TREATIES AS ENDOGENOUS TO STATE INTERESTS: POLITICIZATION AND SECURITIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL WATER TREATIES IN BILATERAL RIPARIAN RELATIONSHIPS

By

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To my parents, who have unceasingly loved and supported me
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<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>Awami League, a left-leaning Bangladeshi political party.</td>
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<td>BNP</td>
<td>Bangladesh Nationalist Party, and right-leaning Bangladeshi political party.</td>
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<td>CS</td>
<td>Copenhagen School, a theoretical approach in the Security Studies subfield of political science that examines securitization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBM</td>
<td>Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river basin.</td>
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<td>GWST</td>
<td>Ganges Water Sharing Treaty.</td>
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<td>IGO</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations, a subfield of political science.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IWT</td>
<td>Indus Waters Treaty.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Nongovernmental Organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>Pakistani People’s Party, a progressive center-left Pakistani political party.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TVA</td>
<td>Tennessee Valley Authority.</td>
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This project examines conflict that occurs between states over shared rivers, where the states have already successfully negotiated a water-sharing treaty. Treaties are generally assumed to be inherently cooperative mechanisms. However, actual circumstances refute this. This study explores political conflict over rivers in treaty-governed interstate relationships through two case studies in South Asia: India and Pakistan, and India and Bangladesh. I argue that the way international water treaties function within interstate relationships is endogenous to state interests, and that their efficacy is related to political contestation over state identity. In particular, state identity determines whether water issues are politicized or securitized. In the latter case, securitization serves to depoliticize interstate relationships over shared water, but not in the way that securitization theory would predict, i.e., by putting the issue outside of the realm of "normal" politics so that it can be opened to emergency measures. Rather, it serves to "stagnate" the issue so that no real political progress can be made in resolving disputes. My dissertation advances our understanding of the relationship between state interests and how treaties function, as well as moving the analysis of international water
treaties beyond the binary and oppositional framework of "conflict or cooperation." This analysis will help us better understand why and how water treaties might fail in a world of increasing water scarcity, and how we can navigate future conflicts.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

Beginnings

The genesis of this project was a series of elite interviews I conducted in India and Bangladesh in 2007 and 2008 on behalf of a Washington, DC-based think tank. I was working on a project whose goal was to understand transnational security challenges from the perspectives of people in the regions in which the challenges are located. In South Asia, these challenges included such issues as crossborder terrorism and shared water resources.

The focus of the water-related research was whether conflict will arise between the states of the region as water scarcity grows due to increased pressure on existing water resources and possible decreases in water resources associated with climate change and the melting of the Himalayan glaciers, which feed all the major river systems flowing south. The project’s interest was possible future conflict, and it was not thought that much, if any, conflict then existed over shared water in South Asia. After all, the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) signed between Pakistan and India in 1960 (with the World Bank as a third signatory) is thought to be one of the most successful international water treaties in the world. At the time of its negotiation, water was considered to be a major possible source of war between the two states, as most of the tributaries of the Indus basin system flow through the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir. The treaty took a decade to negotiate even with substantial guidance and mediation by the World Bank. It is considered successful in that it has prevented a water war between the otherwise antagonistic states (although it has failed in its original goal to forestall all wars between Pakistan and India).
Bangladesh and India also have a water treaty, the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty (GWST) signed in 1996 to govern water sharing of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river system, and it is viewed as similarly successful in US policy circles in that it exists. That is to say, it was negotiated and signed, and functions to allow a harmonious relationship between the two states over the potentially very conflict-prone issue of the allocation of a shared river. Water is an existential resource and thus tends to elicit a zero-sum analysis of interstate relationships over its sharing. Absent a treaty, and in the absence of any successful negotiations, surely chaos would reign: it would be inevitable that two (or more) states would eventually have a war to settle the issue of allocation. As history has shown, states are much more likely—indeed almost always likely—to negotiate a solution to share water resources. Thus, a water treaty, insofar as it is the result of successful negotiations, is seen as being in opposition to a water war. A treaty equals cooperation.

What became immediately apparent during my interviews in Bangladesh, however, was that the GWST is not viewed as a fair or successful treaty there. The prevailing view was that Bangladesh gets the poorer part of the deal, and that India is “stealing” water upstream—taking more than its fair share. This perspective was echoed again and again in all the interviews, which were conducted with newspaper editors, politicians, policy analysts, academics, and hydrologists. The gap between how the treaty is viewed in Bangladesh and how it is viewed in the United States (at least in the policy analysis circles I was a part of) was substantial. Water sharing between Bangladesh and India was not a future problem in Bangladesh: it was a current one. What I was hearing was that the GWST had not “solved” the conflict between the two
states, and indeed that the treaty itself was a source of ongoing antipathy, at least on the Bangladeshi side. Subsequent informal conversations I had with Pakistani individuals in the United States, including the then Pakistani ambassador to the United States, confirmed that similarly negative views are held in Pakistan toward India over water and the IWT.

