Figure 1: The former shores of the Aral Sea (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Government Attitudes to the Central Asian Water Crisis and Third-Party Water Diplomacy

Crafting the message to the listener

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Abstract

Scarcity of water resources in Central Asia's Amu Darya and Syr Darya river basins lies at the root of long-running tensions between Central Asian countries over the division of these resources. Water diplomacy by outside actors aimed at mediating this dispute has so far shown limited results. This thesis investigates what lessons for third-party water diplomacy can be drawn from the water narratives of the Central Asian governments. This question is pursued through a discourse analysis of government publications. This analysis reveals that four distinct discourses can be identified in the Tajik and Uzbek government narratives, which can be classified along two axes: upstream-downstream and international-domestic. The first distinction is to be expected, but the second warrants a closer look. A comparison with publications by governments engaged in regional water diplomacy shows that the Central Asian government discourses aimed at international audiences skew much more closely to the stated priorities of mediators and donors than their discourses for domestic consumption do. This implies that water diplomats should be careful in taking the narrative of Central Asian governments at face value and should pay close attention to their domestic narrative in order to carry out successful mediation.

Acknowledgement

Contents

1. Introduction, objective & methodology

This chapter will offer the background on the Central Asian water crisis that shaped the inception of this thesis, as well as cover its main objectives and methods. Finally, it includes a reading guide for the rest of the thesis.

1.1. Background

The current significance of water resources to the relations between the Central Asian states is rooted in a long tradition, as is the involvement of outside actors. This history is grounded in the region's geography. Being bounded to the South and East by great mountain ranges and to the West and North by vast plains and deserts, the region has historically been hard to incorporate into the empires surrounding it (Frankopan, 2015). Therefore, it maintained a large measure of independence. Its strategic central location on the Asian continent did make it coveted by these same empires.

Figure 2: The sources, uses and sheds of Central Asian water (Source: Zoï Environment Network)

The western reaches of Central Asia are defined by the great Karakum and Karakalpakstan deserts. These stretch for hundreds of inhospitable miles between population centers. It was this harsh terrain that made control of oasis towns such as Merv (in modern Turkmenistan) and Herat (in modern Afghanistan) vital for armies hoping to cross these great deserts. Similarly, the great Amu-Darya and Syr-Darya rivers provided the possibility of moving armies over great distances far faster than it was possible to trek through the desert.

This means that during the 19th century Central Asia's water resources took on great strategic significance for the region's northern and southern neighbors, the Russian and British empires (Hopkirk, 1992). The major diplomatic initiatives and armed expeditions they undertook to build influence in the region in this period, known collectively as "The Great Game" can therefore be argued to be in part a reflection of the value of its water resources.

After being incorporated into the Russian empire and subsequently the Soviet Union, control of water resources was centralized (Kuzmits, 2006). This period also saw the collectivization of agriculture in the region and a massive growth in production, especially of the highly water-intensive cotton crop (Dukhovny & De Schutter, 2011). This increased use of river water started the slow shrinking of the Aral Sea, but the central control over water allocation did prevent conflict over it.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the central authority planning the allocation of water resources disappeared from the institutional stage. The newly independent states, each with a small economic base, could also no longer count on subsidy from the rest of the Union. This led to national concerns taking center stage, with each government trying to maximize the economic gains and political clout it could gain from the previously shared water resources (Zhiltsov, Zhiltsova, Medvedev, & Slizovskiy, 2018). At the same time, the question of water sharing was moved further from the technical realm into the political by governments touting the water as a symbol of sovereignty (Menga, 2014).

During the three decades since the fall of the Soviet Union, international attention returned to the water of the region. This focused mostly on the shrinking Aral Sea, in the form of the Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP). Concurrently, the Central Asian states pursued limited efforts at international cooperation on their shared water resources, such as the Interstate Coordination Water Commission (ICWC) and Interstate Council on the Aral Sea Basin (ICAS). (Sehring, Ziganshina, Krasznai, & Stoffelen, 2020), (Kuzmits, 2006).

In recent years, water reserves in the region have been used up and climate change is starting to affect the basin. This has only sharpened the clash between the hydropower needs of upstream states and the agricultural needs of downstream states. Improved transboundary water management seems essential to alleviate these tense regional relationships and diminish the chance of escalating armed conflict (Zhiltsov, Zonn, Grishin, Egorov, & Ruban, 2018; Sehring & Giese, 2011). Despite broad awareness of the transboundary water management challenges in Central Asia, there is deadlock between the involved states on working towards a solution. Regional water management bodies are unable to enforce conventions (Karthe, Chalov, & Borchardt, 2015) and tensions periodically flare up between the countries (Leonard, 2017).

This state of affairs has produced a number of internationally backed water diplomacy processes that have tried to promote agreement between the Central Asian republics. (Sehring, Ziganshina, Krasznai, & Stoffelen, 2020). Thus far, unfortunately, the fruits of these international initiatives have been modest. Both bilateral and multilateral projects have not managed to truly provide a breakthrough in the crisis. Earlier research into the international presence has, for instance, found that the lack of coordination among international actors

makes them less effective in mediation (Dukhovny, Sokolov, & Ziganshina, 2016). This state of affairs means that the Central Asian water crisis continues to worsen. Water resources are continually diminishing, as the shores recede ever further on the Aral Sea.

1.2. Objective

Broadly, it seems worthwhile to investigate why the results of third-party water diplomacy in Central Asia have so far been modest. Publications have appeared on the theory behind conducting effective water diplomacy (Islam & Susskind, 2013; Moomaw, Bhandary, Kuhl, & Verkooijen, 2017; Schmeier S. , 2018; Grech-Madin, Döring, Kyungmee, & Swain, 2018; Stoffelen, 2017), allowing us to compare Central Asian practice to these theories. What they have in common is a focus on the task of water diplomats to bridge the gap between the values and interests of parties to a water conflict. In this regard it may be instructive to examine the role of the values of the water mediators themselves. To look at what values of water different governments prioritize, an option is to compare the narratives about water that they propagate.

In order to more clearly define a research gap, it is worth taking a look at existing research focusing on the role of narratives and discourses on transboundary water management and water diplomacy. These publications were selected by searching the Google Scholar Database for the keywords "transboundary water", "discourse analysis", "diplomacy" and "donors". The papers discussed here are those that deal specifically with the relationship between transboundary water management and social and political discourses.

There is a limited body of research explicitly examining social and political discourses in relation to water diplomacy processes. These papers generally seek to better understand the 'securitization' of water, or how the division of water resources comes to be framed as a political or security issues. Analyzing the Helmand River Basin in Afghanistan and Iran, for instance, Lane (2020) argues that the majority of 'securitizing moves' come from representatives of the region, rather than from national leaders. Stuart (2019) identifies three main 'pathways' along which stakeholders increase securitization of basin management: the state, human, and ecological security pathways.

Other papers examine the role of water-related discourses in transboundary water management more broadly than securitization. The influence on cooperation of parties politicizing their hydrological data to build their narratives was examined by Babow (2018). Hermano (2019) focused on the Central Asian context, analyzing government discourses surrounding the construction of the Rogun Dam in Tajikistan through the lens of Islam & Repella's (2015) Water Diplomacy Framework (WDF). Discourses can be used to analyze the ways in which actors mobilize to shape transboundary water management. For example, Sayan, Nagabhatla, & Ekwuribe (2020) show that in the Lake Chad basin region, diverse "discourse coalitions" of stakeholders form to support or oppose proposals for restoring the basin.

Taking a more macro view, Williams (2020) describes how India attempts to shape a discourse to discourage a multilateral approach to managing the Ganges river, since it has more influence in a traditional bilateral system. The role of water management related discourses

in domestic politics is another facet that merits attention. The case of the Rogun dam in Tajikistan, for example, which is presented by authorities as a unifying and 'nation-building' effort (Menga, 2014). Similarly, Delang (2019) explored the ways in which the unique positions of South-East Asian countries shaped their public discourses in relation to dam developments on the Mekong River.

Based on this overview, it appears a study has not yet been done that compares political attitudes and narratives in a basin to those of outside mediators to draw lessons from this comparison. It is possible that the way third-party water diplomacy actors look at the water problems of the region contrasts with the narrative propagated by the Central Asian governments. A disconnect between the two might contribute to an explanation of the lack of effectiveness of third-party water diplomacy projects in Central Asia so far. This thesis aims to examine this relationship in order to contribute to the understanding of the role that political narratives and attitudes play in transboundary water management and water diplomacy. This led me to the following research question:

What lessons for third-party water diplomacy can be drawn from the water narratives of Central Asian Governments?

1.3. Research questions

In order to answer this question, three things need to be done. First, there needs to be a definition of water diplomacy to work with. Secondly, the water narratives of Central Asian governments need to be mapped. Finally, these narratives and the findings on water diplomacy theory need to be compared to the practice of third-party water diplomacy in Central Asia in order to attempt to draw lessons. This approach is structured in the following sub-questions:

Question 1 – What academic theories exist on how to conduct water diplomacy?

In order to provide a frame of reference within which to think about the role of third-party water diplomats, this question outlines academic theories that describe the practical application of water diplomacy. This means that there is specific focus on 1) how these theories define the goal of water diplomacy and 2) what they see as the most important factors influencing its effectiveness. This overview of competing theories will also be used in Question 3 to analyze which theories the water diplomacy initiatives in Central Asia adhere to.

Question 2 – What different discourses exist on the values of water in Central Asia?

This question focuses on identifying Central Asian government narratives about the water crisis. The different actors in the region, both regional and external, base their actions on their perception of the problems regarding water management. These perceptions and analyses are shaped by their underlying values regarding water and will probably be different based on their upstream or downstream location. Knowing by what values the Central Asian governments define their interests is essential for conducting constructive water diplomacy. To achieve this, a discourse analysis was to identify the different ways in which the Uzbek and Tajik governments shape their narratives about the regional water situation. This will be

examined mostly through a national lens, since the focus of the research is on the failure of states to reach agreement amongst each other about the common use of the water in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers.

Question 3 – Which of the identified theories and discourses do third-party water diplomacy projects in Central Asia reflect?

