PERCEPTIONS OF THREAT AND SCARCITY: REVISITING THE DOMINANT THEORIES OF WATER CONFLICT THROUGH SECURITIZATION

By

Kelsey Miller

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

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Paul Roe

Word Count: 15,965

Budapest, Hungary
2015

Abstract

In and of themselves, the dominant conflict theories of water war or water rationality suggest that all water conflict will fall neatly into one of these categories, in that the outcome will either be violence or not. However, the threats states may perceive in relation to their scarcity are not as objective as prevailing analysis suggest. Specifically in reference to water, scarcity can mean different things and be elevated to different levels of existential threat. Therefore, by looking at situations of water conflict through a more constructivist approach, securitization of different scarcity threats will show that in certain cases outcomes may lean more toward 'water war' theories or water rational ones.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my utmost gratitude to my supervisor Paul Roe for his guidance and my family and friends who helped me through this project.

List of Abbreviated Terms

GERD   Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

IRS   Indus River System

IWT   Indus Water Treaty

PM   Prime Minister

U.N.   United Nations

UBDC   Upper Bari Doab Canal

WB   World Bank

Table of Contents

Introduction

Water remains one of the most vital resources for civilization, while at the same time human pressures on supply have brought water to increasing levels of scarcity throughout the world. Already, 1.2 billion people live in areas of physical scarcity, while another 1.6 billion people face economic water shortage.[1] Global environmental change coupled with population growth has had an inadvertent effect on water drawing into question its renewability in relative terms. As a result, freshwater as a resource has gained increased attention as a source of conflict due to the "Multiple, cumulative and compounding problems with water supply and quality [that] are converging globally."[2] This fact has raised a number of concerns, particularly as it relates to conflict and security. Already, small scale conflicts and isolated incidents can be seen developing over water between different groups. Typically shared between people both within a state and between states, as water sources dwindle the level of interactions between these various units' and actors though will increase. Thus, "While water resources have rarely been the sole cause of conflict, fresh-water resources are becoming more valuable in many regions, and the likelihood of water-induced conflicts is thus increasing."[3]

In relation to security studies, the first general move towards incorporating environmental concerns occurred during the 1980's when there was a push to broaden the security agenda by widening the referent object axis. As a result, the scope of national security was expanded to incorporate environmental threats.

---

[1] "Water Scarcity." UN News Center. http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/scarcity.shtml (May 27, 2015).
[2] InterAction Council. *The Global Water Crisis: Addressing an Urgent Security Issue.* Edited by Harriet Bigas, Hamilton, Canada: UNU-INWEH, 2012: 3.
[3] Peter H. Gleick, " Water and Conflict: Fresh water resources and international security," In *Global Dangers: Changing Dimensions of International Security, e*dited by Sean M Lynn-Jones and Steven E Miller, 84-117, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995: 101

When attention is turned specifically to water, two ideal theory types emerged which either predicted only two types of water conflict, violent or non-violent. The most salient element in these theories for studies of security is scarcity. Lack of access or competition for dwindling supplies can create situations that quarry one actor against the other in terms of their survival. However, many of these notions are premised on the idea that this will occur only for states who experience physical scarcity. Scarcity can be a social construct though and there are various classification of scarcity a state can posses. [4] Within water war conflicts then, which usually assume both states have the same physical scarcity, analysis should also look at how other types of scarcity, namely economic water scarcity, plays into these overarching theories. Because both subjective and objective threats can be securitized, whether or not the physical scarcity of one actor presents a clearer threat than the economic scarcity concerns of another does not matter. Therefore, water conflict theories should incorporate this type of scarcity as well when considering how states perceive and define their own threat.

As mentioned before, numerous cases where both actors have physical scarcity have been studied. Since they both are worried about access to supply, cooperation to ensure equitable access is much easier. However, in cases where two states find themselves an ideal water war scenario but they do not have the same types of scarcity, the implications of their mismatched threat perceptions remains unknown. This thesis will argue that when securitizations are constructed around different scarcity concerns, the competing rhetoric of speech acts will not produce the cut and dry explanations of water 'rationality' that are given. Instead, where a conflict falls on the spectrum from water war to water rationality will vary

_____

[4] UN News, "Water Scarcity."

depending on how scarcity is portrayed as an existential threat and upon an acceptance of audience which would allow extraordinary measures to be applied.

The first Chapter will provide and extensive literature covering expansion of the security field, environmental security and water conflict theories. In the following chapter, the analytical framework for the case will be outlined. Chapters three and four will then present the two case studies. In each case, the basic water concerns and type of scarcity each state posses will be established. Following that, elements critical to water war theories will be identified before grafting the securitization process onto it. Following the case study will be a final chapter which will conclude the arguments and discuss the implications of the findings.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1 Expansion of Security Field

Traditionally, the discourse of security studies took place in the realm of realist thought, wherein a state and military centric approach encapsulated all the potential threats to survival and sovereignty. Following as such, scholars in the field, "backed by political realism, define[d] security in terms of power…[and,] in realism, meaning [was] closely linked to the military capability of a state."[5] However, after the end of the Cold War, the utility of the dominant state and military centric line of thinking in security waned as a result of more normal world power relations; challenging the conventional concept of security. Under this new international political paradigm scholars, such as Ken Booth, called for shifting the focus of the security field based on observations that "the daily threat to the lives and well-being of most people and most nations is different from that suggested by the traditional military perspective."[6] As a result, a dramatic transfer has occurred in the field of security within the last few decades leading to a new school of non-traditionalist scholars.

There are two sub-categories of followers in the non-traditional approach: wideners and deepeners. Wideners reflect on the scope of security studies and have included a diverse range of issues as part of security affairs.[7] Encapsulating ideas of expansion in the security field is the Copenhagen school, which served to broaden the national security agenda by extending the referent object axis to incorporate economic, political, social, and environmental threats as referents for security.[8] On the other hand, "deepeners discuss the focus of security (i.e. whose security is being threatened)."[9] This allows for various issues to

---

[5] Niloy Ranjan Biswas,"Is the environment a security threat? Environmental security beyond Securitization," *International Affairs Review* 20, no. 1 (2011): 2

[6] Ken Booth, "Security and Emancipation." *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 4 (1991): 318

[7] Biswas, 3

[8] Ole Waever, "Securitization and Desecuritization," In *On Security*, edited by Ronnie D. Lipschutz, 46-86. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995: 47.

[9] Biswas, 3

be analyzed as a security factor at different aggregate levels. As a result of both widening and deepening, nontraditional security has made a significant move from the conventional approaches and has created a new paradigm of security "wherein the threats to referents and interests of nations across the world drive primarily not from a neighbor's army but from other challenges."[10]

However, to justify this move, one has to be able to determine when exactly issues of interest pass out of the realms of normal politics and into the realm of 'security.' Returning back to the notions of traditional security, one finds that threats to the referent are based on the notion of survival. Subsequently, threat can be designated as an international security concern because it can be objectively argued that dealing with this one matter is more important than all others; the issue is presented as an existential threat and should take absolute priority. By levying a concern as such, an actor can thus "claim a right to handle the issue through extraordinary means, to break the normal political rules of the game."[11] Similarly, when widening the referent object axis, such realist notions can help legitimize the inclusion of different sectors if they can be posed as a threat to survival or sovereignty. Following this line of thinking, Ramesh Thakur and Edward Newman submit that one can justify issues and situations presented in various sectors as being security "when they reach a crisis point beyond which the survival chances of the citizens obliterate, affecting the stability and integrity of the society."[12] For the Copenhagen school, however, security and existential threats are not developed in such absolute terms. Rather, threats can also be perceived subjectively and determined to be an existential threat through a specific process of securitization. This constructed concept is particularly important in sectors outside of the

---

[10] Booth, 318
[11] Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. *Security: a New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 1998: 24.
[12] Thapliyal, 22

military, because although "security ultimately means survival in the face of [an] existential threat, what constitutes an existential threat is not the same across different sectors."[13]

In *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde define security as "the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issues either as a special kind of politics or as above politics."[14] With the concept of international security in mind, they justify this move by arguing "if we place the survival of collective unites and principles – the politics of existential threat – as the defining core of security studies, we have the basis for applying security analysis to a variety of sectors without losing the essential quality of the concept."[15] Therefore, in security, "the task is not to assess some objective threats that 'really' endanger some object to be defended or secured [but, instead,] it is to understand the processes of constructing a shared understanding of what is to be considered and collectively responded to as a threat." [16]

Security in this sense is done through a specific process in which uttering the word 'security' justifies the means to handle an issue as an existential threat and opens the way for the actor to mobilize or to take special measures. However, justification is only given if an audience accepts their claims. For this reason, security requires a methodological focus on the "details of specific issues (such as poverty, environment, and climate) and their interrelation with the 'locus'[17] of security."[18] In this sense then "any security problem can be transformed into an existential threat that requires exceptional, emergency, and rescue measures."[19]

---

[13] Buzan et al., 27
[14] Ilbid. 23.
[15] Ibid. 27
[16] Ibid., 26
[17] Refers to the context and framework of security. (Biswas, 4)
[18] Biswas, 3-4
[19] Ibid., 3

While this move has been accepted by many in the security field, others contest the utility in such efforts. There are those, in general, who feel that by expanding outside the military-political sphere it debases the concept of security itself. For example, while analysts, such as Myers, describe the environment as 'ultimate security' wherein "security becomes an all-encompassing term relating to the social, economic, political and ecological wellbeing of individual human beings"[20] others, such as Deudney, describe it as a pollution of security proper, vehemently opposing it as a reference object of international security.[21] Further, and specifically for the process of security introduced by the Copenhagen School, there is an issue of whether 'threats' in certain sectors can actually be framed in ways which allows it to be raised to the level of existential threat.

In principle, any issue on the spectrum can move from un-politicized to securitized depending on the circumstances [22] However, in the case of some subjects, notably the environment which has moved dramatically out of the non-politicized category, we face the double question of whether the issues have been merely politicized or have also been securitized.[23] Further, because the concept of national security, as opposed to national interests or well-being, has been centered upon organized violence, there is debate on whether the environment should be brought beyond the political. People are concerned securitization encourages 'security measures' for issues which could be dealt with through normal means. An additional concern is if actors are focused on the securitization of international environmental problems, they may miss the opportunities presented by addressing it through more appropriate disciplines.

---

[20] Steven Ney, "Environmental security: A critical overview," Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research 12, no. 1 (1999): 11.
[21] Buzan et al., 71
[22] Buzan et al., 24
[23] Ibid.

