between state relations and meanings attached to trans-boundary waters, I evaluate the applicability of the constructivist notions of national interest and identity, and their inter-subjective connection with state relations on my cases. In this way I observe, how the changes in the relations among the concerned states are intertwined with the changes of these meanings attached to trans-boundary waters, and how these changes of state relations are also intertwined with inter-subjective processes related to the concepts of national interest and identity.

#### ***4.1 State relations and attached meanings***

In my second core assumption I stated that the changes in state relations are related to the changes of the meanings attached to trans-boundary waters. During the analysis of the case studies I found that the meaning of the Amu Darya for Uzbekistan and Tajikistan changed slowly from cooperative to conflictive, when the two states became independent from the cooperative community of the Soviet Union, ceased to cooperate, and finally began to rival against each other. In this case, the dynamics of the change in the meaning of trans-boundary waters reflect the change in state relations. In my other case study it was observable that the conflict between Turkey and Syria also emerged in conjunction with conflictive state

relations. Furthermore, after Syria stopped its support to the PKK, the formerly conflictive relations over water took an immediate turn to rapprochement and cooperation. This also supports the existence of the link between the nature of state relations and the meaning attached to trans-boundary waters. It can be stated therefore, that the meanings of trans-boundary waters are intertwined with state relations in the examined cases. However, in the constructivist approach, there is a complex circle based on mutual construction and its inter-subjective processes that links identities, national interests and state relations;<sup>262</sup> therefore, the explanation for the change of meanings of material objects such as trans-boundary waters cannot be fully revealed without the analysis of national interests and identities.

#### **4.2 National interests in the material sense**

Materialist-rationalist approaches of neo-realism and neo-liberalism typically consider national interests as material factors.<sup>263</sup> In a neo-realist sense, the Amu Darya and the Euphrates embody national interests an important material capability, which is essential for the survival of the states, and which supports their pursuit for power that dominates the international system.<sup>264</sup> Neo-liberals also see national interests connected to trans-boundary rivers as essentially material.<sup>265</sup> In their approach, the Amu Darya and the Euphrates embody and determine national interests related to interdependencies and the need for common institutions for water management between the examined dyads of states. The rational approach of both theories reduces the interactions between the two states to a realm of strategy that is dominated by instrumentality.

---

<sup>262</sup> Reus-Smit, 197.

<sup>263</sup> Wendt 92.

<sup>264</sup> Reus-Smit, 206.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

Departing from these assumptions, the neo-realist approach sees the examined cases as inherently conflictive, while neo-liberals only focus on the cooperative opportunities offered by the perceived common national interests of the states. However, the detailed examination of the cases showed that neither approach is accurate. Beside the fact that the examined state relations over trans-boundary waters are not as stable as these approaches would predict on the basis of national interests, neo-realism and neo-liberalism cannot explain either, why Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkey or Syria decided to prioritize common interests over national interests in some periods, and why they turned to the egoistic pursuit of national interests in other periods. From a constructivist viewpoint, the reason is obvious: both neo-realist and neo-liberal approaches fail to consider the inter-subjective constituting force of ideas that weigh more in international relations than mere materiality, not only related to meaning attachments, but also in the case of national interests.

### ***4.3 National interests in the constructivist sense***

Although the concept of national interest is typically attached to materialist attitudes, especially to realism,<sup>266</sup> it can be argued that constructivists are as passionate towards national interests as realists are. Wendt himself writes that the existence and relevance of national interests “cannot be uniquely Realist claims, since then almost every IR scholar would be a Realist. No one denies that states act on the basis of perceived interests, and few would deny that those interests are often egoistic.”<sup>267</sup> However, the emphasis here is on the word “perceived:” Wendt claims that his approach can give “a more stripped down

---

<sup>266</sup> Wendt, 33.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 113.

conceptualization”<sup>268</sup> of national interests than materialist approaches do, which contributes to the revealing of ‘hidden forms’ of international politics.

There is a main difference in the understanding of national interests between materialist-rationalist theories and constructivism, that is, constructivists do not take interests as given, but assume that they are constructed on the basis of identities. National interests in a constructivist sense are the “reproduction requirements” of the identities of state-society complexes.<sup>269</sup> As “[t]he social construction of identities... is necessarily prior to the more obvious concepts of interests: a “we” needs to be established before its interests can be articulated,”<sup>270</sup> in a constructivist sense, the underlying national interests in the examined cases can be accessed through the analysis of the prevailing identities in the examined historical periods.

#### ***4.4 Underlying identities in the examined cases***

On the basis of the empirical findings gained from the examined case studies, and departing from the general approaches of constructivism, the changes of identities can be observed in the analysed cases. In the case of the Amu Darya, in the first period, both republics were parts of the centrally managed community of the Soviet Union. The differences between them that may lead to rivalry or conflict were centrally suppressed in the name of the Soviet unity.<sup>271</sup> Central Asian identity was an important region within the Soviet Union, and both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan shared this identity. Under these circumstances, they perceived each other as similar states with a common identity. Departing from this assumption, their national interests were also perceived as common, and the central

---

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>269</sup> Wendt, 234-235.