The final question focuses on the different water diplomacy projects that have been run in Central Asia. It explores how the German and Swiss efforts in the region fit with the theoretical frameworks and the discourses mapped out in the previous questions. In doing this, a distinction is made between the different 'tracks' of diplomacy (see theoretical framework). This question explores whether certain theories and narratives are more prevalent than others. This exploration provides the link between water diplomacy theory, the narratives in Central Asia, and the practice of water diplomats necessary to attempt to draw lessons in the conclusion.

1.4.   Research design

In general, this thesis is a qualitative study, based on literature study and the analysis of sources published by and about the governments studied. Where literature was used, general key terms provided the starting point of the search, which was then expanded on by using the snowballing method, where one looked into the references in the most relevant search results.

One limitation to data gathering that emerged in the start of the research design process was the impossibility of travel to the region due the covid-19 pandemic. This impossibility and broader uncertainty about what further limitations would emerge over the course of the research contributed to the choice to restrict the research to published texts, rather than involving interviews and other data collection 'in the field'. This choice was further developed into this thesis that is focused on discourse and textual analysis.

Researching the relation between government narratives and water diplomacy in Central Asia can be seen as examining a "unique" case study (Yin, 2009) for the use of water diplomacy to diminish conflict over water resources. This means a case study that is important enough to study in its own right, and not chosen to necessarily be representative of a larger group. It is a unique case study since water shortage and conflict in Central Asia have the potential to affect millions of lives. This makes it worthwhile to study barriers to improvement. At the same time, the comparison of Central Asian practice and experience to water diplomacy theory may provide lessons to strengthen and sharpen the thinking about the topic.

One problem immediately arises in the definition of the area to take under consideration. Considering the fact that water is the main factor of interest, there is a lot to be said for analyzing the full basin area of the Aral Sea Basin (Agarwal, et al., 2000). However, since the main angle of research is a political/policy angle focused on national governments, this runs into problems. This is due to the watershed not being the same as the "policy-shed" (Islam & Susskind, 2013). Specifically, as an example, a swath of territory in northern Afghanistan is part of the Amu-Darya watershed, thereby feeding into the Aral Sea. However, due to its lack

of involvement in attempts to settle disputes over the watershed, including it would stick out in the analysis. Because of this, the area of interest is identified as the five Central Asian countries generally understood to constitute Central Asia as an area of research. These are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. In order to perform a more detailed discourse analysis, it is subsequently limited to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan specifically, on the assumption that they would be representative examples of the upstream and downstream states in the region (Yin, 2009).

1.5. Methodology

Below, each sub-question's methodology is discussed in turn.

Question 1 – What academic theories exist on how to conduct effective water diplomacy?

This question is pursued through a literature review of writings on water diplomacy. In order to give an overview of the theories on the effectiveness of water diplomacy two different schools of thought are compared. In choosing the theories to contrast priority was given to those that focus on the diplomatic instruments that governments can use to influence other states. This means that I have not focused on the more legalistic literature, which explores options for using international law, and regional water bodies to ease water-related tensions (Murthy, 2014; Schmeier & Shubber, 2018).

The first school of thought chosen concerns the thinking behind the 'Water Diplomacy Framework' (WDF) (Islam & Susskind, 2013), one of the most cited theoretical bases for water diplomacy. The other is based primarily on a paper by Moomaw et al. (2017) which explores Sustainable Development Diplomacy (SDD). This second school was chosen because its core ideas represent a clear contrast with the oft-used WDF when it comes to the role of values in resource diplomacy.

Question 1 explores what these theories perceive to be the goal of water diplomacy and by what means they believe it to be most effective. This overview can then be applied in question 3 to compare these methodologies to the practice of water diplomacy projects in Central Asia to see how they compare to these schools of thought.

Question 2 – What different discourses exist on the values of water in Central Asia?

In order to map the different narratives about water that Central Asian governments propagate, a discourse analysis was performed. The analysis is inspired by the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed by Fairclough (2003) which holds that language not only describes the world, but also influences how we perceive it. Foucault's work on discourse also serves as an inspiration, by incorporating not just the literal text but also the context of the speaker (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). Chapter 2.3. offers a more elaborate discussion of the theory behind discourse analyses. The analysis is conducted in three steps: 1) the selection of sources, 2) establishing a set of themes to look for in the sources, and 3) analyzing how these themes are treated in the sources. This approach led to a model of the discourses propagated about water in Central Asia. The specific methodologies for each of these three phases are elaborated on below.

1. Selection of sources

In order to map the discourses that exist regarding water in Central Asia sources from different countries in the region were examined. Since the main regional divide to be expected is between upstream and downstream perspectives, both of these need to be represented. The choice was made to analyze Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in order to contrast these two perspectives through these two countries.

For this analysis the focus is on the government and diplomatic perspective. Therefore, it is based on sources that represent the discourse of the Central Asian governments. These include: policy documents published by these governments, speeches by high-ranked individual representatives, media reports (newspaper and/or TV) insofar as these media can be said to offer a representation of government views. The analysis is based on careful analysis of around a dozen sources per country, rather than a more superficial reading of a larger set.

These sources were selected on the basis of three factors. The first is relevance, meaning that the more specifically a source concerns transboundary water in Central Asia, the better. The second is to what degree the source is meant for public consumption, with more public being better. The last is prominence, which is to say an oft-cited report takes precedence over a more obscure one, and an article from a well-read newspaper over one from a lesser-read one.

The discourse analysis focuses on sources spanning the last five to ten years, with preference given to more recent sources. This should give a clear picture of the current state of discourses in Central Asia. This relatively short time span means that the assumption is made that there are no major shifts in discourse within this period. It also means that the analysis is limited to describing the discourses currently propagated, and it is not an objective of this study to chart the historical development of these discourses.

The sources to analyze were found by conducting a search for certain key terms, such as 'water resources', 'water diplomacy' and 'transboundary water' in combination with the names of the actors. The references of relevant papers used elsewhere in this research were also searched for the same. The search was conducted for sources in English and Russian, since publications by and about Central Asian governments are more prolific in Russian than in English. Where the same source was available in both languages, such as United Nations publications, the English version was used for analysis. The final list of sources analyzed can be found in annex 1.

2. Coding of themes

A set of relevant themes must be compiled to search through the selected sources for. These themes should be chosen in such a way that they cover the different areas in which the source material might deal with the topic of water. For instance, the environmental value of the water could be such a theme, as could its need in agriculture or the food supply. These will be based on values of water often encountered in literature on the topic of water diplomacy. While the analysis started with a set of pre-determined themes in hand, they were not set in

stone. This means that if an important recurring theme were to emerge that had not been anticipated in the coding phase, it would be added to the analysis. This idea of 'evolutionary coding' is based on the idea that "coding is not what happens before analysis, but comes to constitute an important part of the analysis" (Weston, et al., 2001, p. 397).

3. Analysis

For the analysis phase the source material was manually searched for sections that relate to the themes selected. The relevant discourse fragments were, therefore, collected in a template to note down how these themes are covered (see the example of a filled-in analysis template in annex 2). As mentioned above, during this phase I included the option of adding themes in case new insights emerged, but this turned out not to be necessary.

The final analysis is based on finding discourse fragments that offer a meaningful look at the ideas the text propagates about my chosen themes. This collection of discourse fragments was analyzed for patterns. Firstly, this meant finding the main points of contention and agreement within the body of sources for each theme. Secondly, it was attempted to find patterns in the themes and points of view that commonly showed up together. Finally, the context of the sources was included, such as their publisher and audience, to help interpret the visible patterns. This made it possible to distinguish the most relevant discourses regarding water in Central Asia.

Question 3 – Which of the identified theories and discourses do third-party water diplomacy projects in Central Asia reflect?

First off, a list of potentially relevant water diplomacy projects in Central Asia was compiled using scientific literature. Considering the differences between the two tracks of diplomacy covered in the theoretical framework, this definition included both track I activities aimed at mediation between the regional governments and track II activities that seek to alleviate the water crisis through technical assistance.

From this longlist, a selection was made of projects that would offer an interesting case for comparison to the discourses found in Question 2 and the theoretical schools of thought found in Question 1. In this selection priority was given to the programs with the strongest track I elements. These would be most relevant for comparison to the discourse analysis, since they aim to directly bridge the differing values of the actors involved in a compromise, rather than the more detached and technical track II activities.

As a second step further source material was collected relating to the selected programs in a similar way as for the discourse analysis in the last chapter. This means a focus on policy notes, program proposals and public statements or press releases that shed light on the thinking, assumptions and motivations behind these mediation programs.

Finally, these source documents were analyzed through the lens of the four discourses identified in the previous chapter. This means that the same template for collecting discourse fragments was used as in question 2. However, in this analysis the fragments are not independently analyzed to map them into discourses. Rather, the fragments are analyzed

with the discourses from Question 2 as a starting point. This comparison then allows for a conclusion on which of these discourses the mediation programs most reflect to. This also means that the aim is not to map the different discourses that the donor governments propagate, but only to compare the stated goals of their water diplomacy programs to the different discourses propagated by Central Asian governments. Finally, these same documents were compared to the schools of thought from question 1 to see which of these they most reflect.

1.6.   Reading guide

The rest of this thesis explores the assumptions behind water diplomacy projects in Central Asia. Firstly, chapter 2 will give an overview of the theoretical concepts necessary or helpful in understanding the rest of the paper. Chapter 3 explores the first research question and contrasts different theories on the practice of water diplomacy with one another. In chapter 4 I execute a discourse analysis to chart the different values associated with water in Central Asia. Chapter 5 deals more specifically with the international water diplomacy projects that have been pursued in Central Asia and how they relate to the theories and discourses found in the previous chapters. Finally, chapter 6 contains the conclusion, discussion and reflection on the research process.

Chapter	Goals
1	- Introduces the background that led to the thesis' inception. - Formulates the objective based on a short literature overview. - Describes the methodology used in the thesis.
2	- Elaborates on the theoretical concepts behind water diplomacy and discourse analyses necessary for understanding the rest of the thesis.
3	- Compares and contrasts different theories on how to conduct effective water diplomacy.
4	- Analyses the discourses of Central Asian governments regarding water. - Charts these discourses into a framework.
5	- Compares stated goals and methods of water diplomacy projects to the discourses charted in chapter 4. - Compares stated goals and methods of water diplomacy projects to the theories on water diplomacy discussed in chapter 3.
6	- Draws a conclusion on the lessons that can be drawn for water diplomats. - Discusses the validity of the thesis' results. - Gives recommendations for further research.