As noted, the environment, in particular, is often addressed in reference to these two critiques. To start, there is concern in that environmental-security encompasses an almost unmanageable array of sub-issues, especially if 'security' is defined broadly to include human, physical, social, and economic well-being[24] For this reason, "Some scholars filter environmental security through a political and military lens, others perceive it as a social welfare issue."[25] This could mean that the environment is not always considered an issue in reference to itself but also indicates there may be better disciplines, other than security, in which to handle those concerns. Therefore, from a statist approach at least, while individuals, communities and states have all faced insecurity due to the environment, "Compared to what can be seen with regard to the other four sectors…attempts to securitize the environment has a relatively short history."[26]

1.2 Environment Sector

Under the Copenhagen school, Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde describe three relationships of threat which define the possible universe of environmental security:

1. threats to human civilization from the natural environment that are not caused by human activity;

2. threats from human activity to the natural systems or structures of the planet when the changes made do seem to pose existential threat to (part of) civilization, and;

3. Threats from human activity to the natural systems or structures of the planet when the changes made do not seem to pose existential threats to civilizations," such as the depletion of various minerals.[27]

---

[24] Homer-Dixon, Thomas. "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict." In *Global Dangers: Changing Dimensions of International Security, e*dited by Sean M Lynn-Jones and Steven E Miller, 144-179. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995: 43-44
[25] Buzan et al., 71
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., 80

Broad in their nature, these different categories can play out on all different levels on analysis. Niloy Biswas, however, focuses specifically on threats related to the State. In his work, Biswas postulates there are two aspects of the environment-threat nexus, one more scientific and the other more political.

Examining the more scientific agenda first, security for the state is built upon the idea that "ecosystem integrity is crucial for the population's sustainable livelihood."[28] The basis for this is that "many socio-political systems crucially depend on a material basis that is eroded by environmental degradation."[29] On a large scale, it is possible to describe environmental security as the "maintenance of the local and the planetary biosphere as the essential support system on which all other human enterprises depend"[30] As such, issues of environmental change like "pollution, depletion, or natural disasters can pose an acute threat to security."[31] Therefore, in the terms of ecological or biological security, one either considers "degradation, by undermining the means of subsistence, which threatens the security of ecosystems" or, "the disruption to the health and stability of critical systems such as human populations and foods systems which would threaten the state" to be the main security concerns.[32]

The second aspect of environmental security, according to Biswas, is between environment and transnational conflict. One assumption in this context is that a number of environment-related factors, such as environmental degradation, depletion, and lack of access to natural resources, can lead to the outbreak of violent conflict.[33] While this phenomenon is often observed more at the community or local level, it can also permeate state structures

---

[28] Biswas, 11
[29] Ney, 11.
[30] Thapliyal
[31] Biswas, 11
[32] Braden 15
[33] Biswas 11

9

leading to international strife. For instance, one could convincingly suggest that, "Due to the transnational nature or resources, conflict due to scarcity affects the regional or global level in the long-run."[34] In particular, the work of Thomas Homer-Dixon, revealed numerous ways in which environmental degradation and scarcity could be a cause of acute conflict. Bridging his work and Biswas's, one of the types of acute conflict that Homer-Dixon describes, is simple scarcity conflicts; i.e. that scarcities of renewable resources cause resource wars.[35] Homer-Dixon contends that while evidence points to conflict in terms of environmental scarcity, currently, "there is little empirical support for this."[36] However, he goes on to say that the resource he believes to be the most likely to stimulate interstate war is river water.[37]

1.3 Water Conflict Theories

Historically, people have fought for or competed over control and access to natural resources, even if only at the most basic level, i.e. land. The non-renewable resources too, such as coal, oil, and gas were studied within the realm of supply and demand, distribution patterns, availability and so on.[38] Now, as water, a traditionally renewable resources, becomes scarcer, it is possible for water to cross into the boundaries of conflict studies. This move, in particular, is premised on the "fact that water is essential for human's survival and that sources can be physically seized or controlled."[39] Demonstrating this, Peter Gleick observed, "water [is] a subject for military action, an instrument of war, and a salient element of interest in politics."[40]

---

[34] Ibid., 13
[35] Homer-Dixon, 157
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., 158
[38] Thapliyal, 19.
[39] Thapliyal, 27
[40] Ibid.

Despite its critical importance as a resource to human life, assessments of conflict show that throughout history "while water systems have been used as weapons and targets during war, water resources in themselves have rarely been the sole source of violent conflict."[41] However, adverse environmental trends, expanding populations, and ecological destruction at the global scale have brought the concept to the forefront of discussions in recent decades. Beginning in the early 1990s, numerous scholars started to believe that scarcity, combined with the other qualities water as a resource possesses, would "provide the necessary conditions for acute conflict."[42] Drawn from the concept of simple scarcity conflict presented by Homer-Dixon, the ideas of 'water wars' captivated the minds of politicians, officials, and scholars alike. As a result, there have evolved numerous predictions that countries will wage war to safeguard their access to water while many have been keen to factor it into 'doomsday' type scenarios or forecasts.[43]

1.3.1 The Water War Rationale

The water wars theory relates specifically to interstate conflicts, rather than complying with observations, such as those by Gleick, which simply imply that water by nature has contentious aspects to be used at multiple levels. Therefore, the first step to understand this theory is to distinguish it from water related conflicts within countries, and water used as a weapon."[44] Instead, water wars deal with how a freshwater source, in and of itself, can affect the security of a state to the point where it takes absolute precedence of affairs. In this sense, water wars can be defined or understood as "international wars between

---

[41] InterAction Council, *The Global Water Crisis: Addressing an Urgent Security Issue,* edited by Harriet Bigas, Hamilton, Canada: UNU-INWEH, 2012: 12

[42] Thapliyal, 27

[43] Richard Ullman, "Redefining Security." In Global Dangers: Changing Dimensions of International Security, edited by Sean M Lynn-Jones and Steven E Miller, 15-39, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995: 26- 27

[44] Undala Z. Alam, "Questioning the water wars rationale: case study of the Indus Waters Treaty," *The Geographical Journal* 168, no. 4 (2002): 341

states triggered and sustained solely over issues arising from access to water."[45] However, this can still cover a broad range of conflict categories including: "the control of water resources at their source; preventing or ensuring equitable access to water, the manipulation of water allocation for political reasons, and, development disputes in which water systems are a source of disagreement in the context of economic and social development."[46] Taking into account how these actions on water may spark controversy, other water scholars attempt to lie out exactly when and where conflict of this type will emerge.

In and of itself, the water wars rationale traditionally "forecasts war between countries upon a shared water resource if there is water scarcity, competitive use and countries are enemies due to a wider conflict."[47] Adding to this is the belief that competition stems from water use by riparian states. This, it is alleged, will create the most contentious situations because of the dependency of downstream countries on the activities and goodwill of their upstream partners. Combining these notions, Buzan et al., in *Security: a New Framework for Analysis* supports these moves, stating "water dependency on another country may be unpleasant and may cause one to be concerned about that country's pollution and overuse of water, but if one has a conflict with that country for other reasons, one is much more likely to define the water problem as a security problem."[48] To further this idea, Undala Alam adds one further condition to the 'water war' rationales, "bellicose public statements" which are unconducive to de-politicizing an issue. [49]

In brief, if water could become a cause of war, we should see the manifestations of such theories first in scenarios which fit all these preconditions. However, despite such captivating theories, historical analysis of events and a lack of real empirical evidence has

---

[45] Ibid.
[46] InterAction Council, 11-12.
[47] Alam, "Questioning the water wars rationale," 341
[48] Buzan et al., 170.
[49] Alam, "Questioning the water wars rationale," 347.

12

made scholars critical to their cause. Some of the criticism stems from more general beliefs about the environmental sector itself; there are those who firmly hold on to beliefs that water, in and of itself, cannot be a cause of war. [50] Alan Dupont, for example, argues this point by saying that environmental difficulties are unlikely to be the primary cause of major conflict between states. Instead, environmental issues interact with more direct causes of conflict to prolong or complicate existing disputes.[51]

1.3.2 Water Rationality

Opposed to the theories of water wars lays the second subgroup of water conflict studies; those who move towards water as a source of cooperation rather than conflict. Epitomizing these ideas in the security field is Undala Alam, who looks at water conflict from a more critical security approach. Approaching the case of India and Pakistan from a water standpoint, Alam notes that all the preconditions identified by water conflict hypotheses are present. Thus, one should be able to expect war. Yet, despite the expectations of open warfare between the two countries, such as conditions would suggest, he finds instead that the countries choose to negotiation a compromise. With the advent of the Indus Water Treaty, Alam postulates that states, rather than compete for water resources, will choose to cooperate. The reason for this compromise is that States are what he calls "water rational actors"[52]. In essence, this means that in times of existing conflict, or when faced with scarcity concerns, states will choose to "maintain relations with its co-riparian countries that are conducive to ensuring long-term access."[53] As a result, Alam comes to the conclusion of water rationality[54] as the governing order of state affairs in water security.

---

[50] Thapliyal, 27.
[51] Biswas, 7.
[52] Alam, Questioning the water wars rationale," 347.
[53] Ibid.
[54] "Any action taken by a state to secure its water supply in the long-term, both in quantity and quality." (Alam)

Taking a slightly different approach to rationality than Alam is Stephen Stetter et al. While Alam believes that states are rational actors and thus choose to cooperate because they see the ultimate benefits, Stetter argues that overarching global frames and discourses of security guide states to cooperate over water. Globally, Stetter says there has been a "Shift away from concepts of nature as a realm of chaos and savagery and as a cornucopia of resources towards conceptions of nature as universal."[55] In turn, these "world culture frames thus become relevant for the study of water-related conflicts, because the ideas off *universalism*, *scientification* and *rationality* provide a global blueprinting of how to legitimately refer to water" internationally.[56] Essentially, global discourses determine how would be securitizing actors can speak about water. Since these global frames construct water as a resource of to be shared and protected equitably, securitizations of water in any other light become impossible. According to Stetter, the effect of this discursive shift is that water management is no longer the terrain of national actors alone and therefore, states cannot raise the issue to existential threat. Ultimately, issue has essentially been de-securitized through global frames and discourse.

No matter which approach one follows or chooses to believe, water rationality as a whole appears to hold. Numerous cases between countries where war should have appeared resulted instead in negotiated water support. In fact, many of these cases have found that instead of advancing a given conflict towards war, water has instead been a factor of cooperation. Examples of this water cooperation are Israel and Palistaine, India and Pakistan, and Egypt and Sudan.[57]

---

[55] Stetter et al.,448
[56] Ibid., 453.
[57] Ibid., 442.

As a result of these cases of cooperation, it has become generally accepted that water rationality is the norm and that de-securitization is the way in which water as a scarce resource is handled. For this reason, numerous scholars would thus advocate to remove water from more security study analysis and instead keep it in the realm of conflict management and cooperation.