This raised a number of questions. First, why is there such a difference in how interstate water relationships and these water treaties are viewed in the West and in the region? Does the fact that the treaties are viewed negatively in Pakistan and Bangladesh mean that they are not working as they should, or are not “successful” treaties? If there already exists significant antagonism and disputes over water between hegemonic India and its downstream riparian neighbors, what can we expect as water scarcity in the region grows? These were the questions that drove me to pursue a PhD, as I felt the appropriate analytical tools and opportunity for in-depth research were not available to me in the policy analysis world. I soon discovered that despite academia’s greater breadth and depth of research into water conflict, academic perspectives tend to echo those of the policy world in terms of seeing treaties as a solution to conflict over shared water resources. This project emerged as an attempt not only to answer the above questions, but also as a contribution to the academic literature in a way that expands our understanding of water-related conflict and how international water treaties work.

**Overview of Project**

This project examines an area of research that has received little academic focus: conflict that occurs between states over a shared water resources, specifically rivers, where the states have already successfully negotiated a water-sharing treaty. An
international river treaty is generally seen to have a function of enabling two or more riparian states to cooperate by prescribing iterated interactions that over time reduce transaction costs and increase trust (Zawahri 2009, 7). According to this perspective, treaties are inherently cooperative mechanisms because they help states avoid what would otherwise be a conflictual relationship: that of attempting to establish sovereign ownership over a resource that pays no heed to sovereign boundaries.

Conflict, in this conceptualization, does not and cannot occur where a treaty is in existence, because “conflict” in International Relations (IR) literature is what occurs in the absence of some form of governance, i.e., it is the (violent) chaos that ensues in an inherently anarchical international system. Those who study conflict and cooperation over water within this disciplinary perspective find that there is no conflict over water. Rather, there is a plethora of cooperation. International water treaties abound. Ostensibly, it would seem that states really want to cooperate over shared water. It is so clearly in their interest to do so, and despite or perhaps because of the existential nature of water resources, states do cooperate.

This perspective, however, does not allow for an understanding of conflict that occurs despite, or because of, a treaty. When conflict is coded as “war” and “cooperation” as “a treaty,” the study of hydropolitics isn’t about politics at all. Rather, it becomes the study of institutions as stable events that occur (are negotiated) and remain stable over time (as long as they are adhered to). A whole type of conflict, in this case, becomes invisible. Political conflict, the type that occurs over time and itself becomes a type of informal institution, is elided. The concern here is that by not problematizing these conceptualizations of conflict, cooperation, and formal institutions
such as treaties, we are missing a very important dimension of how treaties work within the political relationships between states, and what these political relationships mean for the working of the treaties. There is a consensus that freshwater resources could become a major source of conflict in the coming decades because of the effects of climate change and increasing pressure on existing sources. However, as this study shows, conflict—in the form of ongoing disputes, antagonism, and threat—is already happening, and we would be wise to pay attention. It is imperative that we find ways to analyze and understand this conflict and what its implications are moving forward into this water-scarce future.

While a number of scholars are beginning to problematize the conflict/cooperation binary, the task of studying the politics of water remains a difficult one. While some scholars have created frameworks for analyzing political interactions over water (for example, the Hydro-Hegemony and TWINS approaches discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2), there are few studies that attempt to look at the politics of how water treaties work. This is probably because when studying treaties, the temptation is always to focus on their content. After all, that is their whole point for existing: to prescribe iterated behaviors that lower transaction costs and create trust. A treaty, in this sense, represents a sigh of relief: now that we have that water-sharing situation settled, we can move on to other governing challenges. And indeed, from the high-level view of IR and even policy analysis, any treaty that states negotiate and adhere to is a success. Treaties that “work” are treaties that exist.

Scholars and policy analysts do recognize that treaties do not solve every problem. States that have negotiated water treaties still have disputes. But they are not
having wars over water, so the treaties must be working. Historical studies have shown, however, that wars are exceedingly unlikely if not entirely so, and without any evidence to the contrary, we must move into the future assuming, albeit cautiously, that this will remain the case. We cannot base our understanding of hydropolitics or our predictions for the future on assumptions that are purely hypothetical in addition to being unlikely.

The fact that riparian countries do not have a war over water is simply not a good criterion for judging the efficacy of a water treaty. And, considering that states generally do adhere to treaty prescriptions, and that abrogation is almost as rare as wars over water, compliance is also perhaps not the best way to judge a treaty’s success.

What is needed is an approach that is at once broader and deeper. There are several risks to this, of course. The first is that once you begin to look beyond the ambit of a treaty’s formal prescriptions, you find that often the way a treaty works has little to do with these prescriptions or even the treaty itself. The second is that going broader and deeper can make a study unwieldy and unfocused. In this study, I address the first of these challenges by expanding our understanding of what a treaty is, and what it does. While a treaty is a formal document, it is also a political one. As such, there are de facto interactions that arise alongside its de jure prescriptions. Additionally, a treaty itself is more than these prescriptions: it is also a representation of the international norms having to do with treaties, for example good-faith negotiations, trust in institutions, and a belief in the importance of good standing as a member of the international community. A water treaty, therefore, has a broader impact than its prescriptions. In terms of addressing the second challenge above—the possible unwieldiness of a project such as this one—I pay careful attention to defining terminology.
(see the section later in this chapter), and creating a strong theoretical framework and methodological approach (outlined in Chapter 2). This both delimits the study and gives it focus.