Table 1: Thesis reading guide

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter will offer the theoretical framework helpful in placing this thesis in context. It offers a look at the use of diplomatic instruments in pursuit of water-related goals, the field of 'water diplomacy'. Finally, it discusses the background and concepts important to the field of discourse analysis.

2.1.   Water diplomacy

How to define water diplomacy?

Due to the fact that diplomacy means different things to different actors, a precise definition is hard to give, or rather, there are many contrasting definitions (Molnar, Cuppari, Schmeier, & Demuth, 2017; Klimes, Michel, Yaari, & Restiani, 2019). Many of these proposed definitions point towards applying the diplomatic efforts of states in conflict resolution and prevention to situation where water plays an important role. They are often predicated on the idea that it is the role of water diplomats to find a mutually beneficial solution to bridge differences between parties that share water resources. Finding these solutions often involves a more cooperative approach to water management, as opposed to a confrontational approach. Generally, water diplomacy exists somewhere in the space between water conflict and water cooperation, attempting to move water disputes towards the latter.

One of these definitions for the practice of water diplomacy is "*the use of diplomatic instruments to existing or emerging disagreements and conflicts over shared water resources with the aim to solve or mitigate those for the sake of cooperation, regional stability, and peace*" (Schmeier S. , 2018). This definition was chosen for use in this thesis because it breaks up the principle into a clear combination of means and goals. It is worth examining these in slightly more detail. This paragraph will therefore expand briefly on the interpretation of 1) "conflict over shared water resources", and 2) "diplomatic instruments".

What is the role of water in conflict?

Although large-scale armed conflicts between countries have become rarer over the last half-century (Gat, 2013), conflict remains. Importantly, political conflict in this sense does not necessarily entail an armed struggle. The definition will be used that political conflict means that 1) groups are engaged in conflict as opposed to individuals, 2) state institutions are involved in one way or another, and 3) the conflict requires a political, that is: non-military, solution (Canivez, 2008).

Political conflict can be driven by many factors, but the control over or right to use resources is a root cause in many conflicts. This root cause expresses itself in a number of different concrete drivers of conflict, such as, among others, scarcity, distrust, adversarial governance, cultural or spiritual importance, and scientific disagreement (Nie, 2003). The major interests connected with water are both economic and (geo-)political. Fresh water is necessary for agriculture, while water is also extracted from river flows for use in industry. Hydropower plants form a third major use of water, which, though mostly non-consumptive, do alter the timing of water flows downstream.

Due to the increases in population size, industrialization and large-scale agriculture, water demand is rising in many regions. At the same time, climate change is altering the distribution in place and time of rains, as well as their overall volumes. Though the impact of demographic and economic developments appears to be bigger than that of climate change, these developments together drive an increase in conflict over water (Vörösmarty, Green, Salisbury, & Lammers, 2000). Central Asia appears to be specifically at risk of increasing conflict potential due to this effect (Sehring & Giese, Global Environmental Change and Conflict Potential in Central Asia, 2011).

Another theory revolves around the ideas of "equitable allocation" and "no significant harm" enshrined in the *Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses* (United Nations, 1997). Since solving water conflicts needs to be focused on achieving an "equitable allocation", competing ideas of what is equitable cause trouble in the process (Wolf, Criteria for equitable allocations: the heart of international water conflict, 1999). These differing ideas of equity can be based on three main pillars: the issues of 1) quantity, 2) quality or 3) timing of water flows (Wolf, Kramer, Carius, & Dabelko, 2005). Within this framework, Wolf argues that the Central Asian water crisis is one of timing, because hydropower need water to flow primarily in winter, while agriculture needs it primarily in spring and summer.

What diplomatic instruments can be applied to water conflict?

The most common framework for thinking about the diplomatic instruments available for conflict resolution is the 'multi-track diplomacy' framework. The idea that there are two distinct 'tracks' of diplomatic instruments was first introduced in 1981. The core idea is that track I diplomacy constitutes the formal contacts between states, which is contrasted with the non-governmental conflict resolution efforts that constitute Track II diplomacy (Davidson & Montville, 1981). In this view, a summit of leaders, or a démarche by an embassy to a host government are typical Track I efforts. NGOs or academics that work to alleviate the root causes of a conflict, while not necessarily fully unconnected to government, are Track II actors.

Since being introduced, different authors have amended it in order to challenge and strengthen the original two-track model. The idea of "Track 1.5-diplomacy" has since been introduced to describe processes where official and non-governmental efforts go hand in hand and to challenge the idea that the two tracks are strictly separate. The process culminating in the Oslo Peace Accords of 1993 and 1995 have been described as an example of such a Track 1.5 process (Chataway, 1998).

The model was further expanded in 1996, with the publication of *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace*. Arguing that the original two-track framework did not adequately differentiate between the range of different efforts that encompass track II, the authors proposed a total of nine tracks for thinking about peacemaking efforts. These nine tracks are government, professional conflict resolution, business, private citizens, research and education, activism, religious, funding, and public opinion (Diamond & McDonald, 1996).

This framework is often applied in literature examining a broad range of conflicts. One reason for this is the versatility it offers in including a broad range of efforts in the analysis. However, considering the focus of this research specifically on the role of states and international organizations in water diplomacy, the two-track framework seems to be the most suitable one for analyzing Central Asia.

In the context of water diplomacy in Central Asia, the most important distinction made in this thesis will be that between direct political mediation (Track I) and technical assistance projects where funding is made available to help reform or strengthen water use and governance in the region in order to alleviate the underlying water shortage (Track II).

Track I activities	Track II activities
Direct negotiations	Technical assistance
Visits by government representatives	Cultural exchange
	Scientific exchange
	Institution building

Table 2: Examples of Track I and Track II activities

2.2. Discourse analysis

Discourses in this context refer to the ways in which patterns of language express, influence and act on the world. The relation between language and distribution of power in societies is often an important focus of discourse analysis. This is due to the fact that a discourse, as a conventional way of talking/writing, relates to a conventional way of thinking. The distribution of power therefore influences these conventions, while the conventions in turn influence how the distribution of power is perceived. The analysis of discourses in this sense does not refer to the linguistic analysis of how the structure of language works, but rather how patterns of ideas propagate through different media. (Johnstone, 2018)

There is a variety of different schools of thought on discourse analysis that differ in their aims and methods of analysis. One such contrast is between the 'descriptive' and the 'critical' approach. Within this divide the aim of the descriptive view may be summarized as "describing how language works in order to understand it", while the critical aim is "to apply this work to the world in some fashion" (Gee, 2014, p. 9). This divide can also be understood as being between those who believe "pure description is possible and desirable" and those who "encourage researchers to take a critical, self-conscious stance vis-á-vis their own work and the claims they make" due to "skepticism about the possibility of "scientific truth"" (Johnstone, 2018, p. 24).

While much of the foundational work on discourse analysis in the 1960s and 1970s was based on the descriptive view, the critical view has become more prominent over the last decades. This evolution has culminated in two contrasting approaches based on the work of Foucault and Fairclough. The methods based on their work are generally referred to as Foucauldian discourse analysis and Critical discourse analysis (CDA) respectively (Given, 2008).

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Foucauldian discourse analysis focuses on the relation between discourse and power relations. It is heavily influence by Foucault's work on how language influences the social world and the distribution of power between social groups (Foucault, 1971). The core of this theory is that the language that is used to describe the world both effects and is effected by the power relations of that world, such as economic and political concerns (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) similarly argues that social practice and linguistic practice cannot be seen separately but are one and the same (Fairclough, 1995). This is because language is the method of connecting ideologies to the social and physical world (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). CDA is specifically interested in the choices made in texts in order to map the social views embedded in those texts. In this sense it focuses more on the linguistic features of texts than the Foucauldian approach, which concerns itself more with the social theory behind a text (Fairclough, 2003).

In the end, the choice was made to let the analysis be informed by elements of both schools of thought. It is based myself in the main on CDA, in the sense of taking a primarily textual look at the sources up for analysis in order to map the ideas and views that they represent. Yet the Foucauldian view is also drawn from by allowing the context of my sources, like the relations and respective power of their publishers, to help shape conclusions.

3. Theories on Water Diplomacy

This chapter compares and contrasts two diverging ways of thinking about the use of diplomatic instruments with regards to water. It contrasts the goals of these different styles of water diplomacy and the means by which they hope to achieve them. The first holds that the water diplomat's role is to be a neutral mediator between the conflicting values and interests of the parties to a water conflict. The second expects the water diplomat to take an active part in bringing about a situation where water resources are exploited in line with the ideas of sustainable development. This distinction also roughly reflects the traditional thinking about different 'tracks' of diplomacy, with Track I representing direct government to government mediation, and Track II being the funding of activities to address the causes of a conflict, such as technical assistance.

3.1. The Water Diplomacy Framework (WDF)

Goal

One of the most cited theoretical frameworks for thinking about water diplomacy is that proposed by Islam and Susskind (2013). Their 'Water Diplomacy Framework' (WDF) argues that in conducting water diplomacy, a distinction should be made between an actor's values, interests, and tools. The focus on values here is interesting, since this is what complicates these disputes beyond the level of a purely technical one. Competing values, such as economic, political, cultural, ethical or ecological considerations, shape how actors see the dispute.

In this framework, they classify water problems based on two axes, which determine the type of decision making necessary to alleviate them. These axes are respectively the amount of consensus and uncertainty that exist about a certain water problem. They argue that, due to a proliferation of actors and interventions, most modern water disputes fall somewhere in the middle of both axes, constituting the 'zone of complexity'. These are characterized by the fact that "there is often little consensus about what the problem is, let alone how to resolve it" (Islam & Repella, 2015). This also means that the dispute does not have a clear technical or scientific answer. The goal of water diplomacy in this thinking is to bridge the differences in values between the parties and where possible to reduce the uncertainties that influence the perception of the problem and potential solutions.