1.4 Towards Securitization

The problem with the existing literature is that it is very cut and dry; either the future is war, due to the acute demands of scarcity, or, complete cooperation, either by the states 'rational tendency' or because the global discourses give states no choice. However, the line between outcomes may be more blurred than these theories provide. In many ways, global water frames can influence the legitimate assertions a state actor is able to make in relation to security and need. Then again, the power of those frames is not outright. If an actor can construct an equally strong frame through which to define water as a threat it may be possible to gain legitimacy outside these frames. Therefore, how states weigh the importance of their own necessity or survival can produce different outcomes. Further, Alam claims would suggest that since states are 'rational', i.e. governed by international treaties and agreements, they will continue to choose to cooperate in the future.[58] In the case he presents, this holds true. So, while both of these arguments can find support in the case of India and Pakistan, they do not seem to hold as well in the Nile River Basin.

In the Nile River Basin, Ethiopia went against both previous agreements and prescribed global norms by acting unilaterally to build a dam to which the downstream implications were unknown. In turn, this re-sparked Egypt's concerns of water scarcity and physical survival. In attempts to rebut the dam, Egypt's hard stance resulted in securitizing

---

[58] Alam, "Questioning the water wars rationale," 350.

speech acts, which quickly escalated to the point where war could have been a real possibility.

What this case shows is that rationality is not as firmly engrained as Stetter would suggest, and it is not always the given orientation of states' interactions when it comes to water. Another approach to better understand how these events played out could be to look at the actual concerns of the states which directed how they acted and spoke in regards to scarcity in shared water scenarios. This could be useful because rationality, as Alam describes it, would really only apply if states had the same scarcity issues and concerns. If both States have incentive to secure long term access, when they exchange speech acts similar rhetoric will present itself; by articulating like needs, finding common ground presents itself more readily. As a result, if speech acts and present situations which are more conducive to cooperation. However, scarcity can be a social construct. In the case of the dam built by Ethiopia on the Nile River Basin, physical scarcity was not what characterizes Ethiopia's relationship with their water supply but it was for Egypt. Thus, it is possible, that different perceptions of scarcity 'threat' where constructed by each state in the process of securitization. If there is some credibility to the above claims, one would have to look beyond shared water and look at how each state speaks about scarcity individually and in relation to each other. For example, in the latter case, this would mean looking to see why Ethiopia acted outside normal political rules as it did first, and then how Egypt and Ethiopia constructed their securitization based on individual perceptions of threat and with relation to each other after that. The best process to understand this is through securitization and analysis of speech acts.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework for Analysis

To understand the dynamics of water in an international system and to understand how well current water conflict theories fit different cases, two instances where water was the base of securitizing moves will be evaluated. First, the historical and current relationship of each state with water will be assessed to determine individual needs and scarcity concerns to see how water fits into the states' overall constitution. This will give insight into whether moves will be or are currently accepted to some degree. Second, at heightened points of conflict discourse analysis will determine whether securing moves were made and how exactly water was presented as an existential threat. The success and failure of each case in terms of water conflict theories will thus be determined by analysis of securitization. While success in securitization or not is fairly specific, by taking a constructivist approach, it will be possible to see how well the events fit with prevailing notions of water conflict.

2.1 Outlining Securitization

The crucial aspect of securitization is that it highlights the process through which any issue can move along the political spectrum to become a 'security' issue. To put it in the words of Buzan, Ole, and Wilde, "threat and vulnerabilities can arise in many different areas but to count as security issues they have to meet strictly defined criteria that distinguish them from the normal run of the merely political. Securitization can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicization.'[59] This view offers that there are critical components which distinguish the securitization process since "security is about priority, about…elevating issues

---

[59] Sangeeta Thapliyal, "Water Security or Security of Water? A Conceptual Analysis," *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* 67, no. 1 (2011): 20

to absolute priority." Thus, "If an issue has not pushed almost all other issues aside, it has not been fully securitized."[60]

To summarize, the process which accompanies this phenomenon is that in order for securitization to be achieved, the issue(s) must be "staged as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures."[61] Therefore, not only does an actor have to claim something as a security threat but it must be accepted by an audience so as to validate the use of extraordinary means. Following these criteria, threats to the state need not be confined to military threats but could emanate from societal, economic, and environmental sectors as well.

2.1.1 Units of Analysis

To look at security outside of the traditional approach, certain components have to be determined and defined for an analysis of securitization. In particular, the speech-act approach to security requires the distinction of different types of units, namely referent objects and securitizing actors.[62]

2.1.2 Referent Object:

In an analysis of securitization, referent objects can be defined as "the things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival."[63] Traditionally in security studies, the referent object has been the state wherein "survival is about sovereignty."[64] While securitization opens analysis to a broad spectrum of possible referent objects, theories of water war take place at the level of the state therefore the analysis

---

[60] Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: a New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 1998): 176.
[61] Thapliyal, 22.
[62] Ibid. 35
[63] Buzan, et al., *Security,* 35.
[64] Ibid. 35.

here will remain at this unit level of analysis. Thus, when speaking security in these cases, all such notions are directed at securing the state from issues arising from water scarcity.

2.1.3 Actors

Another important component of securitization is distinguishing the relevant players or, more specifically, those which take part in the process of speaking security. By definition, "Securitizing actors are actors who securitize issues by declaring something – a referent object –existentially threatened."[65]

Fundamentally, for a securitizing actor to be able to speak on behalf of a referent object, the actor must display legitimacy in their right to make such claims. However, since the referent object in this case is the State, the legitimating factor is relatively easy to prove. The relative ease in this is because "the state usually has explicit rules regarding who can speak on its behalf. [So,] when a government says 'we have to defend our national security,' it has the right to act on behalf of the state."[66] Therefore, given that the states is the referent object, in the case revolving around the Indus River basin, the governments of India and Pakistan will be the securitizing actors. It would also stand that on the Nile River, the Ethiopia and Egyptian governments will be the securitizing actors. After the actors are established, how the actors see issues arising from the environmental sector as challenges to the state then becomes relevant. In the case of water scarcity, how these actors attempt to raise the issue beyond the normal rules so as to justify extraordinary means, both separately and in relation to each other, needs close analysis. In particular, this close analysis is needed because scarcity can carry with it different concerns for the different actors. As a result, the

---

[65] Ibid., 36.
[66] Ibid., 41.

rhetoric arising from governments in relation to scarcity may reflect different security agendas.

2.1.3.1 Water Scarcity and the State

Within the totality of threats posed by water security to the state, scarcity will be the main concern of the actors evaluated. But, as already stated, water can be scarce in different ways. Two types of water scarcity are especially important for this analysis and for understanding how governments may claim to be threatened to a point where the solution they see no longer resides within the normal realm of politics.

2.1.3.1.1 Physical Water Scarcity

For some states, threats stem from physical water scarcity wherein there is not enough supply to meet demand. On a large scale, this can threaten a state's existence by threatening its populations; water is necessary for life, therefore if a state cannot provide this the physical safety of its populations is at risk. For states which rely on a shared river system for their supply of water, the implications of physical scarcity becomes more acute, particularly for lower riparian states. In transboundary issues, if actions by one state threaten to reduce or cut off the critical supply of water to another, survival of the latter is threatened. In some instances the threat posed by an upstream state's control of a water source is clear; dependence can be threatening if an upstream nation possess the means to completely cut off the water supply to another state. However, threat can be present without such deliberate antics. Normal use by an upstream country to meet their own demands can unintentionally reduce the supply of water to downstream states. Because water is critical to human life, if a situation is dire enough, reductions in supply may threaten to annihilate entire populations. This would be a clear threat to a state's survival. However, threat level and severity depend on how dependent or scarce a country sees itself. In most water conflict analysis, the states in

question possess, or are assumed to possess, this type of security; not all case studies distinguish which type of scarcity is most relevant.

2.1.3.1.2 Economic Water Scarcity

Second, a state can experience threat from economic water scarcity. Often times in this type of situation, countries have a relatively high level of water resources endowment compared with demand, but may be unable to capture and distribute them do to lack of investment or lack of human capacity.[67] In turn, this can threaten both physical wellbeing of a state's inhabitants as well as development goals of the state. Further, if a government cannot meet the demand of its people, it could risk destabilization or loss of legitimacy.

International river systems, in particular, can demonstrate how this type of scarcity can become an instance of interstate dispute. For example, while an upstream state can benefit from a large physical supply of water, they may not be able to develop or distribute the water due to the demands of downstream states. In many cases, restrictions on use or certain water allocation requirements are sorted out in treaties or basin agreements and initiatives. However, if these are outdated or unequally benefit the lower riparian, the upstream state may feel that their capacity to meet the changing demands of their state are being infringed upon. This can be especially true if the upper riparian state suffers from economic water scarcity. Thus, one of the main security concerns which could manifest in this case is reference to sovereignty.

Both of these classifications of water scarcity are important in understanding where threats originate with respect to water and security. In both scarcity scenarios, though possibly more obvious in the former example, it is possible to see how securitization may take place. Priority is given if it can be argued that "if we do not tackle this problem,

---

[67] "Water Scarcity." UN News Center. http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/scarcity.shtml (May 27, 2015).

everything else will be irrelevant because we will not be here or will not be free to deal with it in our own way."[68]

2.1.4 Speech Acts

Once the actor and referent object are distinguished, the next part of analysis will look at how specifically existential threats are presented and constructed by the actor. The actor uses these actual or perceived existential threats to try and gain legitimacy for extraordinary measures. The way in which the actor conveys threat through the process of speech acts.

Any issue arising from the different sectors must go through the process through which something is constructed as a threat by a securitizing actor. This is paramount to the rise of the actual 'real' threat level of any issue. For this reason, it can be said that "the distinguishing feature of securitization is a specific rhetorical structure (i.e. survival, priority of action)"[69] Through the use of this type of speechmaking, actors thus attempt to raise the threat level high enough to justify using extraordinary means. Whether a threat is objective or subjective does not matter. Through the process of securitization, speech acts serve to equal playing field for these to battle out which will become priority.

In both the Indus and Nile River cases, speech acts are present. However, in each case, the way in which the states presented water as an existential threat was slightly different and, security rhetoric was stronger in some cases compared to the others. To discern where these speech acts are present and possibly which concerns of the state the existential threat language stemmed from, the speech acts of each state will be looked at through discourse analysis. This section will be particularly important because the compatibility of speech acts

---

[68] Buzan, et al., *Security,* 24.
[69] Ibid., 26.

by securitizing actors will be critically evaluated. This may weigh on the audience and thus in the outcome when rivaling states embark in securitizing moves against each other.

2.1.5 Audience

Equally as important as the securitizing actors for successful securitization is the audience. Not only is the designation of an existential threat requiring emergency measures important, but, for successful securitization, there needs to be "acceptance of that designation by a significant audience."[70] Only by acceptance of the audience can securitization be achieved. If the audience does not accept the securitizing moves presented in speech acts, the actor has not raised the threat to absolute priority, and there can be no justification for extraordinary measures. The audience plays a critical role in securitization as can be seen in the cases that follow.