Actual circumstances refute the assumption that treaties and the relationships they prescribe are inherently cooperative. States often have disputes over shared rivers despite the existence of a treaty, and having successfully negotiated a treaty over a particular river does not necessarily mean states will be able to do so over other shared rivers. Additionally, it is not unknown for states to issue threats of violent conflict over shared water even when a treaty exists. International Relations literature gives us few tools with which to understand how disputes and conflict (or the threat of conflict) can still occur between states that have created formalized cooperative plans. This study aims to address this deficit. Its main research questions are:

1. What kind of conflict arises between riparian states that have negotiated a treaty over at least one of their shared rivers or river basins?
2. Why does this conflict occur?
3. How does this conflict unfold?
4. What are the implications of this conflict?

The project seeks to answer these questions through an analysis of two case studies in South Asia. The cases are bilateral, treaty-governed riparian relationships between (upper riparian first) India and Pakistan, and India and Bangladesh. The starting point of the analysis is the bilateral treaties as they function within these relationships, and for reasons that are discussed below, the analysis then expands to consider how these treaties work to influence the broader relationship the bilateral pairs conduct over shared water. I argue, in line with Wendt’s (1994) theory that state
interests are “endogenous to (or part of the problem in) interactions” (384) between states, that the way water treaties function within interstate relationships is endogenous to state interests. This departs from past research on riparian relationships that conceptualizes a treaty and state interests as exogenous, or interests as endogenous to treaties.

The oft-cited difference between the exogenous versus endogenous views of state interests is that the exogenous view does not allow for an understanding of how state interests—assumed to be power, security, and wealth—can change over time (Finnemore 1996, 1). For example, a state’s interest in terms of shared water is to secure as much as it can relative to its riparian neighbors, and this basic interest does not change when a treaty is signed. Thus, treaties only function so long as they do not interfere with this interest. The implication of this is that if a shared water resource were to significantly decrease, perhaps as a result of climate change, the treaty would not prevent conflict from arising. This perspective is often associated with the realist/neorealist literature and is criticized for overlooking the constructive or positive impacts a treaty can have. The neoliberal literature also tends to see interests and treaties (or other institutions) as exogenous, but does not view state interests as purely competitive. This is particularly true in terms of areas of inherent interdependence, such as economic and ecological interdependence, where there is a distinct advantage to cooperating in order to assure mutual benefits (Keohane and Nye 1977, 10). In this case, a state’s interest is not to secure water at the expense of its neighbors. Rather, it is to secure enough water and mitigate loss. Thus, from a neoliberal perspective, states
are much more likely to cooperate over shared resources than go to war over them, and this would likely not change even if water scarcity were to increase.

The constructivist theoretical perspective proposes that state interests are endogenous to international and global social structures (Wendt 1999, 20). This allows for the understanding of state interests as contingent and more complex. In the case of the ecological interdependence of a shared river system, a treaty—which prescribes a set of negotiated interactions that are based on international norms of cooperation—may over time create more cooperative attitudes and thereby behaviors over shared water resources, as states come to appreciate the lowered transaction costs and decrease in uncertainty—increased trust—that accompany adhering to a treaty’s prescriptions. This results in similar predictions to the neoliberal perspective of the preference for cooperation over conflict in that it posits that states can (possibly) be socialized in a way that results in changed interests (Finnemore 1996, 5). Its major shortcomings are that it cannot easily account for situations in which treaties have unintended or even negative impacts (there are several exceptions to this, discussed in the following chapter), and that because it is so focused on how ideas influence state behavior, it has difficulty circling back around to look at how changes in “real” circumstances, such as increased water shortages, interact with state interests and with how treaties themselves function over time.

The approach I propose, while constructivist in that it considers ideas and perspectives to be more influential to state behavior than “real” circumstances, allows for the inclusion of the latter in the analysis by reversing the relationship between interests and treaties. By showing that treaties are endogenous to interests, we can
develop a better understanding of how states may react or cope as pressure increases on water supplies, climate change advances, and water scarcity increases. My approach holds state interests constant, but sees interests as both contingent and immutable by differentiating between the interests of influencers of state policy—i.e., actors (both state and nonstate) who seek to influence policy either through obtaining or maintaining power or gaining the ear of those in power—and the interests of the “state” as a cohesive unit, a “black box.” Both types of state interest are immutable in that they remain constant. Policy influencers seek power, and state policy emerges from their contestation. The state as a black box, however, does not function so autonomously and specifically as to have “preferences” in terms of policy. Rather, the state seeks to endure, and in order to endure, it must have an established sense of self, i.e., an identity.