Means

The 'complex decision-making' proposed by Islam and Susskind in response emphasizes an interdisciplinary look to map the values and interests of the parties involved. Seven recommendations are made for properly putting their framework into practice (Islam & Repella, 2015): 1) recognize that simple, complicated and complex water networks require different management approaches, 2) Ensure appropriate stakeholder representation, 3) Engage in scenario planning and joint fact-finding, 4) Emphasize value-creation, 5) Mediate informal problem-solving and seek consensus, 6) Commit to adaptive management and organizational learning, 7) Implement an appropriate management strategy for each network.

When it comes to implementation of the framework, the authors warn not to lose sight of the "contextual realities" of the dispute under consideration. This means that the values onto

which a water diplomacy process is anchored cannot be pre-specified. Due to the intertwined nature of science, policy, and politics, these values must be part of the mediation process. This is strengthened by an assessment from the research of Van Rees and Reed (2015), who argue against 'zero-sum' thinking that treats ecological water needs as an external constraint, rather than a value-based interest to be part of negotiations. They suggest to fix this by, for instance, including ecological phenomena as 'surrogate stakeholders'.

3.2.   Sustainable Development Diplomacy (SDD)

Goal

In recent years, another way of thinking about resource diplomacy has gained traction, which takes the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a starting point. This theory of 'Sustainable Development Diplomacy' (SDD) has been elaborated on by Moomaw et al. (2017). In this work it is argued that 'traditional diplomacy' that evolved to resolver interstate conflicts is no longer adequate to attend to the problems of the modern world. These modern problems are taken to be represented by the SDGs, which were agreed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 (United Nations, 2015). Prominent among these are global climate goals, but also those relating to sustainable and equitable water use.

Moomaw argues that SDD constitutes not merely the negotiating of an initial agreement relating to the SDGs, but also all phases towards its implementation. In taking this approach, its goal is defined as the implementation of the SDGs.

Means

The paper lists seven 'diagnostics' by which to implement this Sustainable Development Diplomacy (Moomaw, Bhandary, Kuhl, & Verkooijen, 2017, pp. 75-78):

1) reframed issues into a sustainable development context instead of framing them as environmental, social or economic problems
2) utilized mutual gains negotiation techniques to benefit as many state and non-state parties as possible while effectively addressing the issue of concern
3) engaged multiple state and non-state stakeholders
4) assembled the relevant scientific, economic and political information to identify the underlying causes of a problem or issue
5) created a portfolio of actions that can address the stated goals at a level of complexity that is compatible with the complexity of the problem
6) identified the levels of political and societal organization where intervention is most acceptable and governance will be most effective and accountable
7) instruments are living and flexible and able to respond effectively to new information and the evolving context as actions are taken

3.3.   Conclusion: pre-set goals vs. conflict reduction

There are some striking similarities between the two schools. One similarity is that both theories stress the importance of involving a wide range of stakeholders. Both seem to accept that it is impossible or unwise to attempt water diplomacy in a setting that represents exclusively national governments.

Both also emphasize that it is necessary to move beyond the *positions* adopted by parties and focus on their *interests and values*. The idea that this will result in agreements that are a net positive for both parties follows from the theory of mutual gains negotiation (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011). However, even within this shared line of thought a clear difference becomes immediately obvious. Moomaw argues that for SDD the mutual gains analysis has to supplement human needs with ecological needs. Although a similar approach is mentioned in relation to the WDF, taking such ecological needs as *a priori* constraints on negotiations is specifically warned against.

This distinction in fact points towards the main difference between the two schools of thought. While Moomaw's Sustainable Development Diplomacy takes the implementation of the SDGs as the starting point of any diplomatic endeavor, Islam & Susskind's Water Diplomacy Framework cautions against such pre-specification of values.

It could be argued that while SDD is appropriate for bilateral relations of countries who have identified sustainable development as an interest of theirs, it is less appropriate for mediation efforts. This is because rather than bringing parties closer together, it only adds actors, values, and therefore complexity to the negotiations. Bringing the sustainability agenda into the conflict-resolution agenda as SDD does carries the risk of undermining the effectiveness of mediation. Bridging the existing complexities of issues that cross many boundaries and involve differing values is, by contrast, a focus of the WDF (Islam & Susskind, 2018).

4. Discourse Analysis

This chapter maps the discourses propagated by the Central Asian governments to describe the region's water crisis. As mentioned in chapter 1.5. this discourse analysis consists of three stages: the selection of sources, the coding of themes, and the analysis phase. It shows that there is indeed a spectrum of discourses that Central Asian governments propagate about the Central Asian water crisis. As was expected, there is a difference between upstream and downstream discourses. More surprising is the finding that there is a difference between the discourses aimed at domestic and international audiences respectively.

4.1. Selection of sources

The discourse analysis is based on sources that represent the discourses that the relevant state actors in Central Asia propagate. The categories that are taken to fit this description are:

- Policy documents and publications by relevant ministries
- Speeches by (high-ranked) government officials
- Media reports (newspaper and/or TV) insofar as these media can be said to represent a government perspective, either through direct government control or because of the use of direct quotations by government officials.

The search as described in chapter 1.5. yielded the following sources. The full list of sources analyzed can be found in annex 1.

Type	Uzbekistan	Tajikistan
Government publications	4	4
Speeches	3	5
Media reports	3	1

Table 3: Sources analyzed for Uzbekistan and Tajikistan

4.2. Coding of themes

In coding the themes, a structure is used that corresponds to the method used in analyzing the theories regarding water diplomacy in chapter 3. This means thinking separately in terms of the stated goals and the means of the actors. First several main categories of *values* associated with water were defined. Secondly, one general theme was added to represent the *means* actors are willing to employ in pursuit of those values.

Values

As explored above, the core of water disputes is often not merely a technical problem of allocation, but a problem of clashing values about water. Because of this the idea of 'water values' offers an appropriate frame for thinking about the separate discourses propagated about water in Central Asia.

The value-themes that were searched for in the sources are based primarily on themes that were encountered often during the preliminary literature study for this research. The ideas of sustainability and equity in relation to water are prevalent in relation to water (Islam &

Repella, 2015) (Wolf, 1999). Supplemented with commonly encountered specific values, the following themes were chosen:

- **Sustainability**: relating to the long-term tenability of regional water arrangements.
- **Equity**: relating to ideas of fairness and the 'no-harm principle' in division of water resources
- **Ecology**: relating to the conservation of the natural world
- **Economy**: relating to economic interests and development through (for instance) agriculture, industry or power generation
- **Culture**: relating to a sense of identity or heritage
- **Politics**: relating to international relations and geopolitical strengths and weaknesses

Means

Because of the wide variety of possible means to be referred to and the fact that the focus is initially primarily on the different values, it was decided to start with only one theme to represent the means category. Working with the idea of evolutionary coding, the possibility of adding sub-categories was held open in case, in the analysis phase, the single 'means' theme turned out not to adequately reflect differences encountered in the sources.

4.3. Analysis: Four distinguishable discourses

The discourse analysis yielded four clear discourses, which can be plotted on two axes. The first axis covers the difference between upstream and downstream interests. The second axis covers differences between sources aimed at international versus domestic audiences. The graph below shows the main identifying traits of these four discourses. The next sections will further explore the findings and how the two axes inform a framework for thinking about Central Asia's water discourses.

In discussing the features of the discourses examples are included to aid understanding. These should not be taken as representative of the entire text or discourse, but to give an idea of the points made. These examples are imperfect in representing the discourses, if only because a textual example can't show the *absence* of a topic in a source. For English sources, the quotes are presented as in the original, including errors. For Russian sources, the examples shown have been translated to English. The examples are presented with the number of the source they are from and the discourse they represent. Which source corresponds to these numbers can be found in annex 1.
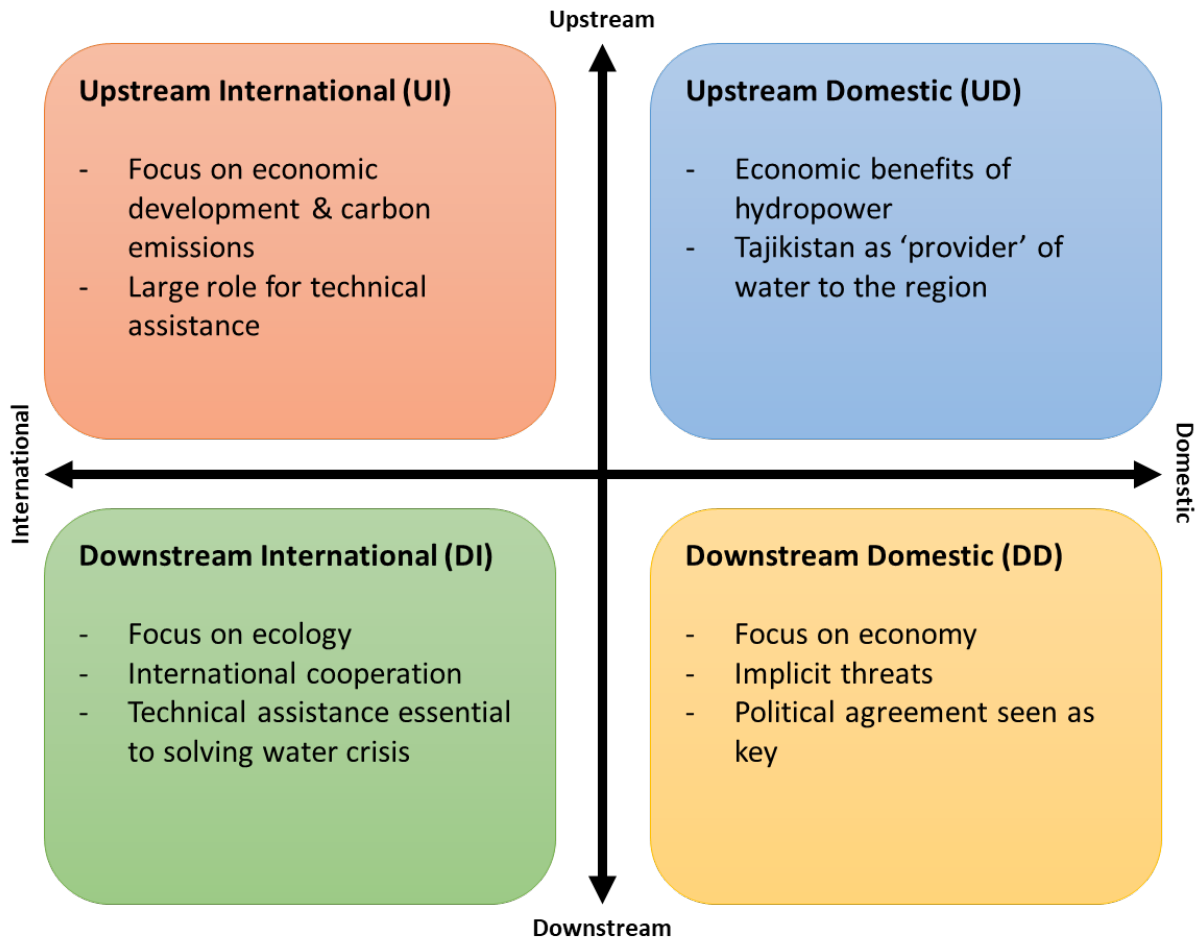
Figure 3: four distinguishable discourses on Central Asian water resources (Source: own work)