2.1.5.1 India and Pakistan:

In the assessment provided by Alam, the World Bank (WB), in addition to Pakistan and India, is recognized as a main player due to the critical role the WB played in facilitating negotiations. However, in this study, the importance of the WB will be re-appropriated to a member of the audience. India and Pakistan frequently direct their statements at the WB and frequently try and position their speech acts in a way which gives their claims priority over the others. As a critical member of the audience, the WB thus played an important legitimating role while also affecting how political events played out.

2.1.5.2 Ethiopia and Egypt

On the Nile River Basin, the role of actors and audience are more complicated in this case, because each state presented a different existential threat in reference to Nile water. As

---

[70] Ibid., 27.

a result, the states were not necessarily competing for the attention or acceptance of the same audience.

First, while Ethiopia presented the Grand Renaissance Dam to the international community in a dramatic way, the most critical acceptance they needed was from their own population. Given this, it did not matter if the international community accepted their securitization or not.

Second, once Egypt started securitization in reference to the threat Ethiopia posed to Egypt's water security, Ethiopia had to redirect their speech acts, to a degree, to a more inclusive audience. Once it reached this point, the real threat of war presented itself.

2.2 Research Objectives and Questions

To reach any conclusions about the role securitization can play in understanding the dynamics of scarcity and water as a threat, each case will be analyzed in full. One main question will be to determine whether "the State, has claimed a right to handle the issue through extraordinary means or to break the normal political rules of the game."[71]

In the India and Pakistan case, it has been commonly accepted that despite an ongoing conflict, water still remained within the normal realms of politics; even though it could have been a volatile component or manifested as part of the conflict leading to war, it was de-securitized. However in the case of Ethiopia and Egypt, the possibility of an open conflict, solely due to issues revolving around water, seemed extensively plausible due to the securitizing moves and speech acts by the two states. Therefore, this study will try to explain what made the latter case more adept to securitization and how it deviated from the prevailing water theories. This study will use these cases to show how securitizing moves are more

---

[71] Buzan et al., 24.

successful in certain situations and will hypothesize these could be the situations in which

water war is possible.

Chapter 3: Case Study of India and Pakistan

For centuries, irrigation in the Indus River Basin has been important for the region and thus developed extensively. When India and Pakistan were granted independence though, this system had to be split between the two states and, where equitable water sharing had been in place before, the issue of resource allocation quickly came up after partition. In terms of water demands and the issues of scarcity though, "the principal issues at stake in the Indus Basin dispute were not particularly complex or mysterious, the dispute was about the use of water."[72] In his own examination of this same case, Alam lays it out very simply: India wanted to irrigate new areas of land using the water that flowed through its territory while Pakistan wanted to maintain supplies to existing uses within its own territory. "Since the amount of water appeared to be finite to the disputants, each side emphasized its right to the water."[73]

3.1 Background and Water Scarcity Concerns – The Foundations for Security

In the case of Pakistan, physical scarcity is an acute concern. Located in a semiarid to arid region where rainfall is very low, the Indus River is the only source of water upon which it depends. Not only is this the major source of water for the more than 180 million people of Pakistan, but, given that over half of Pakistan's population is employed in the agricultural sector, the importance of the Indus River to the well-being of the economy is great as well.[74] For these reasons, this area of the subcontinent has always been extremely vulnerable to any variability of the river;[75] not only to meet the physical needs of its people but also because

---

[72] Undala Z. Alam, "Water Rationality: Mediating the Indus Waters Treaty," PhD, University of Durham, 1998: 104

[73] Ibid.

[74] Gregory Pappas, "Pakistan and Water: New Pressures on Global Security Human Health," *Am J Public Health* 101, no. 5 (2011): 786.

[75] Neda A. Zawahri, "India, Pakistan and cooperation along the Indus River system," *Water Policy* 11, no. 1 (2009): 3

"without enough water, the land is impossible to cultivate;"[76] the Indus River System provides for ninety percent of its irrigation needs. [77]

In India, physical scarcity of water plagues large swaths of the country as well. However, unlike Pakistan, India does not have to support itself on the Indus River System alone. What is important though are the specific areas which the rivers waters support. While India only possess twenty percent of the catchment area of the Indus it is critical as one of the two main river systems which benefit the regions of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan; the country's breadbasket region. [78] Punjab alone, produces more than twenty percent of India's wheat[79]. Therefore, for these relatively arid northwestern provinces the waters of the Indus River provide not only the means for subsistence but also the economic foundation for its people.

Thus, due to both countries equal dependency on the freshwater resource provided by the IRS, they have both developed and irrigated it extensively. However, at times, this has created flashpoints of tension between the neighboring states as they independently try to allocate the river water for their own needs. Based on these existing preconditions, India and Pakistan, at one point, seemed a likely case under which the conditions of scarcity could have led to war.

---

[76] Malik Sumbal,"Water Scarcity Heightens Tensions between India and Pakistan," Public Radio International, August 8, 2014. http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-08-08/water-scarcity-heightens-tensions-between-india-and-pakistan (Accessed May 29, 2015).

[77] Ayesa Siddiqi. "Kashmir and the Politics of Water," *Aljazeera*, August 1, 2011. http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/kashmirtheforgottenconflict/2011/07/20117812154478992.html (Accessed on May 19, 2015).

[78] Zawahri, 4.

[79] Siddiqi, "Kashmir and the Politics of Water."

3.2 INDIA AND PAKISTAN the hyper-political process of partition served to politicize water as well.

As water war theories predict, not only do scarcity and competitive use serve as indicators for the conditions to produce war, but also the parties must be enemies do to a wider conflict. For India and Pakistan the overarching conflict within which the water dispute operates can be found in the process of partition, and more specifically the territorial dispute of Kashmir. Not only did it serve to politicize the water sharing process on its own, but, it created other issues as well, such as population displacement, heightened political tensions and unresolved territorial issues all which served to exacerbate hostilities over the water dispute. During these early years after partition, "disagreements over the flow of the Indus River led to the danger of another military conflict."[80]

3.2.1 Territorial Disputes in Kashmir

Although water was a critical concern after partition, those debates took place at the same time as militarized --- one of the main conflicts emerging from partition was deciding to do with Kashmir which was tied up in both States national identities. For Pakistan, the contested territory took priority; incorporating Kashmir was a basic national aspiration bound up in its identity as an Islamic state. Therefore, the government coveted Kashmir to complete its identity as the homeland for the regions Islamic population. [81] Despite a majority Muslim population, Kashmir had a Hindu ruler who feared being usurped from power by Pakistan armies. As a result, shortly after independence, the ruler signed an instrument of accession with India. Unwilling to lose Kashmir, lest other religious and ethnic groups inside the State press for their own autonomy, India defended its right to Kashmir as well.[82] A short war

---

[80] Pappas, 786

[81] Devin T Hagerty, *South Asia in World Politics,* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005: 51

[82] Praveen Swami, "Quickstep or Kadam Taal?: The Elusive Search for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir," Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, March 2005.

resulted between India and Pakistan which officially ended after the United Nations arranged a cease-fire, effective January 1, 1949. When the fighting ended each nation controlled a part of Kashmir along the Line of Control. However, this still left India with the larger share of the state. Since then, Pakistan has tried various methods, from diplomacy to the direct use of force to wrest the remainder of Kashmir from Indian control, but to no avail.[83]

Apart from identity or nationalist concerns, Kashmir is also critical in the water debate given that sections of the river system, the "lifeline of the newly created Dominion, have its origins in the Kashmiri state. Thus, it became vital for Pakistan to have control over this region; letting go of their claim to Kashmir meant "letting go of the source of Jhelum and Chenab, the Indus' two largest tributaries, as well as being at the mercy of India for water."[84] Therefore, while a large part of Pakistan's ideological claim to Kashmir was founded on the basis of common ethnicity, the Pakistani leadership also had geo-strategic considerations for the integration of Kashmir into their country. Despite complete dependency on the Indus River, none of its tributaries originating within their own territory. Pakistan was well aware of its vulnerable position vis-à-vis water.[85] This sentiment can be displayed by a communique from the British High Commissioner's office in Pakistan, in reference to the government's stance on Kashmir:

> "But one assumption they have refused to entertain: that India should have control over Kashmir. By having such control India could ruin Pakistan, simply by refusing to operate Mangla at the headworks. It is almost certain therefore that Pakistan would reject any solution of the Kashmir problem which would give these powers; she would rather embark on a war which she fully understood to be suicidal."[86]

---

[83] Hagerty, 51
[84] Siddiqi, "Kashmir and the Politics of Water."
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.

With close links to a previous openly militarized issue, re-ignition of war over sources of water seemed eminently plausible; Pakistani territory, which had relied on Indus water for centuries, now found the water sources originating in another country, one with whom geopolitical relations were increasing in hostility.[87] It is thus within this existing conflict that water as an issue of partition should be evaluated as well.

3.2.2 Dividing the Indus River System

While hyper-political tensions emanating from Kashmir effected relations over water, the conditions of partition can at least be said to have politicized water in and of itself as well. To start, irrigation works had a long history on the Indus River, "by the late 1940s the irrigation works along the river were the most extensive in the world." However, prior to 1947 because the basin, and thus project development, had been under the sole political authority of British India, it meant that "water conflict or disagreement could ultimately be resolved by executive order".[88] As a result of such extensive and interconnected infrastructure though partitioning the Indus River, which ran through both States became extremely difficult.

The biggest problem lay with partitioning the state of Punjab, as it contained some of the most developed parts of the complex irrigation system built by the British.[89] Although much of the region went to Pakistan, it failed to receive control of any of rivers headwaters making it completely dependent. By contrast, while only 8% of the basin's area stayed in India, it includes the headwaters of three of the six principal tributary streams[90]. Thus,

---

[87] Wolf, Aaron T., and Joshua T. Newton. "Case Studies| Water Conflict Management and Transformation at OSU." Transboundarywaters.Orst.Edu.
http://www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu/research/case_studies/Indus_New.htm (Accessed May 17, 2015)
[88] Ibid.
[89] Siddiqi, "Kashmir and the Politics of water."
[90] Ibid.

partition served almost immediately served "internationalized the [water] dispute between the new states of India and Pakistan."[91]

Unable to decide what to do with the Indus River System, which was designed to be run under a single administration, not two independent states, the British helped India and Pakistan reach a Standstill Agreement in 1947. [92] Negotiated by chief engineers of west and east Punjab, the two States agreed to allow the existing water sharing systems to continue for the following year. [93] However, "one day after the standstill agreement ended, and in absence of a new agreement, India discontinued delivery of water to Dipalpur Canal and the main branches of the Upper Bari Daap Canal to allocate water for their own development plans."[94] However, there is some speculation as to whether its actions had to do with the conflict in Kashmir as well. Either way, this action led to a quick response from Pakistan; "as the downstream areas turned parched and seared, excitable Pakistanis called for war, crying that a quick death was better than death by thirst and starvation."[95] While India did agree to turn water back on, they also "started demanding proprietary rights on the water of Punjab Rivers, denying Pakistan its due share as a lower riparian."[96] Therefore, even with negotiations underway after 1948, the Indus remained a major source of the antagonism[97] (Shadow of Kashmir) Thus, as can be seen, immediately after partition, "the attendant increased hostility and lack of supra-legal authority only exacerbated the issue."[98] With the conflict over Kashmir and the trauma of partition still vivid in memory, the accompanied exchange of

---

[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] "The Shadow of Kashmir." *Time*, October 3, 1960,
http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?sid=8217b101-db92-4652-acea-
18b41126d5aa%40sessionmgr114&vid=16&hid=108&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#db=edb&AN=542
02437 (Accessed on May 15, 2015).
[96] Khalid Chandio, "India Re-thinking Indus Water Treaty," Islamabad Policy Research Institute, August 17,
2014, http://www.ipripak.org/india-re-thinking-indus-water-treaty/ (Accessed May 29, 2015).
[97] *Time*, "Shadow of Kashmir"
[98] Wolf and Newton, "Case Studies"

bellicose statements throughout the negotiation process made threat of a water war appear entirely plausible.[99] (pappas??)