<sup>270</sup> Hall, 51.

<sup>271</sup> Weinthal, 6.

management of their capabilities through job division reiterated this perception. On the basis of these common national interests, state relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan were cooperative, as well as the meanings that they attached to trans-boundary waters.

In the second examined period, after independence, the perceptions of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan changed. It was an era of transition and shakiness – even the physical survival of the states was in question. This period was dominated by a search for an identity appropriate for the newly independent states, and in this instable situation, in the lack of an accepted narrative about the Self and the Others in the international system, avoiding further instabilities became the main interest of the states.<sup>272</sup> For this reason, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan decided to maintain cooperation and to not engage in rivalry. Cooperative state relations were accompanied with cooperative meanings attached to trans-boundary waters as well.

In the course of time, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan realized that maintaining stability, law, order and the legitimacy of the elites is only possible if they have a broadly accepted, stable identity. Therefore, the third examined period after 2000 was characterized by a pursuit of identity-construction. In such processes the role of the “Other” and of rivalry are of core importance, consequently the nation- and state-building processes that embodied the main national interests of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan boosted rivalry and conflict between them,<sup>273</sup> and the prevailing conflictive attitudes became attached to trans-boundary waters as well. All in all, in the case of the Amu Darya, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the quest of the newly independent states for stabilizing their situation and for finding their new places in the international system boosted identity change and had direct influence on the changes of the meanings attached to trans-boundary river issues.

---

<sup>272</sup> Cf. Weinthal 7-9.

<sup>273</sup> Beatrice Mosello, “Water in Central Asia: A Prospect for Conflict or Cooperation?” *Journal of Public and International Affairs* (2008): 159-160.

The case of the Euphrates differs from the case of the Amu Darya. Although relations between Turkey and Syria are also influenced by identity-, state- and nation-building processes, the main consequence of them is manifested in the indirect attachment of conflict to trans-boundary river issues through the linkage of territorial debates, minority questions and terrorism to the water allocation of the Euphrates.

The first examined period between WWI and 1970 was dominated by the processes of state- and nation-building after independence. The transition from the Ottoman Empire to modern nation-states with its domestic political, social and economic implications took very serious efforts from the leading elites, especially in Syria after the French mandate rule. In this period of identity modification, the main derived interest was relative stability and the avoidance of conflict.<sup>274</sup> As a consequence, in spite of the colliding identities of Turks and Arabs, neutral state relations prevailed, and a rather cooperative atmosphere became attached to trans-boundary waters as well.

In the second examined period, between 1970 and 1999, Turkey decided to pursue an identity that would connect it to the European Communities of highly developed countries.<sup>275</sup> Meanwhile, nation-building processes turned out to be not successful in the case of the Kurdish minority that led to the spreading activities of the PKK. The Turkish answer for both identity challenges was to set the main national interest in economic development, with the help of which Turkey will be able to join to the EC and “transform” the Kurdish population into “modern Turks”.<sup>276</sup> In the meantime, Syria also had a great pressure towards setting the aim of economic development. For the identity-building processes, the leading elites needed the support of the wide agricultural layers of the society; therefore they had to provide

---

<sup>274</sup> Barnes, 520-521.

<sup>275</sup> Kliot, 151.

<sup>276</sup> Jongerden, 141.

satisfying circumstances in agriculture with the help of irrigation.<sup>277</sup> National interests of economic development increased the need for water, and the rivalry over trans-boundary rivers was accompanied by seriously deteriorating state relations containing the renewal of Turk-Arab antagonism, territorial disputes and Syrian support to the PKK.

In the third examined period from 1999 to 2011, the gap between Turkish and EC/EU identity did not disappear, and the continuous refusals from the EC/EU made Turkey search for other “doors” and turn towards Arab countries.<sup>278</sup> Turkey-US relationships also deteriorated due to the US military actions in the Middle East, which also contributed to this turn.<sup>279</sup> This foreign policy turn had serious implications for the identity of Turkey, as well as the rapidly decreasing activities of the PKK after which Syria ceased to support them. The further event brought closer the identities of Turkey and Syria, while the latter removed a serious threat for the Turkish identity-building process. In the meantime, for many Syrians, Turkey became a role model as a Middle Eastern country that modernized while keeping its own autonomy and Islamic identity.<sup>280</sup> National interests derived from converging identities were not perceived as threats anymore; rather, they tended towards cooperation. State relations became cooperative, and this cooperation became attached to trans-boundary waters as well.

Departing from the examined case studies, the consequence can be drawn that the use of the constructivist approach that identities as “private, domestically rooted beliefs about Self and Other” constitute “national interests and the definition of the given situation”<sup>281</sup> has a distinct explanatory power concerning the construction of the meanings of trans-boundary

---

<sup>277</sup> Barnes, 520-523.

<sup>278</sup> Altunisik and Tur, 230., Kutuk, 42-43.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>280</sup> Serim, “Shallow Analyses”

<sup>281</sup> Wendt, 141.

waters. It can be stated here that identifying the complex circle based on mutual construction and its inter-subjective processes that links identities, national interests and state relations<sup>282</sup> contributes to the explanation of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues.