The international/domestic contrast

The most surprising finding is the difference in discourses for international and domestic audiences. This became clear when looking at sources in different languages. English-language publication are often aimed at international audiences, while Russian ones are primarily domestic. Therefore, the striking and unexpected difference in tone and contents of sources in the different languages jumped out and hinted at different discourses for different audiences.

It should be noted that the language divide does not map exactly to the domestic/international discourse divide. Sometimes, Russian-language reports are published of meetings with international visitors or journalists. Conversely, an English translation of a speech to local constituents may be published online. This means that, while language is an important indicator of audience, it is not the only one. In order to help interpret the intended audience of a source, the language was combined with the context in which the source was published or spoken. These data can be found in annex 2.

The main feature of this axis concerns the appropriate means of achieving water-related goals. While both international discourses espouse the value of international frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals, and UN conventions and mediation, the domestic

discourses resort to implicit threats of sanctions and military measures. Compare the following:

> "Uzbekistan supports the draft conventions on the use of water resources of the Amudarya and Syrdarya river basins, which were developed by the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy."

From source UZ-3, DI discourse

> "The countries who have lots of resources and comparative advantages will not be able to use them in isolation. A country will not be able to deliver its energy resources and goods to global markets by itself, bypassing its neighbors. … Any major regional projects of a transport, communication and energy nature are impossible without active interaction between the countries of the region and a high level of their integration"

From source UZ-4, DD discourse (translated from Russian)

> "We are confident that an implementation of the new decade at the national, regional and international levels will contribute to the achievement of the water-related sustainable development goals and will help to preserve this invaluable resource for future generations."

From source TJ-1, UI discourse

> "Constructive cooperation … can guarantee a military aspect will never arise"

From source TJ-4, UD discourse (translated from Russian)

Also, there is a clear difference in the tracks of diplomacy that receive priority. The international discourses prioritize track II activities such as technical assistance programs as a way to alleviate the water crisis:

> "The government of Uzbekistan … initiated the establishment of a special trust fund for the Aral Sea … It's (sic) main task will be to coordinate efforts and implement targeted programs in the following key areas: … The use of limited water resources in the region, especially the transboundary waterways … in the interests of all the countries in the region."

From source UZ-1, DI discourse

In the domestic discourses there is a more explicit sense that these are not enough to solve the crisis and that a solution can only by achieved through political agreement of regional capitals, classic track I diplomacy.

> "No country individually, even using the best water saving technologies, can solve this problem on its own"

From source UZ-4, DD discourse (translated from Russian)

The upstream/downstream contrast

The findings of the analysis support the expectation that there would be a difference between upstream and downstream discourses on water in Central Asia. In the context of sustainability, the downstream discourses place more emphasis on ecology and water savings (SDG 6), while the upstream discourses emphasize sustainable economic development (SDG 1) and hydropower as an avenue to lowering carbon emissions (SDG 7):

> *"I would like to once again draw the Assembly's attention to one of the most acute environmental problems of our time: the Aral Sea catastrophe. I am holding a map showing the Aral Sea tragedy — I believe that words are not necessary."*

From source UZ-3, DI discourse

> *"Climate change accelerates melting of glaciers that brings about the rise of water level in rivers, which, in its turn, has a negative impact on the main sectors of national economy."*

From source TJ-1, UI discourse

> *"The capacity of Tajikistan to use industry - the main source of carbon dioxide emission- is not that huge, and 98 percent of the country's energy is produced at hydroelectric power stations that generate environmentally sound energy."*

From source TJ-1, UI discourse

However, it is interesting to note that this contrast is stronger in the international discourses than the domestic ones. While the Upstream Domestic discourse still emphasizes economic development, the Downstream Domestic discourse also emphasizes economic development rather than ecology. This calls into question the strength of the downstream governments' commitment to ecological goals.

> *"The environmentally friendly electricity produced here [in the Rogun hydropower plant] will fully satisfy Tajikistan's needs for electricity and will give a serious impetus to the development of the country's national economy."*

From source TJ-5, UD discourse (translated from Russian)

> *"…economic growth depends largely on effective water management, the introduction of economic mechanisms that ensure sustainable development of agriculture and protection of the environment."*

From source UZ-5, DD discourse (translated from Russian)

Points of agreement

Finally, some themes do not show major variations across the different discourses. First among these is culture. All discourses feature water as a part of Central Asian history and culture, though generally not as a major theme. Water is obliquely linked to the development of the region's civilizations, invoking a sense of pride and urgency in preserving them. This may partly be an attempt by those in government to use water to play identity politics in order to strengthen domestic political positions.

> *"The Aral Sea, which was once a unique, beautiful and one of the largest closed water reservoirs in the world."*

From source UZ-1, DI discourse

> *"Central Asia has always strongly depended on water resources"*

From source UZ-4, DD discourse (translated from Russian)

Figure 4: The Sari Khosor waterfalls in Tajikistan (Source: TJ-4)

From source TJ-4, UD discourse. (Though not a textual fragment, this picture of the Sari Khosor waterfalls in Tajikistan, complete with rainbow, clearly emphasizes their beauty and is meant to evoke an emotional response. As such it seems relevant to include as an example.)

Secondly no major differences appear on the topic of equity. All discourses feature the goal of 'fair division' of water and 'equitable agreement' in some form:

> *"[President Mirziyoyev] defined the current policy of Uzbekistan as follows: "Do not move away from acute issues, but seek reasonable compromises.""*

From source UZ-4, DD discourse (translated from Russian)

25

> *"Only mutually beneficial cooperation in terms of rational use of water resources will provide sustainable water supply to the population and countries of the region, improving the environment."*

From source TJ-2, UI discourse

However, the practical use of this consensus should not be overstated, because all discourses also imply that the other party is the one exceeding its fair share:

> *"The construction of large hydrotechnical and irrigation facilities on the watercourses of the Aral Sea Basin in the past, without taking into account the environmental consequences, created the conditions for dessication of one of the most beautiful reservoirs on the planet."*

From source UZ-1, DI discourse

> *"The construction of such grandiose hydro-technical … may create a threat of devastating man-made catastrophe."*

From source UZ-7, DI discourse

> *"They're going for the Guinness world record, it would seem, but we're talking here about the lives of millions of people who cannot live without water."*

From source UZ-10, DD discourse

> *"Around 60% of water resources in Central Asia are formed in the territory of the country. However, deficiency of advanced infrastructure and limited financial capacity do not allow to fully use the water resources for the benefit of the economy of the country."*

From source TJ-2, UI discourse

Evolutionary coding

In the end, it was not necessary to add new themes or sub-themes to the analysis. The chosen themes offered an adequately clear variety of topics for analysis to distinguish distinct discourses. However, the 'sustainability' theme turned out not to be a useful one for analysis. Being too much of a 'catch-all' word, nearly every discourse fragment that could be applied to it could *also* be applied to another theme. This appears to be a consequence of the fact that no actor is interested in an 'unsustainable' solution, in the sense that they all want their values and interests to be taken into account in a durable and long-lasting fashion. Precisely these differing values and interests do make it so that the definition of sustainability they each prioritize differs. These different definitions were covered by the other value-themes analyzed. This made the 'sustainability' theme somewhat redundant in analysis.

5. Comparing to water diplomacy in practice

This chapter compares the findings of the theoretical analysis from chapter 3 and the discourse analysis from chapter 4 to the practice of Swiss and German water diplomats in Central Asia. It shows that the values and assumptions reflected in publications on the Swiss program align most closely with the Central Asian discourses for the international audiences. The German program skews closer to the domestic discourses. It also shows that these two programs appear to reflect different theoretic schools of thought on water diplomacy. The German and Swiss programs embrace the mediator's role and the donor's role respectively. The contrast between the two programs also reflects that between track I and track II diplomacy.

5.1. Choice of programs

The review of literature (Sehring, Ziganshina, Krasznai, & Stoffelen, 2020) led to the following list of relevant programs:

Name	Main funders	Period	Track 1	Track 2
Berlin Process	DE	2008 - present	Y	
Blue Peace Central Asia	CH	2014 - 2022	Y	
United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA)	UN	2007 - present	Y	
"Central Asia + Japan" Dialogue	JP	2004 - present	Y	
Central Asia Energy Water Development Program (CAEWDP)	WB, UK, CH, EU	2009 - 2017	Y	Y
Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization Project (CAHMP)	WB	2011 - present		Y
Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Program for Aral Sea Basin (CAMP4ASB)	WB	2015 - present		Y
Aral Sea Basin Program 1 (ASBP-1)	US, NL, EU, WB, UNDP	1994 - 1996		Y
Aral Sea Basin Program 2 (ASBP-2)	CA5, UNDP, WB, ADB, US, CH, JP, FI, NO	2003 - 2010		Y
Aral Sea Basin Program 3 (ASBP-3)	CA5, WB, DE, ADB, CH, EU, US	2011 - 2015		Y

Table 4: Third-party water diplomacy programs in Central Asia.[1]

It can be seen that most water diplomacy projects in Central Asia are focused on technical assistance, thereby constituting the track II side of water diplomacy. For the purposes of this thesis, the German-led Berlin Process and Swiss-led Blue Peace Central Asia Program were chosen for further analysis, since they appeared to be most strongly concerned with track I diplomacy.