3.3 Securitization

Entering into the securitization section will look at the changing dynamics of water as result of partition. Through analysis of speech acts will thus determine how these threats were portrayed and received to determine what aspects could have made them successful securitizations but ultimately why they were not.

3.3.1 Pakistan: Fear of annihilation

As the lower riparian and therefore more vulnerable to the activities of its upstream partner, in when the future of water sharing came into question, they wanted to establish full and equitable access. Immediately into partition and the negotiation processes Pakistan advanced maintained a diligent front built upon the fact that "the water that was in the Eastern Rivers was its only supply, whereas India had other sources to draw upon." (same as 1) Falling in line with this, they maintained that without this water the country would starve and the economy fail; "to Pakistan the Indus system was its bloodline"[100]... Therefore, upon partition Pakistan called for a continuation of the status quo wherein they would be given unbridled access to all flows of the River.[101] Thus the basis of Pakistan's subsequent speech acts: dependency and survival. Following India's closing of water flow to Pakistan though, their speech acts took on much stronger terms. With the basis for existential threat down for what to build upon

[99] Pappas, 787.

[100] Alam, "Water Rationality, 111.

[101] *"The Fingers of Indus." Time, June 1969.* *http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?sid=ef78a3d5277a4a9e-a355234c72956d9b%40sessionmgr114&vid=3&hid=122&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#db=edb&AN=54197164 (Accessed May 10, 2015).*

With the threat to the referent object set, Pakistani posturing vis-à-vis the Indus Basin and India began to take form in 1948 after India cut of flow of water to certain tributaries. In some accounts it is stated that "Pakistan described the closing of the Dipalpur canal and the UBDC with a dramatic interpretation of the facts and claimed that India had cut off "every canal that crossed the boundary."[102] By doing so and specifically saying "every canal," they attempted to make the situation direr, to indicate the severity of their plight and justify extreme measures.

Further, poised as the aggrieved victim, "Pakistan claimed that even though India knew that its actions would lead to a "national calamity" it rejected "Pakistan's plea" to respect the authorized allocations."[103] These specific phrases which were included in speech acts demonstrate a few things. For one, by stating 'national calamity' it invokes notions of disaster, extremity and that India's actions are a threat to the nation as a whole. By appealing to more direct implications of national security they are positioning the threat of scarcity in a way which would justify extraordinary means. Further, by referencing that India has 'rejected their plea' Pakistan is stating there is no other alternative; India has left them no other choices of appeal. These points are emphasized by another statement in reference to cut off supply, in which a Pakistani leader threatened invasion, saying: "Better a quick, glorious death than a slow, lingering one."[104] Taking an offensive stance the invocation of war as a real option are clearly indicated in this instance. Despite the fact that India did eventually turn water back on, the notions of threat did not dissipate entirely and this idea, that India could at any time turn off their water and slowly starve them to death, remained throughout their concerns up until 1960.

---

[102] Alam, "Water Rationality, 110.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Time, "Fingers of Indus"

In 1953 Pakistan again addressed these complaints in front of the U.N. stating that it "faces an unparalleled threat—starvation by a process of slow strangulation,"[105] In this address, the strangler is India and the process through which they were carrying this death sentence out was by "depriving 76 million persons of the waters of the Indus basin, by which they live."[106] Again, by claiming water an 'unparalleled threat' it refers to the issue as being above all others, an existential threat. Further, 'starvation by strangulation' (of water sources), has clear references to threat in terms of survival; if they do nothing to stop this process they will die. So, lest India allows the flow of water to return, Pakistan has no choice but to make them or cease to exist as their lands dry up and they starve. Here, Pakistan is engaging directly to the WB by portraying India as the player unwilling to cooperate and that they are justified in any actions because India has left them no other choice, they will not listen or do not care.

Later, in July 1957, while negotiations were still continuing, problems again rose over India's use of the rivers in its territory and how it threatened the State. In response, the Pakistani Prime Minister, Hussain Suhrawardy, publicly commented on the threat posed by India's development projects on the river:

> "There are, as you know, six rivers. Most of them rise in Kashmir. One of the reasons why, therefore, that Kashmir is so important for us, is this water, these waters which irrigate our lands. They do not irrigate Indian lands. Now, what India has done…. - it is building a dam and it is threatening to cut off the waters of the three rivers for the purpose of irrigating some of its lands. Now, if it does so without replacement, it is obvious that we shall be starved out and people will die of thirst. Under these circumstances …you can well realize that rather than die in that manner, people will

---

[105] Time, "Bristling, Beset Nation"
[106] Ibid.

die fighting. Because that will be the very worst form of aggression." But I think before any such situation can arise, countries of the world…will step in to see that India does not perform any such barbarous action.[107]

To start off, it is important to note the similar concepts that are present here but have been recurring though speech acts from earlier years to account for the time gap but to show these have been present all along. For one death by starvation or thirst. The word 'obvious' for one points out that there should no longer be any question about the threat to survival in this regard. Further, by indicating India does not irrigate their lands with this water as Pakistan does they are making another appeal to the audience to accept their claims over India's. This notion is also present but more direct way. First, the PM is adamant that if India goes along with these plans it will be Pakistan's demise, calling it the 'worst form of aggression.' In this way, he is calling India an active aggressor who needs to be stopped. Second, the word 'barbarous' invokes the ideas of 'othering,' a process traditionally used to justify wars. Potentially to make his speech act more impactful and successful, PM also mentions Kashmir which brings forward many of its own associations of existential threat and militarized affairs. So by associating water to Kashmir, where clashes have already amassed, it is to try raise water to that same level.

3.3.2 India: Physical demands and Playing the Victim

In light of Pakistan's various claims to the Indus waters, India was quick to respond in like fashion. Prime Minister Nehru immediately protested that Pakistan demanded practically all the canal flow while stating that vast areas of India were "simply thirsting and panting for water."[108] In this sense, Nehru was also drawing upon ideas of dependency and survival,

---

[107] Undala Z. Alam, "Questioning the water wars rationale: case study of the Indus Waters Treaty," The Geographical Journal 168, no. 4 (2002): 347-348.
[108] Time, "Fingers of Indus"

trying to portray itself as the real aggrieved victim in the Indus Basin dispute;[109] Though East Punjab in India had approximately the same population and territory as West Punjab in Pakistan, it had only a fraction of the irrigated works that watered crops in West Punjab.[110] In particular, India "laid claim to these waters to expand its existing irrigation framework with the hope that it would, eventually, become self-sufficient in food production and stave off famine." [111]As this specific area constituted the 'breadbasket' of India, if the State was unable to develop or divert water in this region, the whole of India could face food shortages. [112] Further, additional burdens following partition put even more pressure on East Punjab and its under-developed lands.[113] Therefore, initially after partition India's interest in developing its water infrastructure also included "hopes of rehabilitating refugees who had fled Pakistan during the bloodied partition of the Punjab."[114] Potentially realizing their superior position on the river may give Pakistan more legitimacy, India thus used reminders of partition to frame their cause and cause more of an impact when considering their claims; partition was not their fault, they instead were the victim of a bloody conflict who were now left to pick up the pieces which they would need all resources necessary to do. All in all, though the rhetoric used by the Indian government was not as extreme as Pakistan's however, they did use speech acts to appeal to the audience as a valid but rational actor. Thus through this submission the water issue was kept de-securitized by the Indian government.

However, as time went on, India's patience began to wane. "With newly constructed irrigation works standing idle, and public pressure growing to utilize them, the Government of India was eager to bring the talks to a conclusive end, whether by agreement or by the

---

[109] Alam, "Water Rationality," 108.
[110] Ibid., 108-109
[111] Ibid. 106
[112] Ibid., 108-109
[113] Ibid., 108
[114] Ibid., 106

talks breaking down." Even at these later times, when addressing the WB, India continues using the same rhetoric of physical need. The Indian Minister of Irrigation and Power pointed out his Government's benevolence in face such concerns when he says:

> "It was in a spirit of good neighborliness that we accepted the Bank Proposal…same spirit we voluntarily imposed on ourselves restrictions on the utilization of the waters flowing through our rivers, although in the context of the tremendous problems of rehabilitation following partition, we would have been fully justified…We have continued to supply water from the three eastern rivers, although the Government of Pakistan, contrary to the agreement of May, 1948, have defaulted in the payment of canal water charges…There is, however, a limit to our patience. India will not wait indefinitely for a settlement, ignoring the needs of her own people"[115]

In October 1957, the Indian Minister of Irrigation and Power commented publicly on a speech by President of Pakistan Iskandar Mirza, in which he "is reported to have said that any action by India calculated to cut off waters flowing to Pakistan would be considered as an act of aggression and that Pakistan would meet aggression by aggression."[116] In his response, the Indian Minister states "In order to maintain a favorable atmosphere for the negotiations which are now going on … the Government of India does not propose to take any notice of the speech at this stage.[117] While there is no serious security implication present in the Indian Minister's response, it is worth noting that the key phrase, "at this time." In particular, this could indicate some weakness in the water rationality argument. This is meant to show that India is not ruling out any future recognition of Pakistan's benevolence and the possibility of their own posturing of existential threat is still an option. This is only indicating that for the

---

[115] Ibid., 109
[116] Alam, "Questioning the water wars rationale," 348.
[117] Ibid.

time, they are willing to act in this way, not that they always will. This is highlighted by a subsequent statement made by the same Indian Minister in parliament a few months later wherein he says "Indian is not prepared to wait for a day longer than 1962 to withdraw water she was now supplying to Pakistan." [118] He continues on to state that this is 'last word so far as Government of India is concerned.' In essence, India is putting on a good face to appeal to their audience but, there want to point out to all relevant players that there is a limit to their wiliness to negotiate. Therefore, now that this is known, India can claim that any failure to reach a cooperative agreement is not the fault of theirs; they are willing to remain rational while Pakistan is not.