On the basis of these findings, it can be stated that my second and third core assumptions that the changes in the relations among the concerned states are intertwined with the changes of the meanings attached to trans-boundary waters, and that these changes of state relations are also intertwined with inter-subjective processes related to the concepts of national interest and identity, are justified in the examined cases. Moreover, it can also be stated that revealing this complex circle of mutual construction and its inter-subjective processes that links identities, national interests and state relations<sup>283</sup> makes a contribution to the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues. All things considered, from my case studies the consequence can be drawn that a constructivist approach has a significant added value in the analysis of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues in comparison with mainstream neo-realist and neo-liberal theories.

---

<sup>282</sup> Reus-Smit, 197.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

## CONCLUSION

Examining the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues is an outstanding study area to further the explicit IR theorisation of hydropolitics while criticizing the dominant approaches of neo-realism and neo-liberalism. In this research I proposed to follow these aims with the examination of my main statement, in which I argued that *a constructivist approach can make a contribution to the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues.*

For this, I applied a constructivist approach on two cases of trans-boundary water issues, with the help of three constructivism-based core assumptions, to find out how constructivism can make a contribution to the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues, while materialist-rationalist approaches fail to give a plausible explanation for these changes. In the course of the analysis, the three core assumptions, namely, that the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues is the outcome of the changing meanings that are attached to these issues through social construction; that the changes in the relations among the concerned states are intertwined with the changes of these meanings attached to trans-boundary waters; and that these changes of state relations are also intertwined with inter-subjective processes related to the concepts of national interest and identity, helped me to trace the roots of these changes and to give a plausible explanation for them in the examined cases. On the basis of these core assumptions, I found out that the constructivist approach can go well beyond the rigid and narrow rationalist-materialist understandings of the conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues, and that it can make a contribution to the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues.

I suggest here that this developed constructivist approach to the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues can be applied with the necessary modifications to other similar cases as well. My conclusions seem to be plausible and consistent with the underlying methodology and the relevant theoretical and empirical findings. My findings about the explanatory power of the constructivist approach concerning the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues are also useful for forecasting or understanding forthcoming trans-boundary water issues on the basis of changing identities and interests in the international system. They are not only applicable for empirical problems but also make a contribution to the debate over the IR theorization of hydrogeopolitics. My findings namely illustrate that theorization of hydrogeopolitics can contribute to the problematization of until now hidden issues and that this problematization may help policy-makers to find new solutions by challenging “common knowledge” – for example about the inherently conflictive or cooperative nature of trans-boundary water issues.

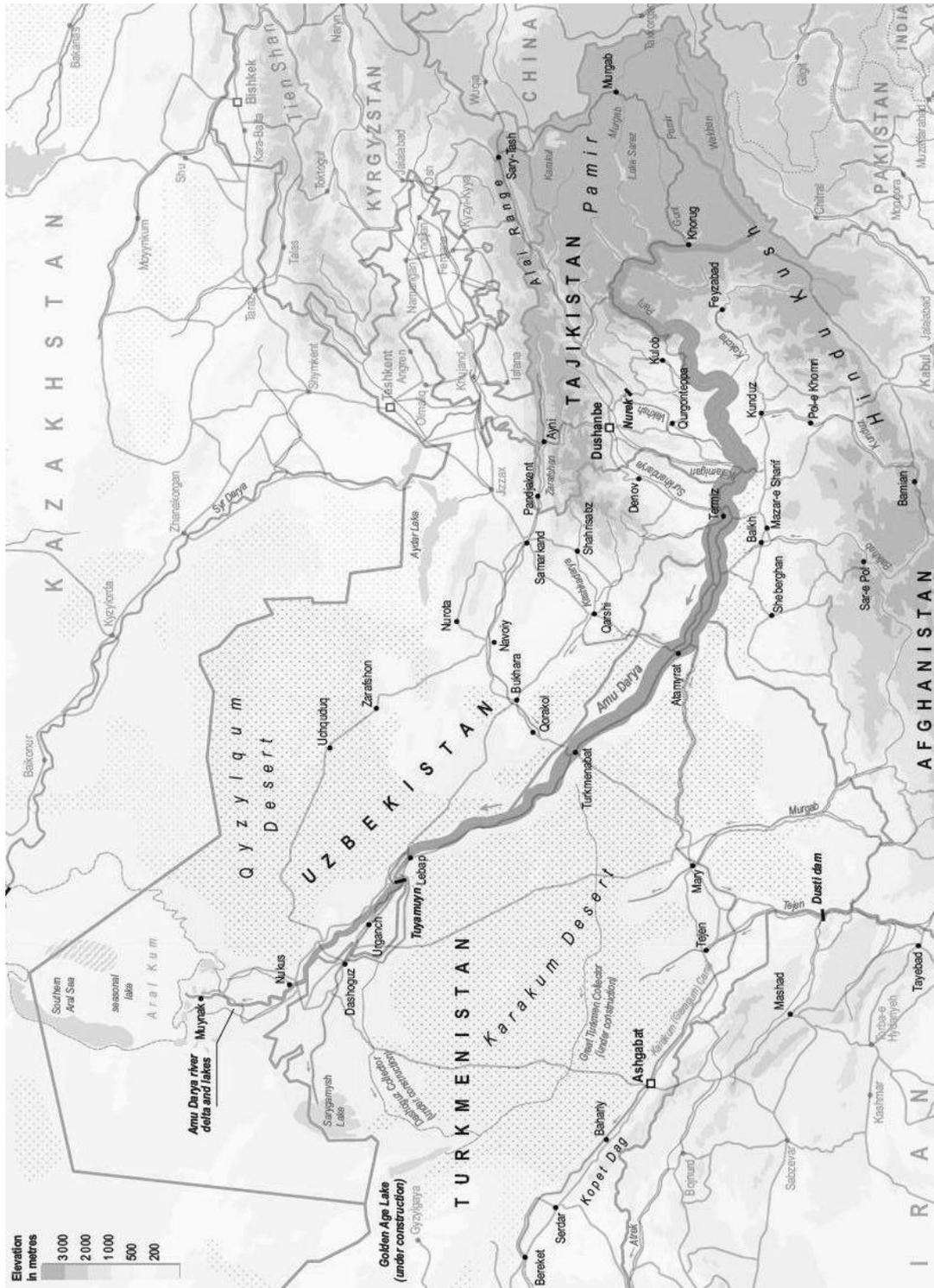
However, I have to emphasize here that the framework that I established through the constructivist analysis of the historical representations of trans-boundary waters in my case studies is not a universal model that could be used as a general framework without modifications regarding the given circumstances of the analysed cases. Rather, my research can be used as an example of how constructivism can contribute to the understanding of the dynamics of conflict and cooperation in trans-boundary water issues. The main reason for this is that the construction of the meaning of trans-boundary waters can differ very much from case to case. Therefore, my research is basically a straw-in-the-wind kind of research. That means that even if the used cases shows that my theoretical contribution is justified, they are neither necessary nor sufficient to decide if a constructivist approach can universally be used in this way to contribute to the understanding of the dynamics of conflict and cooperation.