Focusing on track I diplomacy offers an interesting opportunity for analysis, because this type of water diplomacy is directly engaged with trying to find common ground between the values and interests of the Central Asian governments. This work is more closely related to the discourses and values identified in chapter 4 than that of track II diplomacy. A second reason

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[1] Abbreviations: ADB = Asian Development Bank, CA5 = Central Asian Five (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), CH = Switzerland, DE = Germany, EU = European Union, FI = Finland, JP = Japan, NL = Netherlands, NO = Norway, UK = United Kingdom, UN = United Nations, UNDP = United Nations Development Program, US = United States, WB = World Bank

for focusing on these two projects is that they offer a decently sized and varied body of sources for analysis of their underlying goals and assumptions. This allows for a better analysis of relevant patterns. The relevant sources found and analyzed can be found in annex 1. The choice for the Swiss and German programs does mean that the focus is exclusively on *European* third-party water diplomacy, which means the potential for comparison of cultural effects on the mediator's side is limited. Also, the analysis in chapter seems to show that the Central Asian governments propagate different discourses to different audiences. It is possible that the same is true for Switzerland and Germany, but that is not the aim of this analysis. Here, only the publications about the specific water diplomacy programs are compared to the Central Asian discourses and water diplomacy theories.

5.2. Analysis

Blue Peace Central Asia

Blue Peace Central Asia is a water diplomacy program run by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation that has been active since 2014. Through this program Switzerland pursues both the goal of conflict prevention and the goal of sustainable access to resources formulated in its foreign policy strategy (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, 2016). The image that emerges from the source documents is one of a program that uses mediation and negotiation to supplement the technical assistance work that the Swiss government is doing through the ASBP. In this way, the political track I activities are tied very narrowly to the Swiss role in technical assistance track II activities.

> *"On the one hand, it strengthens diplomacy by building on traditional mediation skills. On the other hand, it provides specialist knowledge that is available in Switzerland in cross-border water management and in the joint operation of systems on watercourses."*

From source CH-3 (translated from German)

> *"In addition to the regional approach, activities in the individual countries are also supported"*

From source CH-1 (translated from German)

In the sources the emphasis lies with the interest of the water from an ecological/sustainability point of view. The human (economic) interests of the water users are accorded a lower prominence. The Swiss also focus on equity principles and technical assistance as avenues for finding a solution to the crisis.

> *"It couldn't be saved: the Aral Sea is a monument to a man-caused ecological catastrophe."*

From source CH-2 (translated from German)

> *"And so, water as a resource should be looked after, protected and justly divided among the countries."*

From source CH-1 (translated from German)

This focus on sustainable development, constructive cooperation and on technical assistance clearly reflect the Central Asian international discourses better than the domestic ones. The emphasis on ecological values also implies more alignment with the downstream international discourse than with the upstream international one.

Berlin Process

The Berlin Process is one of the older third-party water diplomacy programs in Central Asia. Started by the Germans in 2008 and having been carried on by successive German governments, it aims to improve regional water cooperation. The German efforts at mediation are focused more explicitly on achieving political agreement between the Central Asian governments. In earlier phases of the process, it included a larger technical assistance component aimed at better water management and the strengthening of institutions. But in the most recently launched phase of the process the emphasis turns to political cooperation and mediation between the Central Asian governments.

> *"In Phase I (2008-2011) the focus was on political advice and the strengthening of institutions for the management of cross-border rivers... In Phase III (2015-2017) … the aim is to institutionalize an independently managed water cooperation between the Central Asian states."*

From source DE-2 (Translated from German)

While mentioning ecology, the source documents about the Berlin Process do not emphasize ecological goals as clearly as the Swiss Blue Peace Central Asia program does. Instead, there is an emphasis on the need for agreement between the states considering their respective human interests. Germany is presented as a facilitator for reaching this agreement.

> *"The water of the rivers, especially the two large rivers Amu Darya and Syr Darya, is the basis for drinking water supply, for irrigated agriculture and for generating energy from hydropower."*

From source DE-2 (translated from German)

> *"Sensible and fair distribution mechanisms between the various types of use - agriculture, energy and sanitation - would also have to be found."*

From source DE-3 (translated from German)

By placing more emphasis on the respective economic and political interests of the Central Asian countries and less on ecological values, the Berlin Process actually skews a bit closer to the values projected in the domestic discourses than the Swiss program. Similarly, the shifting focus from large-scale technical assistance to direct political talks also brings the German program more in line with the ideas of the domestic discourses. However, its focus on cooperation and mediation rather than achieving goals through threats and power struggle, clearly reflects the international discourses.

5.3.   Reflection on water diplomacy theories

Based on these findings, we can compare the two programs to the theories of water diplomacy outlined in chapter 3. It appears that the Swiss have given the Sustainable Development Goals, with an emphasis on ecological ones, a prominent place in their mediation efforts. This shows that the Swiss program adheres closer to the thinking of Sustainable Development Diplomacy. Conversely, the German program attempts a more neutral position of understanding and facilitating talks about the respective interests of the Central Asian countries. This approach better reflects the Water Diplomacy Framework.

The Water Diplomacy Framework approach is based on the idea that the water diplomat should understand the interests and underlying values of the parties involved and try to find common ground within these. The findings of chapters 4 and 5 imply that there is a risk to this approach of misunderstanding the values of discussion partners. The difference in domestic and international discourses means that, if a water diplomat does not adequately distinguish between what is being said to them and what is being said to domestic audiences, they can be left with a skewed view of the actual values and interests to be mediated.

Sustainable Development Diplomacy is based on the goal of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. This goes beyond merely having an agreement on the topic, but follows the whole path of implementation. The findings above also imply a risk to this approach. When the negotiation partners claim in their international discourse that technical assistance is essential in order for them to implement the SDG's, Sustainable Development Diplomacy implies that that assistance should be offered. However, these partners' domestic discourses imply that they do not actually believe technical assistance to help solve the larger issues. In this case a lack of thorough examination of the domestic discourses can lead to technical assistance funds being spent in a non-productive way.

5.4.   Conclusion

While the programs analyzed were chosen to reflect track I diplomacy, it turns out that the Swiss actually tie their diplomatic efforts quite closely to their technical assistance track II efforts, reflecting the idea of Sustainable Development Diplomacy. The German mediation effort appears more detached from technical assistance, reflecting the Water Diplomacy Framework.

Both of these approaches carry the risk of listening insufficiently to partner governments' domestic discourse. It is noteworthy in this regard that the program that more heavily leans on track II activities appears to reflect the domestic discourses *less*: while the Swiss program aligned most closely with the Central Asian discourses for the international audiences, the German program skews a bit closer to the domestic discourses. This could have something to do with the fact that there is a more tangible benefit to partner countries in being seen to align with a *donor's* priorities than with a *mediator's* priorities.

6. Conclusion, discussion and recommendations

6.1. Conclusion

This thesis asked whether lessons could be drawn for third-party water diplomats from the water narratives of Central Asian Governments. In order to do this, the practice of Swiss and German water diplomats was compared to water diplomacy theory and to the discourses propagated by the Uzbek and Tajik governments.

The first sub-question presents two ways of thinking about how water diplomacy can help alleviate conflict over scarce water resources that underlie this work. The first holds that the water diplomat's role is to be a neutral mediator between the conflicting values and interests of the parties to a water conflict. The second expects the water diplomat to take an active part in bringing about a situation where water resources are exploited in line with the ideas of sustainable development. This distinction also roughly reflects the traditional thinking about different 'tracks' of diplomacy, with Track I representing direct government to government mediation, and Track II being the funding of activities to address the causes of a conflict, such as technical assistance.

In analyzing the narratives of the Uzbek and Tajik governments in the second sub-question, this study showed that there is indeed a spectrum of discourses that Central Asian governments propagate about the Central Asian water crisis. As was expected, there is a difference between upstream and downstream discourses. This is mostly reflected in their differing ideas of what sustainability is supposed to mean and is shaped by their differing geographical assets. For instance, the downstream discourse frames sustainable development as preserving the ecology of the Aral Sea. The upstream discourse, however, frames sustainable development in terms of reduction of poverty and carbon emissions. In this way, contradictory positions are both framed as the sustainable option.

More surprising is the finding that there is a difference between the discourses aimed at domestic and international audiences respectively. Here it turns out that, for instance, the value of sustainable development, cooperative mediation and technical assistance programs are valued much more highly in the publications aimed at international audiences than in those aimed at domestic audiences.

The comparison of these discourses to the Swiss and German water diplomacy programs in Central Asia in the third sub-question showed that the values and assumptions reflected in publications on the Swiss program aligned most closely with the Central Asian discourses for the international audiences. The German program skews a bit closer to the domestic discourses. It also emerged that the two programs appear to reflect different theoretic schools of thought on water diplomacy. The German program embraces the mediator's role and emphasizes the need for political agreement. The Swiss, on the other hand, place a stronger emphasis on technical assistance and step into the donor's role. In this way the two programs respectively embrace track I and track II diplomacy. It seems that both of these approaches are vulnerable to a one-sided approach if the water diplomats only hear their partners' international discourse. However, the risk is higher for donors than for mediators,

since there is a clear benefit to partner countries in being seen to align with the donor's priorities.

To an extent, it can be expected in diplomacy and politics that in messages for different audiences, one gives emphasis to different aspects of one's position. In this case, however, the domestic and international messages about the value of cooperation and technical assistance appear to be contradictory, rather than complementary. It is impossible to say whether either of these messages is 'true' or 'false'. More importantly, this contradiction implies that these governments are attempting to satisfy differing political interests in the domestic and international arenas.