A state is both a conglomeration of its territory, citizens, institutions, and leaders, and a constructed idea of itself as a state in relation to other states. A state’s identity and the cohesiveness of this identity is at least as important as its resources in terms of creating internal stability, if not more important. As the paucity of truly failed states shows, state provision of goods can be very inadequate and uneven while the state continues to endure if citizens, and more importantly policy influencers, are invested in the idea—the identity—of the state and the meaning this invests in them as members of that state. This is not a sufficient cause of state endurance, but it is necessary and foundational. States, like individuals, need ontological security (Mitzen 2006): a sense of self that is stable and persistent. International politics emerges from the expression of
this identity: an “on-going process of states taking identities in relations to Others” (Wendt 1999, 21).

State identity is the contingent aspect of state interest of both types (aggregate black box, and disaggregated via policy influencers), and particular types of state identity inform how policy functions in interstate relationships. While both bilateral pair cases in this study have negotiated water treaties, these treaties function very differently—in one case successfully, and the other unsuccessfully—because of variations in state identity. To put it succinctly, the treaties’ efficacy is determined by the way in which state identity is expressed through state behavior vis-à-vis its shared water resources. In this sense, water governance is always political. This study therefore departs from the prevalent view in IR literature on institutions that treaties can be extracted from politics and studied as separate variables, either independent or dependent. I seek to put the politics back into the study of treaties by positing that treaties themselves are political, and function politically. They are not simply “events” that occur at the end of negotiations, or formalized and static behavioral prescriptions that govern discrete episodes of interstate relations. They are also part of ongoing political relationships between states, and must be analyzed in terms of how they function over time.

Analyzing state identity and politics as process is not an easy task, as it requires a more nuanced and complex approach than is generally allowed by standard research practices in political science. Both identity and politics often manifest through what people say, write, or otherwise express discursively. In this study I rely on two strains of constructivist literature in the IR subfield of security studies: Campbell’s (1998) work on
identity and security, and securitization theory (discussed further in subsequent chapters). Methodologically, I follow primarily interpretive methods, but in a systematic way that takes its form from a more positivist approach and allows for an analysis of both discursive and empirical evidence, in line with the sociological variant of securitization theory (e.g., Balzacq 2011). Together, the theory and methodology form a framework through which I seek to connect politics as it manifests in the realm of discourse with political outcomes in the real world. Underpinning this approach is the concept of performativity, developed by scholars such as Austin (1962) and Butler (1997). Performativity theory posits that speech and other discursive practices are themselves actions, i.e. political, and that public speech and related effects both express and (re)create identity. In other words, politics are not a result of interactions between actors or states, but are these interactions. Outcomes are likewise not “results,” but rather part of the ongoing, evolving creation and recreation of the process of politics.

I use the methodological approaches and evidence that best fit the goals of each part of the study. Historical analysis allows for the establishment of the meaning and role of water in arid regions, such as South Asia, where agriculture and thus the development of society requires extensive irrigation works. In such regions, the control of water is deeply associated with how societies have developed culturally and politically, and ongoing political processes. A similar type of historical sociology is used to establish the state identities of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The major evidence used in the investigation of how state identities inform the politics of water is English language news media, which is analyzed quantitatively and discursively. English language media
in the region is created by and for elites, the actors who are “policy influencers.” In line with Davis’s (2003) supposition that media is how elites communicate with other elites (rather than how they communicate with the “masses”), this project views English language media in South Asia as part of political processes, much of which is discursive in nature. It is the major location of the manifestation of political contestation, which emerges as the securitization (in Pakistan) or politicization (in Bangladesh) of water issues. The discursive analysis is then embedded in a type of process tracing of related state behavior in order to show how this securitization and politicization impacts international relations over shared water resources.

The concept of politics as performative is key to this study’s approach as it allows for the inclusion of evidence that otherwise would not be considered, for example news media discourse. Securitization and politicization, types of discourses that often arise around water resources, primarily take place in the discursive realm (this includes pictorial realms such as television, which was not considered in this project because of its focus on elite exchanges). While securitization theory proposes that there is an ultimate purpose to such discourse—to put an issue outside of normal politics in order to allow for the possibility of nonpolitical, emergency actions—this study shows that securitization is actually its own process. In other words, there may not be an “ultimate” intended goal to such discourse. The discourse itself is political, and it has political consequences in real time. Ironically, as the Pakistan case shows, sometimes these consequences may take an issue outside of the normal realm of politics, but not in the sense of creating a true case for emergency action. Rather, securitization may effectively stagnate an issue so that no political forward momentum can be achieved.
This may serve the purposes of domestic leadership, or it may be that the issue itself cannot be resolved politically.

The purpose of this study is to show how state identity and its contestation, which emerges as securitization or politicization of water issues, impacts the political efficacy of international water treaties and the broader relationships that they influence. The analysis presented here is preliminary, and it seeks to develop a new theory of how water treaties function, one that enables us to understand how conflicts can occur in the presence of formalized cooperation. It is therefore limited in its scope to a single region that allows for the comparison of two cases in which many aspects can be held constant in order to create a meaningful explanatory framework. For similar reasons, this study looks only at bilateral water treaties. Many water treaties are multilateral, which would complicate my theoretical and methodological approach and analysis, but not, I believe, refute my findings. Other limitations of this project are evidentiary. One, I was not able to return to the region to augment my original interviews. Thus, while these interviews were the impetus of this project—and in a few cases are cited—they guide the analysis rather than inform it (although, as the interviews took place during my ten year time period of analysis, 2001/post-9/11 to 2012, it could be argued that they are more relevant as discursive evidence than any interviews conducted outside of that time period would be). Two, it was not always possible to find news media archives for all years and all relevant sources for my time period of analysis. This is discussed further in the next chapter. Finally, while I did conduct a news media analysis for India (and in some cases use the intertextuality of Indian news media to fill in the gaps for missing news media evidence in the case of Pakistan), India’s perspective is not a (major) part
of the cases presented here. This is suited to the focus of this project, which is concerned with the experiences and perspectives of downstream, and therefore vulnerable, countries. However, while India prefers bilateral treaties, it is itself a downstream riparian of its major river basins, which are geographically multilateral (China is the most upstream riparian).