However, further research in other trans-boundary water cases may increase confidence in this constructivist approach and justify its theoretical contribution in a more general way.

As for another related direction of further research, I would suggest to follow the thread of challenging “common knowledge” and move towards the critical theoretical roots of constructivism. During my research I only analysed dominant representations, which means that I often bracketed questions of power-knowledge relations and their roles in the construction of meanings, state relations, interests and identities both domestically and internationally. However, I argue here that the critical analysis of these power-knowledge relations could significantly further the understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues by giving a more comprehensive picture about the processes of social construction related to these changes.

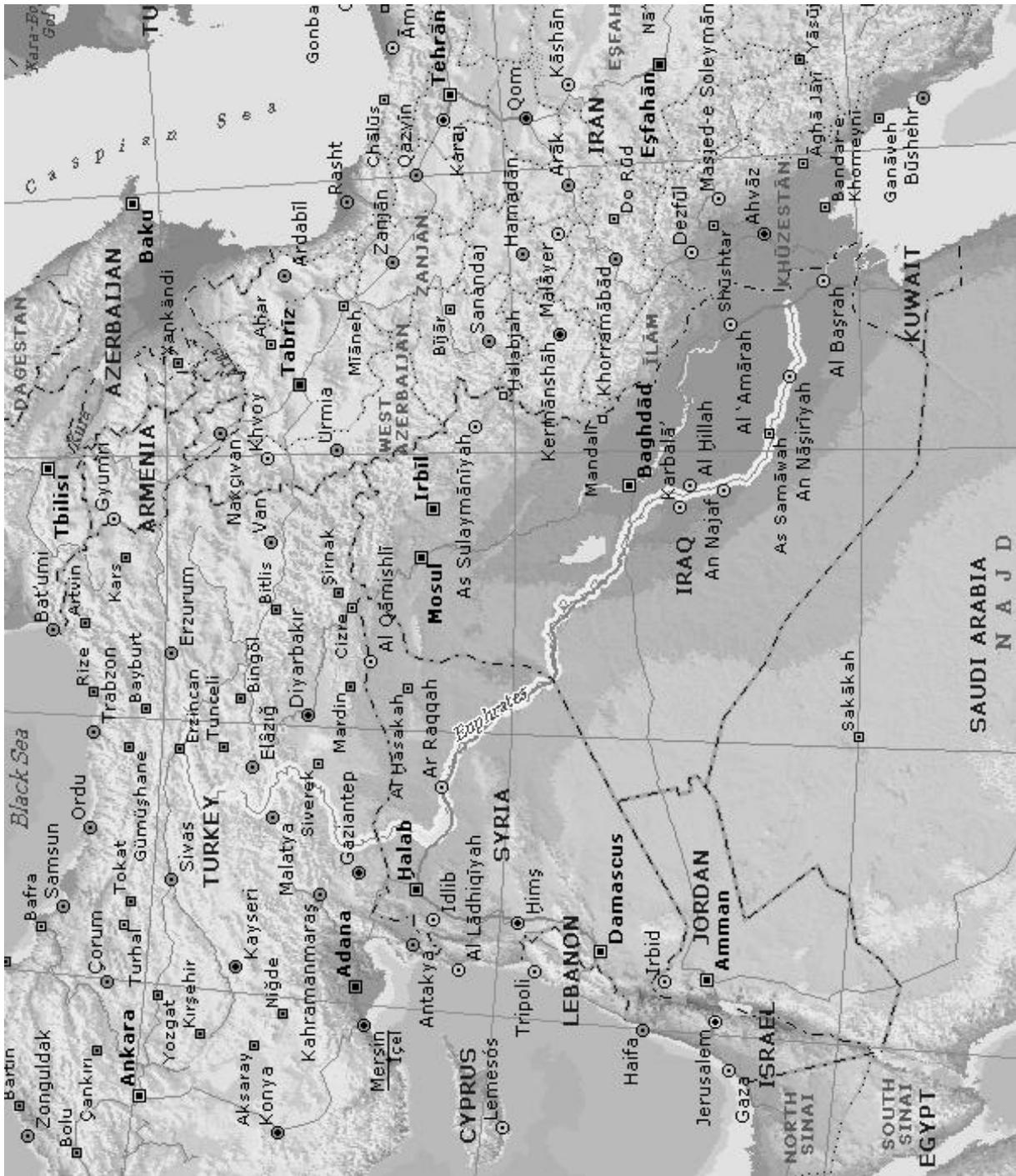
From the single statement that “water is politics,” my research moved towards a deeper understanding of the changes in the cooperative and conflictive nature of trans-boundary water issues by using the constructivist approach of ‘water issues are what states make of them.’ Looking into this process of “making” and discovering the underlying power-knowledge relations beyond and among state borders may be the greatest challenge for advanced critical research on this topic, contributing to the furthering of the explicit IR theorisation of hydro politics.