Propagating the international discourse aligning with donor interests and promoting technical assistance brings in funding from donors. That these ideas are not reflected in domestic discourses raises doubts about the commitment of the Central Asian governments to these ideas.

In conclusion, a lesson can be drawn: it is vital for water diplomats to carefully assess the values and political interests of their partner countries. This thesis has shown that the story partners tell to mediators and donors may not be the same that they tell their own people. In order to usefully mediate or effectively spend shrinking technical assistance budgets, it is essential to properly understand the thinking of partner governments. Partner countries are aware of donors' policy priorities and the findings of this thesis indicate that they shape their international messages in order to present themselves as aligning with those priorities. Their domestic publications cast doubt on their commitment to these priorities, however. Because of this one needs to watch out carefully for hearing what one wants to hear.

6.2.   Discussion

This section discusses the validity of the research and the factors that may have influenced its reliability.

The first and most obvious limitation is the number of documents analyzed and the assumption of their representativity. In total 30 source documents were thoroughly analyzed in order to shape my model of discourses and donor adherence to them. This seems to be enough to form a coherent picture, but may not be enough to capture a potential higher degree of nuance. As for representativity, it was attempted to include sources that represent multiple facets of and actors within the governments involved. This implies that the patterns seen throughout these sources can be taken to show a 'government-wide' discourse, rather than the ideas of any one individual. By necessity, all sources analyzed are in the public record. However, this is not a huge limitation, since the object of this thesis was not to discover the 'real' opinions and ideas of the Central Asian governments, but rather to map the discourses they propagate. Sources in the public record are particularly well-suited to this.

It is possible that the findings of the discourse analysis were shaped by the original themes chosen for analysis. Although the option was held open of adding more themes, the original set does shape how one interprets the sources in first reading. Furthermore, the first ideas of possible patterns already take hold after analyzing the first few documents. There is a risk

here of a degree of 'tunnel vision' that leads one to read what one expects to find in the sources analyzed subsequently. This risk was minimized by collecting meaningful discourse fragments in the analysis template, in order to lessen the impact of hunches and tunnel vision.

The fact that sources were analyzed in both English and Russian made it possible to recognize the difference in discourses for domestic and international audiences. However, the fact that the language of publication plays such a large role also points at another limitation of this research. While Russian is a much-used language in government and society in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, they also have their native Uzbek and Tajik languages. The author's lack of knowledge of these languages made it impossible to collect and study sources in these languages, so how their contents would relate to the established discourse model could not be assessed.

While the different publication languages were the first and strongest indicator of the audience of the sources, there is no strict 'firewall' between sources with domestic and international audiences. This means that, since the audience of a source is a matter of interpretation, the discourse that its contents are taken to represent is also a matter of interpretation. The risk here is one of circular reasoning, where a source is interpreted as being aimed at an international audience, simply because it appears to reflect the international discourse. This risk was minimized by explicitly separating the interpretation of the audience from the contents of the source. As mentioned in section 4.3. the factors used to interpret the audience (language, speaker, forum) are included in the list of sources in Annex 1.

In order to be able to take a more detailed look at the discourses, the discourse analysis was limited to one upstream state and one downstream state. While the selection of these countries is interesting in its own right, since they are the most active players in the Central Asian water crisis, this selection does mean caution is needed in drawing conclusions about the other Central Asian states. While it could be considered likely that other countries in the region will also have some degree of difference between their international and domestic discourses, this was not explicitly researched.

6.3.   Recommendations for further research

Firstly, the validity of this thesis' conclusions would be strengthened by expanding the analysis. Performing a similar discourse analysis on sources from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan could find out if the domestic/international discourse divide is merely typical for Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, or whether it is a wider-spread phenomenon. Expanding the search to sources in these countries' national languages would expand our understanding of the relation between language, audience and discourse.

In a similar fashion, better understanding of the relation between diplomatic efforts and government discourses would benefit from comparing the discourses to a wider range of diplomatic initiatives. The current comparison includes the German and Swiss initiatives, but excludes the Japanese mediation effort. This means that a potential cultural influence on the side of the water diplomats could not be accounted for in this research.

The assumption of static discourses and assumptions behind water diplomacy made it possible to map the current state of discourses in Central Asia. However, it does not enable an explanation of how these came to be. In that regard it may be interesting to perform a similar research over a longer timespan to see how these discourses developed. Were they immediately in place after independence or did the domestic/international contrast take time to develop? Or perhaps a similar contrast already existed before with the Soviet government in Moscow as the "international" audience?

Similarly, tracking the development of assumptions in water diplomacy projects more closely through time could be instructive. It is mentioned that the German-led Berlin Process appears to be shifting away from technical assistance and strengthening its political aspects. Whether this is in fact accurate and, if so, what caused this shift would strengthen understanding of the way donors might respond to being presented with different discourses.

By focusing on Track I diplomacy projects in Chapter 5, it was possible to make a decent analysis of the thinking of donors running international mediation efforts in Central Asia. However, this came at the cost of less attention for Track II projects. It was shown that the German program was exclusively a track I program, and mostly skewed to the domestic discourses. The Swiss mediation program, which tied itself more closely to track II activities, reflected the international discourses more strongly. This contrast raises further questions. For instance: are track II activities more vulnerable to losing sight of the difference between domestic and international discourses? To address this, it might be worth performing a deeper analysis of the track II programs. This could map what these programs hope to achieve and what these expectations are based on. This could shed light on how donors' expectations of the effectiveness of their technical assistance is influenced by the discourses of the recipient countries.

Finally, this thesis is based on the common opinion of literature on the Central Asian water crisis that argued that international mediation has not lived up to expectations. However, assessing the effects or effectiveness of the individual programs named and analyzed in this thesis went beyond its scope. This means that it cannot be strongly argue that there is a relation between the effectiveness of a program and the degree to which it incorporates the domestic or international discourses of the recipient. A more in-depth comparison of the effects of these different programs and the degree to which they reflect different discourses could strengthen this understanding.

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Annex 1 – List of discourse analysis source documents

This annex provides the details of the source documents analyzed in the discourse analysis. It lists the title of the document, the exact speaker or institution in whose name it was published, the forum or context in which it was published and the language of publication. Together, this gives an idea of the relevance and audience of the sources. The titles of non-English sources are listed in the original language with an English translation in brackets. All of these documents and the filled-in analysis templates are available and can be provided by the author.

Uzbekistan sources

Source	UZ-1
Title	The Problems of the Aral Sea and Water Resorses (sic) of Region
Speaker	Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan
Forum	Press release on Ministry website
Language	English
Date	2020
Link	https://mfa.uz/en/cooperation/aral/1406/
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	UZ-2
Title	В г.Женеве обсудили трансграничное водное сотрудничество *(In Geneva transboundary water cooperation was discussed)*
Speaker	Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan
Forum	Press release on website of Uzbek embassy to Kazakhstan
Language	Russian
Date	2019
Link	http://www.uzembassy.kz/ru/article/v-gzheneve-obsudili-transgranichnoe-vodnoe-sotrudnichestvo
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	UZ-3
Title	Speech by President Mirziyoyev to the United Nations General Assembly
Speaker	President Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan
Forum	Speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations
Language	English
Date	2017
Link	http://undocs.org/en/A/72/PV.5
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	UZ-4
Title	Шавкат Мирзиёев: «Центральная Азия — единый организм» *(Shavkat Mirziyoyev: "Central Asia is a single organism")*
Speaker	President Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan
Forum	Interview with Uzbek newspaper 'Gazeta'
Language	Russian
Date	2017

Link	https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2017/03/22/region/
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	UZ-5
Title	Вода – важный фактор обеспечения устойчивого развития нашего региона *(Water is an important factor in the securing of the sustainable development of our region)*
Speaker	National Information Agency of Uzbekistan
Forum	Press release on own website
Language	Russian
Date	2017
Link	http://uza.uz/ru/society/voda-vazhnyy-faktor-obespecheniya-ustoychivogo-razvitiya-nash-23-11-2017
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	UZ-6
Title	«Общерегиональному сотрудничеству в водопользовании альтернативы нет» — глава МИДа *("There is no alternative to regional cooperation in water use" – head of Foreign Ministry)*
Speaker	Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan
Forum	Newspaper article reporting remarks by Foreign Minister to a meeting of the International Press Club in Uzbekistan
Language	Russian
Date	2017
Link	https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2017/04/17/water/#!
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	UZ-7
Title	Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan A.Kamilov at the General Debates of the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly
Speaker	Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan
Forum	Speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations
Language	English
Date	2014
Link	https://mfa.uz/en/press/news/2014/09/2477/
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	UZ-8
Title	Press release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Speaker	Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan
Forum	Press release on Ministry website
Language	English
Date	2015
Link	https://mfa.uz/en/press/release/2015/08/4992/
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	UZ-9

Title	Address by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov at the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development Goals
Speaker	Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan
Forum	Speech to the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development Goals
Language	English
Date	2015
Link	https://mfa.uz/en/press/news/2015/09/5376/
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	UZ-10
Title	Uzbek leader sounds warning over Central Asia water disputes
Speaker	Then-President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov
Forum	Newspaper article reporting remarks by Karimov made in Kazakhstan
Language	English
Date	2012
Link	https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-centralasia-water/uzbek-leader-sounds-warning-over-central-asia-water-disputes-idUKBRE8860W420120907
Accessed	14-08-2020

Tajikistan sources

Source	TJ-1
Title	Statement by President Rahmon to the United Nations General Assembly
Speaker	President Rahmon of Tajikistan
Forum	Speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations
Language	English
Date	2017
Link	https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/72/tj_en.pdf
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	TJ-2
Title	Emomali Rahmon at the 7th World Water Forum
Speaker	President Rahmon of Tajikistan
Forum	Speech to the 7th World Water Forum
Language	English
Date	2015
Link	http://www.diplomatmagazine.nl/2015/05/03/the-president-of-the-republic-of-tajikistan-at-the-7th-world-water-forum/
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	TJ-3
Title	Глобальные водные инициативы Таджикистана *(Global water initiatives of Tajikistan)*
Speaker	Foreign Ministry of Tajikistan
Forum	Press release on website of Tajik embassy to Kyrgyzstan