This study shows that if a state identifies as a “normal” state that is a participating member of the international community—however peripheral its position—it will conduct its international politics in accordance with the norms of this community. If it does not identify as a “normal” state, and sees itself as at odds with the international community, it will distrust or outright reject these norms. In the case of states in arid regions, where control of water is central to governance, water becomes an “at hand” issue that is taken up during times of increased domestic contestation over a state’s identity. For states that have a perception of being “normal,” water issues are politicized, but the state still behaves politically from a standpoint of operating within the boundaries of international norms. This is the case for Bangladesh, which despite an ostensibly more precarious position vis-à-vis India regarding water than Pakistan has with India, exhibits trust in and respect for international norms guiding interstate interactions, and international institutions such as treaties. In Pakistan, on the other hand, which does not see itself as a normal member of the (Western-hegemonic) international community, water issues become securitized during times of domestic contestation. Securitization of water issues creates a discourse of danger that is projected onto the international political playing field (Campbell [1992] 1998), which creates a situation in which the political process is essentially stalled. Thus, while Pakistan and India have a
comprehensive treaty governing their interactions over water—a far more comprehensive treaty than Bangladesh and India have—their political relationship over water is marked by delays, threats, and stagnation.

This conclusion furthers our understanding of how international water treaties work by theorizing how conflict can occur despite, or even because of, the existence of a treaty. It does so by analyzing treaties as political and part of broader political relationships and processes, rather than as simply institutions that can be extracted from their embeddedness and studied as separate variables. Additionally, this study contributes to security studies literature, in particular securitization theory. Securitization theory posits that when an issue is securitized, it is put outside of the realm of “regular” politics, thus allowing states to engage in violent conflict or war over the issue. The analysis here indicates that securitization may occur not in response to actual conflict between states, but because of domestic contestation over state identity. In this case, securitization has other functions, among them distraction and power grabs. The result of this, and possibly one of the intentions, rather than being an attempt to address an issue with “politics by other means” (Clausewitz), is instead an attempt to disengage politically. This disengagement indicates that politics—in the case of this study, relationships guided or governed by international water treaties—have failed.

This dissertation proceeds as follows. The rest of this chapter defines some important terms and ideas and presents the basic details of the two cases. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on water and securitization theory, and outlines the theoretical and methodological approach of this study. Chapter 3 introduces the role of water in the development societies and states in semiarid and arid regions, specifically those in
South Asia. Chapter 4 and 5 include the empirical analysis of the state identities of Pakistan and Bangladesh and their political relationships with India over water. Chapter 6 concludes, and discusses what this study means in terms of how international water treaties may function as water resources decline over the coming decades due to increased use and climate change impacts.

Definitions of Key Terms

Conflict vs. Disputes

There is an important distinction made in political science literature between the terms “conflict” and “dispute.” The former is taken to mean violent conflict, such as a war. The latter term covers political and other conflict that falls short of war. In this study I use the terms somewhat differently. I use “conflict” to refer to the general tone of interstate relationships: they can be conflictual or conflict-prone in the sense that they are not fully cooperative. I also use “conflict” to describe a series of disputes that occur over time and can be taken, together, to represent the “typical” behaviors states can display when interacting. “Dispute” here refers to actual incidents that can be described in detail and often occur within the ambit of formalized and treaty-governed cooperation, for example the dispute between Pakistan and India over the Baglihar Dam, which unfolded through formalized meetings and “warnings” as per resolution procedures detailed in the Indus Waters Treaty.

The distinction between the two terms is an important one, as is my adjusting the meaning of “conflict” to cover nonviolent but antagonistic interactions. One reason is that, as will be discussed in the next chapter, states simply do not go to war over shared water resources. The fact that they are far more likely to cooperate via negotiations and treaties has been empirically verified. The use of “conflict” only for war and war-like
interactions effectively removes from consideration and elides ongoing conflictual interactions over water, especially in treaty-governed interstate relationships. In such relationships, where using “conflict” as a description is disallowed, there is only one way to view treaties: as cooperative. One can apply the term “disputes” to acknowledge that antagonism still arises, but “disputes” cannot account for long term antagonism (i.e., conflict). Nor can it, in the case of the conflict/cooperation dichotomy that emerges from the conflation of conflict with war, account for antagonisms created or exacerbated by treaties.