## APPENDIX



**Figure 1. The Amu Darya.**

Source: UNEP-ENVSEC, *Environment and Security in the Amu Darya Basin* (ENVSEC Report, 2011), 12-13.



**Figure 2. The Euphrates.**

Source: “Waterways in the Middle East,” Inner Asian and Uralic Resource Centre, Indiana University, Bloomington, <https://www.indiana.edu/~iaunrc/outreach/waterways.shtml> (accessed May 25, 2012)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abu Assali, Sarah. "Guarding the Stars." *Syria Today*, December 2011. <http://www.syria-today.com/index.php/december-2011/932-life/17482-guarding-the-stars-> (accessed May 25, 2012).
- Adler, Emanuel. "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics." *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 3 (1997): 319-363.
- Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republic of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan on cooperation in the field of joint water resources management and conservation of interstate sources.* 'Almaty Agreement', February 18, 1992. TRE-153789.
- Ahmad, Masood and Mahwash Wasiq. *Water Resource Development in Northern Afghanistan and Its Implications for Amu Darya Basin.* Washington DC: The World Bank, 2004.
- Allan, Tony. "Hydro-Peace in the Middle East: Why No Water Wars: A Case Study of the Jordan Basin." *SAIS Review* 22, no. 2 (2002): 255-272.
- . *The Middle East Water Question: Hydropolitics and the Global Economy.* London: I. B. Tauris, 2001.
- Allouche, Jeremy. "A Source of Regional Tension in Central Asia: The Case of Water." *CP 6: The Illusions of Transition: which perspectives for Central Asia and the Caucasus?* Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva (2004): 92-104.
- . "The Governance of Central Asian Waters: National Interests Versus Regional Cooperation." *Disarmament Forum* 4 (2007): 45-55.
- Altunisik, Meliha Benli, and Ozlem Tur. "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations." *Security Dialogue* 37, no. 2 (2006): 229-248.
- Atkinson, Carol. "Constructivist Implications of Material Power: Military Engagement and the Socialization of States, 1972-2000." *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2006): 509-537.
- Aydin, Mustafa, and Fulya Ereker. "Water Scarcity and Political Wrangling: Security in the Euphrates and the Tigris Basin." In *Facing Global Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts*, edited by Hans Günter Brauch et al., 603-613. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2009.
- Barnes, Jessica. "Managing the Waters of Ba'th Country: The Politics of Water Scarcity in Syria." *Geopolitics* 14 (2009): 510-530.
- Bozdaglioglu, Yucel. "Constructivism and Identity Formation: An Interactive Approach." *Review of International Law and Politics* 3, no.11 (2007): 121-144.

Case Studies. In *Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Resolution*, edited by Heather L. Beach, 79-131. Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2000.

CAWATERinfo Database. "Water Resources of the Aral Sea Basin." [http://www.cawater-info.net/arak/water\\_e.htm](http://www.cawater-info.net/arak/water_e.htm) (accessed May 25, 2012).

Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook 2012: Syria*.  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook 2012: Tajikistan*.  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ti.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook 2012: Turkey*.  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook 2012: Uzbekistan*.  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/uz.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

Day, Theresa. "Kate Clow: Winds of Change in Turkey's Tourism Policy." *Today's Zaman*, January 12, 2012. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-268424-kate-clow-winds-of-change-in-turkeys-tourism-policy.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

Dinar, Shlomi. "The Geographical Dimensions of Hydro-politics: International Freshwater in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia." *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 53, no. 1 (2012): 115–142.

Doty, Roxanne Lynn. *Imperial Encounters*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

*Downstream Impacts of Turkish Dam Construction on Syria and Iraq: Joint Report of Fact-Finding Mission to Syria and Iraq*. Kurdish Human Rights Project, The Ilisu Dam Campaign and The Corner House, 2002.

du Plessis, Anton. "Charting the Course of the Water Discourse through the Fog of International Relations Theory." In *Water Wars: Enduring Myth or Impending Reality*, edited by Hussein Solomon and Anthony Turton, 9-34. Durham/Pretoria: ACCORD/Green Cross International and the African Water Issues Research Unit, 2000.

Dunn, Kevin C. "Historical Representations." In *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, edited by Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash, 78-92. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Economic Commission for Europe and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. *Strengthening Cooperation for Rational and Efficient Energy Use of Water and Energy Resources in Central Asia*. New York: United Nations, 2004.

- Elhance, Arun P. "Hydropolitics: Grounds for Despair, Reasons for Hope." *Internal Negotiations* 5 (2000): 201-222.
- . *Hydropolitics in the Third World: Conflict and Cooperation in International River Basins*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1999.
- "Fundamental Principles of Water Legislation of the USSR and Union Republics." December 10, 1970. *Vedomosti SSSR* 50 (1970), item 566.
- Furlong, Kathryn. "Hidden Theories, Troubled Waters: International Relations, the 'Territorial Trap', and the South African Development Community's Transboundary Waters." *Political Geography* 25 (2006): 438-458.
- Gleick, Peter H. "Climate Change, Exponential Curves, Water Resources, and Unprecedented Threats to Humanity." *Climatic Change* 100 (2010): 125-129.
- . "Water and Conflict: Fresh Water Resources and International Security." *International Security* 18, no. 1 (1993): 79-112.
- . "Water Conflict Chronology." Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment, and Security, *Database on Water and Conflict Water Brief*, 2008.
- . *The World's Water: The Biennial Report on Freshwater Resources*. Washington DC: Island Press, 2011.
- Guner, Serdar. The Turkish-Syrian War of Attrition: The Water Dispute. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 20 (1997): 105-116.
- Hall, John A. "Ideas and the Social Sciences." In *Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change*, edited by Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane, 31-56. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Hermann, Margaret G. "Content Analysis." In *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, edited by Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash, 78-92. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Homer-Dixon, Thomas F. "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases." *International Security* 18, no. 1 (1994): 5-40.
- . *Environment, Scarcity and Violence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Hurd, Ian. "Constructivism." In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, edited by Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, 298-316. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Hurd, Elizabeth S. "Time to Stand up, Turkey." *Today's Zaman*, April 27, 2011. [http://www.todayszaman.com/news-242104-time-to-stand-up-turkey-by-elizabeth-shakman-hurd\\*.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/news-242104-time-to-stand-up-turkey-by-elizabeth-shakman-hurd*.html) (accessed May 25, 2012).

- International Crisis Group. "Central Asia: Water and Conflict." *ICG Asia Report* 34 (2002).
- International Fund for the Aral Sea (IFAS). *Programme of Concrete Actions on Improvement of Environmental and Socio-Economic Situation in the Aral Sea Basin for the Period 2003-2010 (ASBP-2)*. Dushanbe, 2003.
- Ivanova, Anna. "Water Resources are the Basis for Sustainable Development and Future Progress." *Uzbekistan National News Agency*, May 13, 2011. <http://uza.uz/en/society/1929/> (accessed May 25, 2012).
- Jongerden, Joost. "Dams and Politics in Turkey: Utilizing Water, Developing Conflict." *Middle East Policy* 17, no. 1 (2010): 137-143.
- Julien, Frédéric. "Hydropolitics is What Societies Make of It (or Why We Need a Constructivist Approach to the Geopolitics of Water)." *International Journal of Sustainable Society* 4, no.1-2 (2012): 45-71.
- Karaev, Zainiddin. "Water Diplomacy in Central Asia." *The Middle East Review of International Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2005): 63-69.
- Khovar National Information Agency of Tajikistan. "Water Resources in Central Asia & Afghanistan." March 22, 2012. <http://khovar.tj/eng/foreign-policy/2841-water-resources-in-central-asia-afghanistan.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).
- Kibaroglu, Aysegul and Waltina Scheumann. "Euphrates-Tigris Rivers System: Political Rapprochement and Transboundary Water Cooperation." In *Turkey's Water Policy* edited by Aysegul Kibaroglu et al., 277-299. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2011.
- Kibaroglu, Aysegul. *Building a Regime for the Waters of the Euphrates-Tigris River Basin*. London: Kluwer Law International, 2002.
- Kipping, Martin. "Can 'Integrated Water Resources Management' Silence Malthusian Concerns? The Case of Central Asia." In *Facing Global Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts*, edited by Hans Günter Brauch et al., 711-723. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2009.
- Kliot, Nurit. *Water Resources and Conflict in the Middle East*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Kolars, John. "The Hydro-Imperative of Turkey's Search for Energy." *Middle East Journal* 40, no. 1 (1986): 53-67.
- Kurowska, Xymena and Friedrich Kratochwil. "The Social Constructivist Sensibility and Research on Common Security and Defence Policy." In *Explaining the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy: Theory in Action*, edited by Xymena Kurowska and Fabian Breuer, 86-110. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Kutuk, Zeki. "The Marginalization of Water in Turkish-Syrian Relations." In *Managing Blue Gold: New Perspectives on Water Security in the Levantine Middle East*, edited by Mari Luomi, 36-45. Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2010.