Language	Russian
Date	2020
Link	http://www.tajikemb.kg/index.php?option=com_newscatalog&view=article&id=287&Itemid=140
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	TJ-4
Title	Водная дипломатия Таджикистана, которая объединяет мир *(Water diplomacy of Tajikistan, which unites the world)*
Speaker	Various Tajik officials
Forum	Newspaper article lauding the effects of Tajik water diplomacy and citing government officials
Language	Russian
Date	2020
Link	https://asiaplustj.info/ru/news/opinion/20200320/vodnaya-diplomatiya-tadzhikistana-kotoraya-obedinyaet-mir
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	TJ-5
Title	Международное десятилетие действий «Вода для устойчивого развития» *(International decade of action "Water for sustainable development")*
Speaker	Parliament of Tajikistan
Forum	Press release on own website
Language	Russian
Date	2018
Link	https://parlament.tj/ru/water_resources
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	TJ-6
Title	Address of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Leader of the Nation, His Excellency Emomali Rahmon to the Parliament of the Republic of Tajikistan
Speaker	President Rahmon of Tajikistan
Forum	Speech to the Parliament of Tajikistan
Language	English
Date	2016
Link	http://www.president.tj/en/node/13748
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	TJ-7
Title	Speech by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Leader of Nation, H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon Vakhsh River Diversion Ceremony
Speaker	President Rahmon of Tajikistan
Forum	Speech to builders of the Roghun Dam and official guests
Language	English
Date	2016
Link	http://www.president.tj/en/node/13409
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	TJ-8
Title	Speech at Roghun HPP First Unit Launch Ceremony
Speaker	President Rahmon of Tajikistan
Forum	Speech to builders of the Roghun Dam and official guests
Language	English
Date	2018
Link	http://www.president.tj/en/node/18899
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	TJ-9
Title	Meeting with the management and specialists of Roghun HPP and residents of Roghun town
Speaker	Office of the President of Tajikistan
Forum	Press release on own website
Language	English
Date	2016
Link	http://www.president.tj/en/node/13421
Accessed	14-08-2020

Source	TJ-10
Title	Start of construction of Roghun HPP dam
Speaker	Office of the President of Tajikistan
Forum	Press release on own website
Language	English
Date	2016
Link	http://www.president.tj/en/node/13416
Accessed	14-08-2020

Blue Peace Central Asia (Switzerland) sources

Source	CH-1
Title	Zentralasien (Kirgisistan, Tadschikistan, Usbekistan) *(Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan))*
Speaker	Foreign Ministry of Switzerland
Forum	Policy summary on own website
Language	German
Date	2020
Link	https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/de/home/laender/zentralasien.html
Accessed	24-08-2020

Source	CH-2
Title	"Blue Peace": Was kann Schweizer Wasserdiplomatie bewirken? *("Blue Peace": What can Swiss Water Diplomacy achieve?)*
Speaker	Swiss government officials
Forum	Swiss newspaper article citing various Swiss government officials

Language	German
Date	2018
Link	https://www.srf.ch/kultur/wissen/wochenende-wissen/wasserkonflikt-in-zentralasien-blue-peace-was-kann-schweizer-wasserdiplomatie-bewirken
Accessed	24-08-2020

Source	CH-3
Title	Wasser: Grundlage für nachhaltige Entwicklung und Frieden *(Water: bedrock for sustainable development and peace)*
Speaker	Swiss envoy for Water in Central Asia
Forum	Opinion article in a Swiss newspaper
Language	German
Date	2019
Link	https://dievolkswirtschaft.ch/de/2019/05/bonvin-06-2019/#:~:text=Daraus%20ist%20die%20Initiative%20%C2%ABBlue,und%20von%20%C3%A4usseren%20Einfl%C3%BCssen%20ab.
Accessed	24-08-2020

Source	CH-4
Title	Die Zusammenarbeit der Schweiz im Bereich Wasser *(Swiss development cooperation in the water field)*
Speaker	Swiss envoy for Water in Central Asia
Forum	Opinion article in a Swiss newspaper
Language	German
Date	2010
Link	https://dievolkswirtschaft.ch/de/2010/07/bonvin/
Accessed	24-08-2020

Source	CH-5
Title	Wichtiger Partner in der Wasserdiplomatie: Bundesrat Didier Burkhalter führt politische Gespräche in Kasachstan *(Important partner in water diplomacy: Member of the Federal Council Didier Burkhalter has political talks in Kazakhstan)*
Speaker	Federal Council of Switzerland
Forum	Press release on own website
Language	German
Date	2017
Link	https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/de/home/aktuell/news.html/content/eda/de/meta/news/2017/6/19/67104
Accessed	24-08-2020

Berlin Process (Germany) sources

Source	DE-1
Title	Aussenminister Westerwelle begrüsst "Berliner Erklärung" zur regionalen Zusammenarbeit in Zentralasien *(Foreign Minister Westerwelle greets the "Berlin Declaration" on regional cooperation in Central Asia)*
Speaker	Foreign Ministry of Germany

Forum	Press release on own website
Language	German
Date	2012
Link	https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/120308-gem-erklaerung-wasserkonferenz/249196
Accessed	24-08-2020

Source	DE-2
Title	Konferenz Wasser und gutnachbarschaftliche Beziehungen in Zentralasien *(Conference Water and good-neighborly relations in Central Asia)*
Speaker	Foreign Ministry of Germany
Forum	Press release on own website
Language	German
Date	2015
Link	https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/150907-konferenz-wasser-zentralasien/274574
Accessed	24-08-2020

Source	DE-3
Title	Wasserdiplomatie in Zentralasien *(Water diplomacy in Central Asia)*
Speaker	Foreign Ministry of Germany
Forum	Press release on website of German embassy to Uzbekistan
Language	German
Date	2018 according to publishing date on website, but the text speaks of 2012 in past tense and 2013 in future tense.
Link	https://taschkent.diplo.de/uz-de/themen/wirtschaft/-/1602468
Accessed	24-08-2020

Source	DE-4
Title	Grüne Zukunft für Zentralasien *(Green future for Central Asia)*
Speaker	Federal Government of Germany
Forum	Press release on own website
Language	German
Date	2020
Link	https://www.deutschland.de/de/topic/politik/green-central-asia-eine-berliner-initiative
Accessed	24-08-2020

Source	DE-5
Title	„Berlin-Prozess" in Zentralasien *("Berlin Process" in Central Asia)*
Speaker	Project coordinator for the German "Water in Central Asia" program (CAWa)
Forum	Interview with the magazine of the German Research Centre for Geosciences
Language	German
Date	2011
Link	https://gfzpublic.gfz-potsdam.de/rest/items/item_43181_1/component/file_43179/content
Accessed	24-08-2020

Annex 2 – Example template for source analysis

The full set of analyzed documents and the filled-in analysis templates are available and can be provided by the author.

Source	UZ-1
Title	The Problems of the Aral Sea and Water Resorses (sic) of Region
Speaker	Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan
Forum	Press release on Ministry website
Language	English
Date	2020
Link	https://mfa.uz/en/cooperation/aral/1406/
Accessed	14-08-2020

Theme: Sustainability

Discourse strand from source	Relevance
"To the great regret (sic), today it became obvious that the revival of the Aral Sea to its full condition is already impossible"	The text contains these clear references to the importance of sustaining the Aral Sea, lamenting the fact that this has already become impossible.
"The preservation of unique flora and fauna, which is currently on the verge of extinction"	The references to the preservation of flora and fauna suggest a wish to preserve the status quo ante.

General observations

Theme: Equity

Discourse strand from source	Relevance
"The use of limited water resources in the region … in the interests of all countries in the region and in strict accordance with the norms of international law"	A clear reference to the principle of equitable allocation of resources.

General observations
This is the only reference to equity in the text, though the litany of complaints about the effects to Uzbekistan of the drying out of the Aral Sea hint at an equity argument with regards to the other countries in the basin.

Theme: Ecology

Discourse strand from source	Relevance
"Unprecedented disaster and irreparable damage to the life and the population living there, the ecosystem and biodiversity of the Aral Sea"	One example of many strongly worded references to the ecological situation of the Aral Sea.

General observations
The strong language used throughout the (English-language) text regarding the ecological damage being done to the Aral Sea suggest that the Uzbek government understand the 'salaciousness' of the ecological topic and the potential it has to win them allies abroad.

Theme: Economy

Discourse strand from source	Relevance
"in its environmental, climatic, socio-economic and humanitarian consequences"	In the first paragraph, economic concerns are brought up.
"In addition, the Aral Sea played an important role in the development of the region's economy"	A large paragraph is dedicated to the economic concerns related to the disappearance of the Aral Sea.
"Fertile lands of the delta of the Amudarya and Syrdarya (sic) rivers … provided employment for more than 100 thousand people in the sphere of livestock, poultry farming, growing of agricultural crops."	The importance of agriculture (and the necessary water) to the Uzbek economy are repeatedly emphasized.

General observations

Theme: Culture

Discourse strand from source	Relevance
"Dessication of one of the most beautiful reservoirs on the planet"	Repeated references to the "beauty" of the Aral Sea imply a cultural attachment and concern beyond mere economic or ecological worries.
"The Aral Sea, which was once a unique, beautiful and one of the largest closed water reservoirs in the world"	Idem.

General observations

Theme: Politics

Discourse strand from source	Relevance
"In addition, the Aral Sea played an important role … in the formation of a stable social infrastructure"	The jobs that the Aral Sea provided are explicitly linked to the internal stability of Uzbekistan's political system.

General observations

Theme: Means of furthering values

Discourse strand from source	Relevance
"Initiated the establishment of a special trust fund for the Aral Sea … It's main task will be to coordinate efforts and implement targeted programs"	This text strongly emphasizes multilateral initiatives as the way forward to mitigate the Aral Sea crisis
"At the national level, Uzbekistan is undertaking great efforts to combat the negative effects of the dessication of the Aral Sea"	The text emphasizes Uzbekistan's efforts, in the context of a call to action towards other countries.

General observations
No references are made to bilateral deals or armed conflict. Uzbekistan appears to be showing that it wants to 'play by the rules' in settling the issue with its neighbors.

Macro-level observations (if applicable)