An additional reason for using “conflict” to describe noncooperative interactions is that while disputes over shared water resources may not devolve into war, this is not to say that water does not play a role in violent conflicts, and that some interstate relationships over shared water are highly exploitative and inequitable. While it may not be “provable” that water is a source of the ongoing violent conflicts between Pakistan and India, it is not mere coincidence that the disputed area of Jammu and Kashmir happens to be where most of the tributaries to the Indus River, Pakistan’s major source of water, are located (and some major water works built during the British colonial era that can effectively “shut off” Pakistan’s water supply). Also, nonstate actors are increasingly a source of violent crossborder conflicts in the region. Militant groups may have a number of goals, but in Pakistan water has been used as a rallying cry and justification for terroristic violence. States also have been known to use water as a reason to threaten war (e.g., as Egypt has done), and downstream states are vulnerable to fears that water can be used as a weapon of war, either by cutting it off or releasing floodwaters from upstream dams. The term “disputes” cannot account for conflict
between nonstate actors or nonstate actors and the state; nor can it account for threatened conflict on the part of the state. The latter may be hyperbole (Katz 2011), but in terms of the theoretical approach of this study, which posits that hyperbole is also political—hyperbole is politics being “performed”—it is also conflict (Katz does account for this somewhat, but he labels it “signaling”).

International Relations vs. Foreign Policy

The major differentiation between international relations and foreign policy is that the former refers to how states interact within the international system, and the latter to a state’s particular approach to international politics, i.e. its direct relationship with other states. Within the academic discipline of political science, as in other academic disciplines, there is an attempt to draw thick black lines around definitions of such concepts. A theory in the subdiscipline of International Relations, therefore, should be concerned with the bigger or high-level picture: the international system as a whole, or how things work across the system. For example, realist and liberal theories, while entirely different in their explanations and predictions, are theories that can supposedly be applied to all states within the international system, regardless of internal/domestic differences. Waltz (1996), the originator of neorealist IR theory, explains that a theory of foreign policy would do the opposite: it would “explain why states similarly placed in a system behave in different ways” (54).

Going by Waltz’s definitions, this project would seem to be one of foreign policy, as indeed its purpose is to show how two states, Pakistan and Bangladesh, while being very similar in many ways (there is an opportunity to hold many variables constant between the comparative case studies), behave differently. As this project has been conducted within the discipline of International Relations, I feel it necessary to explain
why it is an IR project, not a foreign policy project—although clearly foreign policy has a
place in it, and I use the term “foreign policy” occasionally, sometimes alongside the
terms “international politics” and “international relations.”

The discipline of International Relations has moved on considerably since
Waltz’s 1979 classic *Theory of International Politics*. While “big” covering theories are
still being produced and serve as the backbone of the discipline, IR research by
necessity encompasses the specific, either by applying general theory to specific cases,
or refining theoretical approaches. This project falls into the latter category of research.
It is in conversation with neoliberal institutionalist theories of IR that concern themselves
with cooperation between states, and that consider treaties to enhance such
cooperation (rather than, as I discuss, stymying cooperation or even creating conflict).
Where this study pushes the boundaries of IR is that it includes analysis of some
domestic history and politics of Pakistan and Bangladesh. This has been done very
carefully and with considerable attention to the kinds of source material used. As was
mentioned above, travel to the region and elite interviews do inform this work. In
Chapter 4, which discusses the state identities of Pakistan and Bangladesh, I conducted
an extensive survey of available literature and based my analysis on the consensus of
area studies scholars. In other words, while there was some literature that presented
outlying ideas, *most* of the literature together formed a consistent picture of Pakistani
and Bangladeshi state identities. Additionally, I used a systematic and precise
framework of analysis for determining state identities. This is outlined in more detail in
the next chapter and Chapter 4 where the analysis takes place.
Ultimately, this project is concerned with state behavior within the international system, and the theory it refines about state behavior is meant to be applicable to other states within that system. It is a dynamic, rather than static, theory in that it proposes that states can and do behave differently—and that state behavior can and does change over time—and that this can be analyzed systematically in explanatory fashion. In this study I use the terms “international relations” (uncapitalized) and “international politics” somewhat differently, depending on whether I am indicating a broad and general type of interstate interactions or the specific series of interactions between states. I use the term “foreign policy” when I am considering international politics from the domestic perspective or referring specifically to one state’s behaviors within the broader interstate relationship.

The Cases

The following sections briefly introduce the two case studies, focusing on the treaties that have been negotiated over shared rivers. More detailed discussions of other aspects of these cases, such as political interactions and instances of specific disputes between the bilateral pairs, can be found in the Chapter 3 and the empirical chapters, where they form part of the framework and evidence.

Pakistan and India: The Indus Waters Treaty

The Indus River system originates in the Tibetan Plateau, flows through Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir, and then into Pakistan (see Figure 1-1). (China is the uppermost riparian of both river systems examined in this project. China has not negotiated treaties over either.) The Indus system is composed of the Indus River and five tributaries (from west to east, the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej), most of which flow through the disputed region of Kashmir. India controls the upper reaches of
these tributaries and much of the irrigation headworks built during the British era. This gives India the power to shut off Pakistan’s water supply. It did just that during 1948 for a period of about a month, an event that demonstrated the volatility of the relationship between the two riparians.