League of Nations. France and Turkey. "Agreement with a View to Promoting Peace, with Protocol Relating Thereto, Protocol Concerning Its Coming into Force, and Exchange of Notes." October 20, 1921. *League of Nations Treaty Series* 54, no. 1284.

LeMarquand, David G. *International Rivers: The Politics of Cooperation*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1977.

Makhmedov, Yusuf, Mamurjon Madmusoev and Suhkrob Tavarov. "Water and Energy Disputes between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and Their Negative Influence on Regional Co-operation." RUSHD NGO: Tajikistan, 2012.

Manzurova, Nodira, Iroda Umarova and Madina Umarova. "Rational Use of Water is an Urgent Task." *Uzbekistan National News Agency*, May 14, 2011.  
<http://uza.uz/en/politics/1930/> (accessed May 25, 2012).

McKinney, Daene C. "Cooperative Management of Transboundary Water Resources in Central Asia." In *In the Tracks of Tamerlane. Central Asia's Path to the 21st Century*, edited by Daniel L. Burghart and Theresa Sabonis-Helf, 187-220. Washington DC: National Defense University, Center for Technology and National Security Policy, 2004.

*Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of Syrian Arab Republic in the Field of Efficient Utilization of Water Resources and combating of drought*. December 23, 2009. LEX-FAOC103269. Official Journal No. 27947 (Mukerrer), 28 May 2011.

*Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Turkey and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on establishment of a pumping station for withdrawal of water from Tigris River*. December 23, 2009. LEX-FAOC103283. Official Journal No. 27947 (Mukerrer), 28 May 2011.

*Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Turkey and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic for a Construction of a Joint Dam on the Orontes River Under the Name "Friendship Dam"*. December 23, 2009.  
<http://web.ogm.gov.tr/birimler/merkez/egitim/disiliskiler/Dokumanlar/mutabakat%20zabitlari/Suriye/Asi-Ing.pdf> (accessed 25 May 2012).

*Memorandum of Understanding in the field of remediation of water quality between the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic*. December 23, 2009. LEX-FAOC103198. Official Journal No. 27947 (Mukerrer), 28 May 2011.

Micklin, Philip P. *The Water Management Crisis in Soviet Central Asia*. Kalamazoo, Western Michigan University, 1989.

Mollinga, Peter P. "Water and Politics: Levels, Rational Choice and South Indian Canal Irrigation." *Futures* 33, no. 8 (2001): 733-752.

Mosello, Beatrice. "Water in Central Asia: A Prospect for Conflict or Cooperation?" *Journal of Public and International Affairs* (2008): 153-156.

Myers, Norman. *Ultimate Security: The Environmental Basis of Political Stability*. New York: Norton, 1993.

Oswald Spring, Ursula, and Hans Günter Brauch. "Securitizing Water." In *Facing Global Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts*, edited by Hans Günter Brauch et al., 175-202. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2009.

Qabbani, Abdulhamid, "Going Hungry." *Syria Today*, January 2012. <http://www.syria-today.com/index.php/january-2012/940-focus/17953-going-hungry> (accessed May 25, 2012).

———. "Q&A: George Soumi, Minister of Irrigation." *Syria Today*, January 2011. <http://www.syria-today.com/index.php/january-2012/940-focus/17956-qa-george-soumi-minister-of-irrigation-> (accessed May 25, 2012).

Reus-Smit, Christian. "Constructivism." In *Theories of International Relations*, edited by Scott Burchill et al., 188-212. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005.

Schmeier, Susanne. "Governing International Watercourses: Perspectives from Different Disciplines." *Hertie School of Governance Working Papers*, no. 53 (2010).

Scientific and Technical Council. "Protocol 566: Improvement of the Scheme on Complex Use and and Protection of Amu Darya Water Resources." Ministry of Land Reclamation and Water Management of the Soviet Union, September 10, 1987. Cf. Masood Ahmad and Mahwash Wasiq. *Water Resource Development in Northern Afghanistan and Its Implications for Amu Darya Basin*. Washington DC: The World Bank, 2004, 34.

Selby, Jan. *Water, Power and Politics in the Middle East: The Other Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2003.