3.4 Conclusions/Implications of Case

In 1960, the states of India and Pakistan concluded their process of negotiations in what resulted as the Indus Water Treaty. Not only did the process sustain through eight years of negotiations, amidst periods of heightened tensions resulting not only from water rhetoric but the ongoing dispute in Kashmir, but it is the only accord that has withstood wars and near wars in the history of India-Pakistan relations.[119] For these reasons, "the IWT is regarded internationally to be a successful instance of conflict-resolution between two countries that have otherwise been locked in mutual antagonism."[120] Presented this way, water rationality has a solid claim to …. However, while the presumptions of water rationality seem to hold, through the presented analysis of securitization, it does not appear the actors are as water rational as Alam's theory would suggest. In particular, the speech acts by Pakistan indicate a stance which was much less focused on negotiation rather than extreme measures. India, on the other hand maintained rhetoric which was considerably more de-securitized. However, at

---

[118] Ibid., 349
[119] Naveed Ahmad, "India-Pakistan: Troubled Water," International Relations and Security Network, November 6, 2008. (Accessed May 17, 2015).
[120] Ramaswamy Iyer, "Indus Waters Treaty 1960: An Indian Perspective," Heinrich Böll Foundation. March 16, 2014, https://www.boell.de/de/node/281787 (Accessed May 15, 2015).

times, their irritation with the negotiation process indicated that, if pushed to it, they would give up on finding a cooperative solution.

The securitization process leads to other insights as well. For one, the role of audience, necessary for any successful securitizations does give a little bit to Stetter's argument. The overarching global frames and ideas the WB held and juxtaposed into the negotiation could have helped sustain cooperative tendencies and kept the issue de-securitized by limiting what each state could claim legitimately. If the bank had fully accepted either of the state's initial positions, it could have been the legitimacy and acceptance they needed for successful securitization and to act outside the normal political rules. However, another possibility is that rather than any pre-existing or overarching frames governing the security positions of each state, it could be that the similar 'security' concerns of each actor kept the issue de-securitized.

India and Pakistan both construct their speech acts to address their physical needs of survival. However, since each states speech acts distinguished similar needs and threats, for the WB to accept one state's claim over the others would have been difficult. Recognizing that the WB was unlikely to take their individual claims, each state repositioned their claims in more de-securitizing ways to legitimate their speech acts to the WB and give them better standing during negotiations. The actors in this case, realized the constraints of the audience they had to fight their claims in front of which had an impact on the actors and how they spoke of water. But, this was only possible because the similar nature of each states concerns provided the necessary conditions for the cooperative framework to take hold. In this way, the WB is can be seen as a crucial player and implies that where a particular conflict falls between the two water theories could depend not only on the original positioning of the actors claims, but also on the orientation and capacity of the audience.

39

Chapter 4: Case Study: ETHIOPIA AND EGYPT

In 2011, Ethiopia began constructing its Renaissance Dam on one of the tributaries to the Nile within its borders despite objections from its downstream neighbours. Since then Egypt and Ethiopia have been locked in a diplomatic dispute, which reached a peak in 2013. Egypt, which utilizes more Nile water than any other country but contributes none, fears the dam will have a detrimental effect on its share of Nile water, restricting the flow of water to its nation.[121] Historically, Egypt does have some rights over the Nile emanated from two treaties, dating from 1929 and 1959. The treaties, signed with the UK and Sudan, allocate two-thirds of the Nile's water resources to Egypt, with the right to veto any project to take place on the Nile.[122] When these objections were raised however, Ethiopia denounced the long standing treaties and continued with their plans despite warnings from Egypt. In Ethiopia's eyes, the water treaties hindered their self-determination when it came to use of their own resources. Control over the water they possess was necessary for securing their future.[123]

4.1 Introduction to the Nile

As one of the longest rivers in the world, its flow can be split into two main parts, the Blue and White Nile. With eleven riparian countries, the singular system has to effectively work to sustain them altogether; "for all the countries along the river, the Nile is critical as a life force."[124] At the same time, the flow of the Nile also acts as a natural endowed

---

[121] Aya Nader,"Egypt refuses Renaissance Dam storage capacity," *Daily News Egypt*, posted on January 11, 2015, http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/01/11/egypt-refuses-renaissance-dam-storage-capacity/ (Accessed February 25 2015).

[122] Emeline Wuilbercq,"Ethiopia's Nile dam project signals its intention to become an African power," The Guardian, 14 July 2014. http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jul/14/ethiopia-grand-renaissance-dam-egypt. (Accessed on 25 February 2015.)

[123] Wuilbercq,"Ethiopia's Nile dam project."

[124] Majeed A. Rahman, "Water security: Ethiopia-Egypt Transboundary Challenges over the Nile River Basin," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 48, no. 1 (2012): 37

commodity which benefits the economic activities of numerous states.[125] However, the absolute benefits of the Nile are not equally distributed among the riparian's and the geo-strategic positioning of a singular state can either add or take away from their benefit share. One country whom has historically reaped all the gains the Nile has to give is Egypt. Since ancient times, civilization in Egypt has developed around the Nile allowing Egypt to raise to a position of power. Thus, it become engrained within the national identity that "Egypt was the gift of the Nile." This has led to the common held stance within Egypt that they alone 'own' the natural resource, which greatly affected relations on the Nile.[126]

As a regional hegemonic power, Egypt has had certain powers over the development and control of the use of water resources in the Nile for many decades, effectively denying other riparian countries complete access to their water resources.[127] To emphasize this, while Egypt is privy to numerous water agreements in which they were able to carve out their share of the Nile, Ethiopia has been left in the dust. "There have been about 60 water agreements since 1902 which either ignored Ethiopia or which Ethiopia decided to apparently consent to by keeping mute on the issue.[128] However, overuse and global warming, have caused the basin to deplete, leading to a decline in overall water resources.[129] Although guaranteed certain allocations of water, as the bottommost riparian country Egypt is almost completely dependent upon the actions of its upstream counterparts. Further, "shortages of water and water resources all along the Nile, have prompted countries to take a second look at Egypt's unbridled access to the Nile." [130] In particular, Ethiopia became more active in their desire to

---

[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid., 36
[127] Ibid.
[128] Rahman, 42
[129] Ibid., 37
[130] Ibid., 36

41

develop their water resources which, threatened not only their hegemonic position of Egypt but also their physical well-being.

Relevant for the discussion of Ethiopia and Egypt is the Blue Nile. "Considered the most fertile for crop production, this strand of the Nile begins its journey in Ethiopia, through Sudan, and discharges in Ethiopia.[131] For agriculture and irrigation, this part of the Nile, is crucial for Egypt's agricultural production and survival.

4.2 The Dynamics of Scarcity

As stated, Egypt as a state is almost entirely water scarce in terms of physical supply. Yet, despite the fact that "Egypt contributes essentially nothing to the flow of the Nile, [it] depends upon it for 97% of its water supply [and] consumers more than 80% of all Nile water."[132] The reason Egypt is able to benefit from such a large share of water comes from a number of colonial era treaties. First, a 1929 colonial document granted the bulk of the water from the Blue Nile to Egypt and Sudan.[133] Not only did this declaration from London "established Egypt's right to 48 billion cubic meters of water flow, and all dry season waters, but also, it gave Egypt veto-power over any upriver water management projects."[134] Second, the 1959 Agreement signed between Egypt and Sudan reinforced the 1929 declaration and "allocated Egypt 55.5 billion cubic meters of water annually while Sudan was allowed 18.5 billion cubic meters. These 79 billion cubic meters represented 99% of the calculated average annual river flow [of the Blue Nile]"[135] So, while Egypt does have actual physical scarcity

---

[131] Ibid., 37

[132] Xun Wu and Dale Whittington, "Incentive compatibility and conflict resolution in international river basins: A case study of the Nile Basin," *Water Resource Research* 42, no. W02417 (2006): 3.

[133] Addis Ababa, "Egypt escalates war of words over Ethiopia's Nile dam project," *Sudan Tribune*, June 11, 2013. http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article46909 (Accessed April 16, 2015).

[134] Abayomi Azikiwe, "Water and the Geopolitics of the Nile Valley: Egypt confronts Ethiopia," *Global Research*, June 18, 2013. http://www.globalresearch.ca/water-and-the-geopolitics-of-the-nile-valley-egypt-confronts-ethiopia/5339545 (Accessed on 25 May 2015).

[135] Azikiwe, "Water and Geopolitics."

needs, the state has considerable say in what goes on the Nile and the ability to protect its interests through historical treaties.

Ethiopia on the other hand, was not represented in any of these agreements. So, although not complacent in the treaties themselves, Ethiopia is expected to uphold them. However, Ethiopia's new desire to grow its power and become an 'African giant' has caused them to rethink their hereto compliant stance.

In contrast to Egypt, Ethiopia has abundant water resources, however, they still experience insecurity from scarcity issues. However, its concerns emanate from economic water scarcity; while Ethiopia contributes 85% of the water flow in the Nile, it barely uses any of it. [136] In part this underuse and scarcity stems from the colonial treaties referenced above. Of the eighty-five percent of the Niles Water it produces, Egypt is granted the use of over seventy percent of it.[137] However, this is not the only reason for Ethiopia's scarcity, but, it remains closely linked; poor and underdeveloped infrastructure, which prevents the State from meeting all the needs of its people, is another critical component. With a rapidly growing population, this problem could only get worse, therefore Ethiopia claimed was likely to "need greater access to the Nile's flow to meet swelling demographic and industrial demands."[138] The only way to do so was to improve infrastructure. For one providing better access to water would benefit its populations and two, with a large source of running river water development of their hydroelectric potential could be an avenue to economic growth.[139] This was the sentiment that Prime Minister Meles was obsessed with during this time in power, development of infrastructure to bring the Ethiopian state out of the throes of poverty, famine and dependency.[140] However, the problem is that any attempts to improve infrastructure,

---

[136] Wu and Whittington, 3
[137] Ababa, "Egypt escalates war."
[138] Map source
[139] Xu and w , 4
[140] Davison, "Nile"

either to provide better access to water or to meet industrial demands, risks reducing the flow to Egypt. Therefore, in terms of remedying its water scarcity problems, all that is really important to Ethiopia is the ability to use the resources it possess as it pleases. Egypt and Nile treaties had kept them 'dependent' for too long.