To the observing West, the river-sharing situation between post-Partition Pakistan and India was of great concern. Kashmir was seen as the biggest stumbling block to peace between the newly independent countries, but many believed that the problem of the divided Indus river system was “at the core” of the Kashmir problem (Lilienthal 1966, 65). In 1951 the World Bank offered its services as a mediator in negotiations for an Indus treaty. After nearly ten years of discussions, India and Pakistan finally signed the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in 1960. The treaty specified that the western-most three tributaries flowing through Indian-held Kashmir belonged to Pakistan, and the eastern three to India. India is severely restricted in terms of its use of the three belonging to Pakistan. The treaty allows only run-of-the-river hydroelectric dams that do not divert water.

The treaty is widely perceived (in the West) as successful, primarily because despite numerous wars between its signatories, it has never been abrogated. In other words, it is seen as effectively separating the water issue from the broader political relationship between India and Pakistan. Despite the treaty, the Indus has been the source of a number of disputes, mainly involving India’s development plans on Pakistan’s tributaries. The treaty is highly technical and specifies the allowed dimensions of hydroelectric dams built on these tributaries. However, there is still much room for interpretation. The treaty also gives Pakistan the right of objection to all Indian
development plans, which Pakistan does as a matter of course. The treaty outlines dispute resolution procedures between the two countries. If they are unable to come to an agreement over issues involving technical aspects of a dam, they are to request that the World Bank appoint a neutral expert (NE) to adjudicate the case, or that the case be otherwise specially adjudicated. The expert’s decision or court’s ruling is to be accepted without demure by both countries. In the nearly sixty-year history of the IWT, Pakistan has only twice requested extrabilateral adjudication as per the treaty, in 2005 and 2009. These two cases are discussed further in a later chapter.

**Bangladesh and India: The Ganges Water Sharing Treaty**

The partition of India and Pakistan also put a new sovereign boundary across the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) basin (see Figure 1-2). This river basin, like the Indus, originates in the Himalayas of the Tibetan Plateau. It flows through Nepal, India, and finally Bangladesh, which at the time of partition was East Pakistan. In 1971 Bangladesh fought its Liberation War to gain freedom from Pakistan. In 1975 India brought its Farakka Barrage online, a flood-control and diversion dam located 17 kilometers north of the Bangladeshi border. This dam has been the major issue of contention between the two countries regarding the GBM, with Bangladesh claiming India’s upstream diversions have severely affected downstream agriculture, salinity levels, and navigability.

India and Bangladesh signed their first agreement over sharing the river in 1977 at the behest of the 31st UN General Assembly. It was a five-year agreement, and after it expired the two countries were unable to negotiate a more permanent solution until 1996. The Ganges Water Sharing Treaty (GWST) also has a time limit, albeit longer. It expires after thirty years (in 2026), at which time a new treaty can be negotiated. Unlike
the Indus treaty, which physically divides the river system and specifies what kinds of dams can be built by India, the GWST specifies how much water India must release downstream to flow into Bangladesh. Flow levels were calculated based on averages between the years 1948–1988. The treaty is primarily concerned with the sharing of the water during the dry season from January to May, and it specifies the following flow levels, based on flow level measurements at Farakka.

- If flow levels are 70,000 cusecs or less, each country gets fifty percent.
- If flow levels are between 70,000 and 75,000 cusecs, Bangladesh gets 35,000 cusecs with the rest going to India.
- If flow levels are over 75,000, India may take 40,000 cusecs with the rest going to Bangladesh.

There are two caveats to these specifications. The first is that between March 1 and May 10, each country shall receive a guaranteed 35,000 cusecs in alternating ten-day periods. The second is that if the river’s flow at Farakka falls below 50,000 cusecs in any ten-day period, there is no set agreement as to how much water India must release, but the two countries must immediately meet to discuss emergency sharing measures.

The GWST differs from the IWT in several important ways. The first is that it is significantly shorter. The IWT is primarily a technical document. It was designed and written, for the most part, by engineers, and amounts to over eighty pages, including appendices and annexures. The GWST is a three-page document, including one page of annexures, that with the exception of the rather simple specifications for the relationship between flow levels and water sharing, is vague in its language. The dispute-resolution procedure it outlines amounts to the general prescription that the governments of India and Bangladesh meet to work out their differences, and there is
no official procedure for extrabilateral adjudication. Finally, while the IWT effectively covers all shared rivers between Pakistan and India because the countries share only one major river system, the same is not true of Bangladesh and India, which share multiple rivers. The GWST covers only one of these.