Serim, Ali. "Shallow Analyses of Syria Could Lead to Embarrassing Mistakes." *Today's Zaman*, June 26, 2011. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-248537-shallow-analyses-of-syria-could-lead-to-embarrassing-mistakes.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

Smith, Steve. "New Approaches to International Theory." In *The Globalisation of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, edited by John Baylis and Steve Smith, 165-190. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Sneddon, Chris, and Coleen Fox. "Rethinking Transboundary Waters: A Critical Hydropolitics of the Mekong Basin." *Political Geography* 25, no. 2 (2006): 181-202.

Soffer, Arnon. *Rivers of Fire: The Conflict over Water in the Middle East*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.

Soucek, Svat. *A History of Inner Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

- Stevenson, Struan. "Hydro-Power Stations Do Not Consume Water." *Khovar National Information Agency of Tajikistan*, October 28, 2011. <http://khovar.tj/eng/energetics/2353-hydro-power-stations-do-not-consume-water.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).
- . "President Emomali Rahmon Should Be Widely Supported by the West." *Khovar National Information Agency of Tajikistan*, March 1, 2011. <http://khovar.tj/eng/archive/1912-s.stevenson-president-emomali-rahmon-should-be-widely-supported-by-the-west.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).
- Syria Today. "Syria and Turkey Reconcile Water Dispute with Friendship Dam." March 2011. <http://www.syria-today.com/index.php/march-/753-business-news/14498-syria-and-turkey-reconcile-water-dispute-with-friendship-dam> (accessed May 25, 2012).
- Today's Zaman. "Time of Turkey Under Water." March 18, 2012. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-274563-time-in-turkey-under-water.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).
- Today's Zaman. "Turkey No Longer has Kurdish Issue, says PM Erdoğan." February 21, 2011. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-242523-turkey-no-longer-has-kurdish-issue-says-pm-erdogan.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).
- Today's Zaman – Reuters. "Turkey Readies Sanctions against Syria." September 28, 2011. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-258204-turkey-readies-sanctions-against-syria.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).
- Today's Zaman. "Erdogan Supports Syrian People's Right to Self-Defense." April 1, 2012. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-276003-erdogan-supports-syrian-peoples-right-to-self-defense.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).
- Trottier, Julie. "Water Wars: The Rise of a Hegemonic Concept: Exploring the Making of the Water War and Water Peace Belief within the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict." *From Potential Conflict to Cooperation Potential (PCCP): Water for Peace. UNESCO-Green Cross* (2002).
- Umarova, Madina, Iroda Umarova and Nodira Manzurova. "Uzbekistan has Rich Experience in Rational and Efficient Use of Water Resources." *Uzbekistan National News Agency*, May 14, 2011. <http://uza.uz/en/politics/1932/> (accessed May 25, 2012).
- United Nations. "Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes." March 17, 1992. *United Nations Treaty Series* 1936, 269.
- United Nations. "The Protocol on Matters Pertaining to Economic Cooperation Between the Republic of Turkey and the Syrian Arab Republic." 17 July 1987. *United Nations Treaty Series* 1724, no. 30069.
- United Nations. "Water for Life Decade: Transboundary Waters." [http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/transboundary\\_waters.shtml](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/transboundary_waters.shtml) (accessed May 19, 2012).

Uzbekistan National News Agency. "Uzbekistan's GDP Grows 8.2% in Nine Months." Oct 20, 2011. <http://uza.uz/en/politics/2208/> (accessed May 25, 2012).

Warner, Jeroen F., and Mark Zeitoun. "International Relations Theory and Water Do Mix: A Response to Furlong's Troubled Waters, Hydrohegemony and International Water Relations." *Political Geography* 27 (2008): 802-810.

Weinthal, Erika. "Water Conflict and Cooperation in Central Asia." *Human Development Report* 32 (2006).

Wendt, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Wolf, Aaron T. "Conflict and Cooperation along International Waterways." *Water Policy* 1 (1998): 251-265.

———. *Hydropolitics along the Jordan River: Scarce Water and its Impact on the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Tokyo: UN University Press, 1995.

———, ed. "Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database." Oregon State University. <http://www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu/> (accessed May 19, 2012).

Wunderer, Julia. "The Central Asian Water Regime as an Instrument for Crisis Prevention." In *Facing Global Environmental Change: Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concepts*, edited by Hans Günter Brauch et al., 739-748. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 2009.

Yavuz, Ercan. "'Water Wars' Threat Gone with 18 Transborder River Dams." *Today's Zaman*, January 11, 2011. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-232099-water-wars-threat-gone-with-18-transborder-river-dams.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

———. "Minister: Water War No Longer a Possibility in Turkey's Region." *Today's Zaman*, February 21, 2011. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-236174-minister-water-war-no-longer-a-possibility-in-turkeys-region.html> (accessed May 25, 2012).

Zehfuss, Maja. "Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison." In *Constructivism and International Relations*, edited by Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander, 93-117. London: Routledge, 2006.

Zeitoun, Mark, and Jeroen F. Warner. "Hydro-hegemony: A Framework for Analysis of Transboundary Water Conflicts." *Water Policy* 8 (2006), 435-460.