4.3 Indicators of water rationality

Even though there exists multitude interests represented by the states on the Nile the notion that rationality would guild their interactions was the general accepted norm. Demonstrating this one can see that "Before the 1950s there was less resentment over the Nile water resources by riparian countries; however, despite changing circumstances such as declining water resources, hunger and disease, riparian countries consistently decided to renegotiate amongst themselves in order to access the Nile."[141]

Demonstrating further the tendency to act rationally are several water treaties which support cooperation. These include the 1993 Technical Committee to promote development cooperation among riparian countries. There was also the Nile Basin Action Plan launched in 1995 and in 1997 the Canadian International Development Agency, through collaboration with the World Bank, attempted to foster cooperation among riparian countries to promote dialogue.[142]

Perhaps one of the strongest indicators of states penchant for cooperation is the Nile River Basin Initiative. Despite contestation with Egypt over hegemonic dominance and water claims, "the Nile Basin Cooperative Frame Work Agreement, launched 1997-2007, showed the desire of riparian countries to cooperate in order to achieve common goals and the allocation of water resources."[143] Although there was no international treaty or agreement

---

[141] Rahman, 39
[142] Ibid., 40
[143] Ibid., 44

that bound the countries together, there did exists many cooperative agreements between upstream and downstream riparian countries which instilled in the countries a sense of commonality and universality. Taken all together, the prevailing theory of water cooperation should hold given that there is incentive and precedence for cooperation between the countries to ensure their long term access to water. Further, dominant frames of universalization with the overall approach of preserving the regional ecosystem worked to guild the way in which states spoke about the Nile waters.[144] Even for Egypt, which was not a part of the Agreement, began to "shift away from its traditional policy of Nile unilateralism"…and began to embed the conflict between them and other riparian state within world cultural frames of rationality.[145]

However, if these global frames and notions of rationality did exist, Ethiopia's announcement of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam completely went against them.

4.4 Securitizing Moves

When Ethiopia initially unveiled their plans for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the world was taken completely by surprise. "Although the site was identified in 1964 [for its hydroelectric potential], the decision to go ahead with what had been known as Project X [within the Ethiopian government] became public less than a month before construction began on April 2."[146] Many of the regional actors were taken aback. In doing such Ethiopia served to "break the normal political rules of the game e.g. in the form of secrecy."[147] By handling the issue through such extraordinary means, the perceived threat from Egypt's view point became greater. For one, the Egyptian embassy's spokesman was

---

[144] Stetter et al., 453
[145] Ibid., 454
[146] William Davison, "Nile: Ethiopia's 'grand dam' rouses citizens, dismays critics," *Horn Affairs,* January 13, 2012, http://hornaffairs.com/en/2012/01/13/nile-ethiopias-grand-dam-rouses-citizens-dismays-critics-william-davison/ (Accessed on April 21, 2015).
[147] Buzan et al., 24.

astonished to learn a reservoir more than twice the size of Singapore would be created by a barrage Cairo had not been consulted on.[148] Referencing the prevailing treaties governing Egypt tried to invoke its historic right over the Nile, however Egypt responded by claiming those treaties obsolete.[149]

Also uniformed, was the Nile Basin Initiative which was supposed to establish cooperative management of the river.[150] As a member of the Initiative, Ethiopia had dedicated itself to mutual development and management of Nile resources. Therefore, the unilateral move came as a fairly large blow to the organization as a whole and shows the critical importance Ethiopia put on the dam's construction because by keeping it secret they minimize many foreign obstacles in its development. After unveiling their plans though, Ethiopia still had to navigate the backlash in attempts to keep GERD alive.

4.5 Ethiopia

Right after announcing the plans for GERD, Ethiopia, at first, directed its speech acts to its population. However, to complete successful securitization, to be able to build the dam. To do so, "The government portrays the dam as a 5,900-foot long, 475-foot high beacon of progress that will banish the country's reputation for famine and dependency."[151] In this sense, the government is appealing to its own citizens to realize the critical importance of the dam. Further they are trying to attach to hit this idea that the dam will save them by 'banishing' the countries famine and dependency; the answer to all their problems.

Thus, when the international community would not fund the project, PM Meles again appealed to the populations. He was quoted as saying "No matter how poor we are, in the Ethiopian traditions of resolve, the Ethiopian people will pay any sacrifice," he said. "I have

---

[148] Davison, "Nile."
[149] Wuilbercq, "Ethiopia's Nile dam."
[150] Davison, "Nile."
[151] Davison, "Nile."

no doubt they will, with one voice, say: 'Build the Dam!'"[152] He was not wrong. Calling upon

the 'Ethiopian traditions of resolve' drew upon national sentiments and pride. Further, by

stating that the 'Ethiopian people will pay any sacrifice, Meles engrained within the people

the notion that the construction of the dam is of utmost importance and should be the top

priority of both the state and people alike. In addition, rhetoric of nationalism, and addressing

the 'Ethiopian people' as one collective unit who will 'pay any sacrifice,' Meles creating

national sentiment to draw upon for support. Such strong referents were need because the

acceptance of the people was tantamount to none in achieving PM Meles plan.

4.5.1 Appealing to the People

Upon Ethiopia's initial unveiling of GERD, there were more than a few neighbouring

countries who were less keen on the idea. Generally, unsupported by the international

community, or at least large bodied ones, Ethiopia would not receive any outside funding for

the project. It was believed that by denying funding the project would die because the

scheme, which was expected to cost $4.1 billion was thought to be too expensive for Ethiopia

to go about it on its own.[153] However, "the government [instead appealed] to the population

to buy treasury bonds to support GERD. Some companies even urged their personnel to give

up a month's wages to support GERD.[154] After Meles speech, commented on above, the

public has been bombarded with advertisements, posters, reports, and speeches about the

dam, while the state sold bonds to partially fund it." By rallying the nation, Ethiopia received

all the approval it needed to go ahead with their controversial dam. In this sense,

securitization in Ethiopia, and justification to build the dam was successful.

---

[152] Davison, "Nile."
[153] Wuilbercq, "Ethiopia's Nile dam project."
[154] Wuilbercq, "Ethiopia's Nile dam project."

However, in terms of interstate water conflict theories the implications of this are evident. Securitization within the state does not necessarily lead to 'security' outside of it. Yet, Ethiopia's successful securitization within the state did play a critical role in how events played out because as Ethiopia continued down its path to construct the project, Egypt's sense of threat was becoming direr.

4.5.2 Egypt Responds

After being caught completely off guard and coming to the realization that Ethiopia intended to continue with its plans despite its objections, the government of Egypt began posturing their own position in reference to the threat they saw in GERD.

At first, Egypt tried to use its hegemonic positioning to dissuade the Ethiopian government by referencing numerous treaties and agreements which dictate the need for their approval on any Nile projects. However, as already discussed, Ethiopia's response was to simply state those treaties to be obsolete and invalid. Therefore, Egypt began a series of speech acts which claimed the construction of the Renaissance Dam as an existential threat to their survival.

For one, water for irrigation is a main concern of Egypt highlights this by saying Moustafa: "Egypt has got about 7 million acres of cultivated land…a very small amount. So if you drop by even 200,000 acres or half a million acres that is a huge area for Egypt. And Egypt one of the biggest wheat importers in the world…The dilemma is quite large." This basic statement, which doesn't necessarily call on any extraordinary means, but still focused on survival, is nonetheless important because it gives insight into the concerns of Egypt and where their claims are coming from. Further, by indicating just how small their area of cultivatable land is, and by suggesting it could be threatened, this positions their claims in real terms and hints at eth real security concerns that are at play.

At a different point during heightened tensions, Morsi stated ""if Egypt is the Niles gift, then the Nile is a gift for Egypt and if it losses one drop as a result of this grand renaissance dam, then our blood is an alternative."[155] In this way he positions the importance of water to be so high that even a slight decrease will warrant war; they will risk their blood over water. Further, Alaa Yassin, Advisor to the Egyptian Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation and spokesman for the GERD file told a news source that ""Egypt's share in the historic Nile River is a water red line that cannot be crossed."[156] In doing so, Yassin suggests that water is of utmost important and an affair in which they will not back down from. Further, while not saying anything explicitly, the rhetoric does imply that if Ethiopia crosses a certain line, they will retaliate.

Hussam Swailam, Egyptian military analyst. "There is a difference between security and existence itself. We are wholly dependent. So truth is that any threat against the Nile waters will result in the reduction of Egypt's share. This would threaten us with thirst and death."[157] Here, the notions of survival, as they are physically threatened, are again drawn upon, this time through the use used of words such as 'thrist' and 'death.' Swailam also invokes this notion by saying they are 'wholly dependent' and that any threat against the Nile is a threat against them.

4.5.3 Ethiopia repositioning its speech acts

In response to various speech acts and objections from Egypt, when adjusting its claim to the outside community, Ethiopia continued its rhetoric of placing sovereignty as its justifying claim.

---

[155] "The Water War between Egypt and Ethiopia." YouTube. July 3, 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnMuhjHBZHM (Accessed June 2, 2015).
[156] Nader, "Egypt refuses renaissance dam."
[157] YouTube, "The Water War between Egypt and Ethiopia."

Indicating its hopes to become an 'African lion' Zagid Abraha, the deputy-head of Gerd coordination states "We [Ethiopia] have finished with the syndrome of dependence. We want to recover our past glory."[158] To the people he is suggesting that Ethiopia has fallen from past glory but can regain it again. The implications of this statement allude to sovereignty and that the only way to 'recover past glory' is to go against the prevailing norms infringe upon the states authority and which keep them dependent upon Egypt.

In another instance, Prime Minister Desilan of Ethiopia stated, "Nothing can stop this dam, it is vital to Ethiopia's interests."[159] Again, this language puts the dam above all other concerns by saying it is 'vital' and that Ethiopia will not back down. Similar arguments are presented by Assefa Seifu, former commander of the Ethiopian army. When in an interview where a representative from Egypt was also present, he was asked whether he backed PM Desilan's and Ethiopia's stance. His response was as follows:

"Do I agree with what he said? Absolutely. Because for umpteen number of centuries, the Nile, 86.4% of the water emanating from Ethiopia has been serving Sudan and Egypt... Now, time has come for Ethiopia to get some use from it. And it is our god given right to do it."[160]

In this response one can find that the ideas of sovereignty, that Ethiopia be allowed to use and make decisions about how to use the resources within its territory. Stating that 'Ethiopia has been serving Egypt' highlights this in that their survival as a state needs to be about regaining sovereignty. In addition, his statement that 'it is their god given right to do so' for one,

---

[158] Wuilbercq. "Ethiopia's Nile dam project."
[159] "The Water War between Egypt and Ethiopia." YouTube. July 3, 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnMuhjHBZHM (Accessed June 2, 2015).
[160] YouTube, "The Water War between Egypt and Ethiopia."

directly opposes Egyptian claims that the Nile is a gift to them and two, indicates that no one or thing will be able to get in their way because god alone gave them this right.

This sentiment is furthered by Alemayehu Tegenu, Ethiopia's minister of Water, Energy and Irrigation who says "For a long time we derived no benefit from our river."[161] Specifically referring to the river as 'ours' positions Ethiopia in a way where they can justify any actions they may take within their territory. While this may seem to be non-political, in a region where water agreements and notions of universalism, this claim is actually quiet alarming and deviates greatly from the realm of normal politics. Ethiopia, by unilaterally claiming "These treaties are now obsolete" and "We are entitled to build the dam" clearly shows they see the prevailing laws governing Nile water as a hindrance to their national interests. By claiming these interests as being existentially threatened they are thus justifying extraordinary measures to regain their rights as a sovereign state.

4.6 Conclusions

Although war was not the outcome of the escalated tensions between Ethiopia and Egypt, it did get very close, if strong rhetoric or speech acts are to be taken serious. However, what this case did show was that at least at the national level, it is possible to securitize water in terms of scarcity and as a resource.

This securitization process for Ethiopia is worth nothing for another reason as well which relates back to the overall argument that when the threats posed by water scarcity do not match, reaching negotiation will be harder. The Ethiopian people want development and dependence. The only way to do so, as it is presented, is to build this dam. Therefore, in this back and forth of opposing rhetoric produced a zero sum game. If Ethiopia concedes to Egypt, they get nothing and Egypt still gets all the water. On the other hand, the only way

---

[161] Wuilbercq, "Ethiopia's Nile dam project."

Egypt can guarantee their long term access to supply is by not allowing Ethiopia to build the

dam; it is a zero sum game. Ultimately, the two countries negotiate but mostly on part of

Egypt. Ethiopia is still building the dam. Therefore, this could indicate that water rationality

is not as strong as suggested.

Conclusions

There are many different conclusions to be drawn from a comparison of the two case studies presented. From these two general ideas will be touched upon, the implications of the cases for water conflict theories and the implications for security. To start with water conflict, as seen through the different securitizing moves made by each country, different mixtures of perceived threat and security can produce cases which fall more toward the middle of water war and water rational.

In this case on the Nile River, it is possible to see the dynamics of a conflict when the actors have different understandings of threat. Just like the India and Pakistan case, there existed scarcity and competitive use. However they differ in some critical ways. For one, even though securitizing moves by Pakistan and Indian took place within a wider conflict, the rhetoric was not as strong or antagonizing as that which originated from the Nile basin. In part, this could be because the states in the latter case had different water scarcity concerns and perceived their existential threat to be different. This served to produce securitizing speech acts which fundamentally called upon different existential threats.

This idea is present in another way as well which was hinted at in the last chapter and which has to do with the audience. In the first case study, the WB and other international organizations aiding states after partition were the audience for India in Pakistan. What we saw in this case though was that the audience on one level was able to bridge the commonalities in each countries speech acts which helped facilitate cooperation. At the same time though, the countries recognized they were unlikely to get acceptance if they securitized water, so they re-oriented their speech. In this sense, the events did play out much closer to what water rationality would expect. But, this has to do with as much as rationality as it does that they had similar, more easily negotiated claims. For Ethiopia and Egypt, audience was

also important, especially for Ethiopia because they could appeal to their own, specific audiences and not have to worry about vying for dominance as much. By delineating themselves on different sides of the issue, negotiation and cooperation became much more difficult. To see whether or not mismatched scarcity and perceptions of threat more cased would have to be brought in. However, at this stage, I would suggest that simple scarcity conflicts over water will lean more toward the water war side than water rationality.

However, there are some issues to address as well. Due to the nature of resources, like water, securitization may have a much harder time at the international level. Referring back to Stephen Stetter et al., the notions of global frames as guiding the discourse of security of the environment has some relevance here. At the international level, successful securitization of the environment is difficult. None of the countries in this case were successful, except perhaps Ethiopia. But, Ethiopia's initial securitization took place at the national level in reference to the state. This brings into question whether the environment can really be securitized as a referent at the international level. Due to the nature of critical resources it is perhaps a good thing that securitizations are so difficult because it ensures equitable and continued access to all people. Interestingly though, there does seem to be a way to get around this. When Ethiopia securitized the right to build the dam it set off the subsequent securitization of Egypt bringing the conflict to an international level close to war. Now that Ethiopia has broken through the frames it could mean that others will follow suite and that water, or scarcity conflicts could still show up in the future when different scarcity concerns and demands are positioned against each other.

"Reimagining the Indus Waters Treaty." SciDev.Net South Asia. (Accessed May 29, 2015).

"The Shadow of Kashmir." *Time,* October 3, 1960. http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?sid=8217b101-db92-4652-acea-18b41126d5aa%40sessionmgr114&vid=16&hid=108&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#db=edb&AN=54202437 (Accessed on May 15, 2015).

"The Water War between Egypt and Ethiopia." YouTube. July 3, 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnMuhjHBZHM (Accessed June 2, 2015).

"Bristling, Beset Nation." *Time,* February 23, 1953, 37-38. http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?sid=5485265a-997c-426a-8dad-e084863d43c5%40sessionmgr4002&vid=6&hid=4202&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#db=edb&AN=54171107 (Accessed on May 15, 2015).

"India." AQUASTAT- FAO's Information System on Water and Agriculture, 2011. http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/ind/index.stm (Accessed May 29, 2015).

"The Fingers of Indus." *Time*, June 1969. http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?sid=ef78a3d5-277a-4a9e-a355-234c72956d9b%40sessionmgr114&vid=3&hid=122&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#db=edb&AN=54197164 (Accessed May 10, 2015).

"Water Scarcity." UN News Center. http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/scarcity.shtml (May 27, 2015).

Ababa, Addis. "Egypt escalates war of words over Ethiopia's Nile dam project." Sudan Tribune, June 11, 2013. http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article46909 (Accessed April 16, 2015).

Ahmad, Naveed. "India-Pakistan: Troubled Water." International Relations and Security Network, November 6, 2008. http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?id=93519 (Accessed May 17, 2015).

Alam, Undala Z. "Questioning the water wars rationale: case study of the Indus Waters Treaty." *The Geographical Journal* 168, no. 4 (2002): 341-353.

Alam, Undala Z. "Water Rationality: Mediating the Indus Waters Treaty." PhD, University of Durham. 1998.

Azikiwe, Abayomi. "Water and the Geopolitics of the Nile Valley: Egypt confronts Ethiopia." Global Research, June 18, 2013. http://www.globalresearch.ca/water-and-the-geopolitics-of-the-nile-valley-egypt-confronts-ethiopia/5339545 (Accessed on 25 May 2015).

Biswas, Niloy Ranjan. "Is the environment a security threat? Environmental security beyond Securitization." *International Affairs Review* 20, no. 1 (2011): 1-21. [Printed]

Booth, Ken. "Security and Emancipation." *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 4 (1991): 313-326.

Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. *Security: a New Framework for Analysis.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub, 1998.

Chandio, Khalid. "India Re-thinking Indus Water Treaty." Islamabad Policy Research Institute, August 17, 2014. http://www.ipripak.org/india-re-thinking-indus-water-treaty/ (Accessed May 29, 2015).

Davison, William. "Nile: Ethipia's 'grand dam' rouses citizens, dismays critics." *Horn Affairs,* January 13, 2012. http://hornaffairs.com/en/2012/01/13/nile-ethiopias-grand-dam-rouses-citizens-dismays-critics-william-davison/ (Accessed on April 21, 2015).

Gleick, Peter H. " Water and Conflict: Fresh water resources and international security." In *Global Dangers: Changing Dimensions of International Security, e*dited by Sean M Lynn-Jones and Steven E Miller, 84-117. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995.

Hagerty, Devin T. *South Asia in World Politics,* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005.

Homer-Dixon, Thomas. "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict." In *Global Dangers: Changing Dimensions of International Security, e*dited by Sean M Lynn-Jones and Steven E Miller, 144-179. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995.

InterAction Council. *The Global Water Crisis: Addressing an Urgent Security Issue.* Edited by Harriet Bigas, Hamilton, Canada: UNU-INWEH, 2012.

Iyer, Ramaswamy. "Indus Waters Treaty 1960: An Indian Perspective." Heinrich Böll Foundation. March 16, 2014. https://www.boell.de/de/node/281787 (Accessed May 15, 2015).

McLaughlin, Mitchell, Sara and Neda A. Zawahri. "The effectiveness of treaty design in addressing water disputes." *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 2 (2015): 187-200.

Nader, Aya. "Egypt refuses Renaissance Dam storage capacity." *Daily News Egypt*, January 11, 2015. http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2015/01/11/egypt-refuses-renaissance-dam-storage-capacity/ (Accessed February 25, 2015).

Ney, Steven. "Environmental security: A critical overview." *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 12, no. 1 (1999): 7-30.

Pappas, Gregory. Pakistan and Water: New Pressures on Global Security Human Health." *Am J Public Health* 101, no. 5 (2011): 786-788.

Rahman, Majeed A. "Water security: Ethiopia-Egypt Transboundary Challenges over the Nile River Basin." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 48, no. 1 (2012): 35-46.

Siddiqi, Ayesa. "Kashmir and the Politics of Water." *Aljazeera*, August 1, 2011. http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/kashmirtheforgottenconflict/2011/07/201178121 54478992.html (Accessed on May 19, 2015).

Stetter, Stephan, Eva Herschinger, Thomas Teichler and Mathias Albert. "Conflicts about water: Securitizations in a global context." *Cooperation and Conflict* 46, no. 4 (2011): 441-459. [Printed]

Sumbal, Malik. "Water Scarcity Heightens Tensions between India and Pakistan." Public Radio International, August 8, 2014. http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-08-08/water-scarcity-heightens-tensions-between-india-and-pakistan (Accessed May 29, 2015).

Swami, Praveen. "Quickstep or Kadam Taal? The Elusive Search for Peace in Jammu And Kashmir. Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, March 2005.

Thapliyal, Sangeeta. "Water Security or Security of Water? A Conceptual Analysis." *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* 67, no. 1 (2011): 19-35.

Ullman, Richard. "Redefining Security." In *Global Dangers: Changing Dimensions of International Security.* Edited by Sean M Lynn-Jones and Steven E Miller, 15-39. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995.

Waever, Ole. "Securitization and Desecuritization." In *On Security,* edited by Ronnie D. Lipschutz, 46-86. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

Wolf, Aaron T. "Conflict and Cooperation along International Waterways." *Water Policy* 1, no. 2 (1998): 251-265.

Wolf, Aaron T., and Joshua T. Newton. "Case Study of Transboundary Dispute Resolution: The Indus Water Treaty.

Wolf, Aaron T., and Joshua T. Newton. "Case Studies| Water Conflict Management and Transformation at OSU." Transboundarywaters.Orst.Edu. http://www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu/research/case_studies/Indus_New.htm (Accessed May 17, 2015)

Wu, Xun, and Dale Whittington. "Incentive compatibility and conflict resolution in international river basins: A case study of the Nile Basin." *Water Resource Research* 42, no. W02417 (2006).

Wuilbercq, Emeline. "Ethiopia's Nile dam project signals its intention to become an African power." *The Guardian*, July 14, 2014. http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jul/14/ethiopia-grand-renaissance-dam-egypt (Accessed on 25 February 2015).

Zawahri, Neda A. "India, Pakistan and cooperation along the Indus River system." *Water Policy* 11, no. 1 (2009): 1-20.