Above are overviews of the cases; they are reviewed in full in the chapters that follow. Chapter 2 discusses literature relevant to international rivers and the gaps this study intends to fill, introduces securitization theory, and outlines the study’s methodological approach.
Figure 1-1. Indus River basin system.
Figure 1-2. Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna Rivers basin system.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

International Rivers Literature

The study of internationally shared water is inherently interdisciplinary and spans a wide range of specific areas of expertise. Even isolating the subject area to rivers that cross international borders does not significantly narrow this scope. There are numerous potential water-sharing conflicts, among them pollution, transportation, territory (in the case of a river that forms a boundary between states), and of course allocation. The literature on international rivers is therefore diverse and often multidisciplinary. While there is literature that fits squarely within its area of expertise—this is particularly true of environmental and hydrological studies—it is not unusual for experts in all disciplines in which water-sharing challenges are analyzed to attempt to understand and include expertise from other disciplinary perspectives. After all, one cannot study, for example, the impacts of decreasing flow levels without acknowledging both environmental and political realities. Neither can one study hydropolitics without acquiring some understanding of hydrology, international law, and even engineering (as much water conflict is related to the building of big dams).

This makes hydropolitics a difficult subject in which to feel any kind of mastery. Relevant literature is often “hidden” in the tomes of other disciplines, and full of what can seem—from the perspective of a political scientist—arcane or extraneous details. The literature often does not fall within the purview of the epistemologies and methodologies of political science, and therefore can require acrobatic and creative brainwork to apply it to an analytic framework for a study undertaken according to the disciplinary requirements of political science. Perhaps the greatest challenge is that much of the
literature that touches on water politics seems itself genuinely confused about the appropriate way to study water, politics, or both. It tends toward description rather than analysis, and can lack clearly defined methodologies, theoretical weight, and explanatory power. This is not universally true of the literature; however, the diffuse nature of water issues, particularly internationally shared water, makes it a very challenging area of study from a disciplinary perspective.

Comprehensive reviews of literature having to do with hydropolitics exist elsewhere (e.g., Dinar et al. 2007—the literature has branched out in the last decade, so more recent bibliographies tend to focus on particular strains of the literature; I review relevant recent literature below), and will not be rehashed here. While this project makes use of a variety of sources, many of which are discussed in depth in later chapters, this review focuses on the literature most relevant to this study’s overarching subjects: conflict and cooperation over international rivers, water security, and treaties.

Even within these seemingly specific issue areas, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological approaches are diverse and often go undefined (du Plessis 2000; Furlong 2006). Many scholars make the argument that rivers must be viewed from multiple perspectives because the issues surrounding freshwater supply touch on so many aspects of the human condition: physical, social, economic, and political (Elhance 1999; Allan 2001). This chapter provides a framework for assessing the literature by examining it chronologically as well as epistemologically. It then focuses in on securitization theory, which underpins this study’s theoretical framework. The final section outlines the methodological approach of this study.
Interest within the discipline of political science in conflict and cooperation over internationally shared freshwater can, in part, be traced to the issue’s emergence as an area of policy and security concern in the post-Cold War environment of the 1990s. In particular, the “water wars” thesis garnered the interest of scholars analyzing the political and security dimensions of water that crossed sovereign boundaries. The possibility that in the future we will see increasing instances of tension and violence between states over shared freshwater was first introduced in the journal *Foreign Policy* in 1985 (Cooley), and again in 1991 (Starr). A book by Bulloch and Darwish, *Water Wars: Coming Conflicts in the Middle East* (1993), brought the vision of a future of wars over water to a broader public audience.

The water wars thesis is based on the Malthusian assumption that as resources become scarcer, human beings will resort to violence to secure their access to these resources. It is a thesis that makes such intuitive sense that is prone to being accepted almost without question. Much of the academic literature on international rivers has developed in response to this overly simplistic perspective that resource scarcity on its own causes conflict. In the “broadening and deepening” environment of the security studies subfield in political science in the 1990s, there was a growing interest in the link between resource scarcity and conflict. However, scholars generally complicated that link, positing that a number of intervening factors could determine whether conflict would arise in situations of scarcity. Gleick (1993) offered an early set of metrics that could be used to predict conflict, including the ratio of demand versus supply, how much water originates outside of a country’s borders, and dependence on hydroelectricity. Homer-Dixon (1994; 1999) argued that scarcity is modified by humans’ capacity to
adapt. Like Gleick, he was not necessarily focused on international, interstate conflict, but he did touch on the water wars thesis in his compendium of his research during the 1990s, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* (1999). While he advances the opinion that water is the most likely resource to cause interstate wars, he disagrees with the direct connection between water scarcity and wars painted by the water wars thesis. He argues that interstate wars over water are only likely in very specific circumstances: the downstream country must be dependent on a supply for its national wellbeing, an upstream country must be threatening this water supply, there must be an already-established antagonistic relationship between the two countries, and the downstream country must be militarily on par or stronger than the upstream country (Homer-Dixon 1999, 179–180; according to these criteria, Pakistan and India would qualify as candidates for a water war).

Lowi (1993), one of the few to approach the subject of water wars from a theoretically (neo)realist perspective, explored riparian relationships in terms of factors that can impede cooperation. Dominant powers, she writes, will only choose to cooperate if they are (1) highly dependent on the water resource, and (2) not in the upstream geographical position (Lowi 10). The implicit assumption here is that in all other situations, conflict (i.e. “not cooperation”) is more likely. Other scholars during the 1990s pursued similar questions of what could cause conflict or scuttle attempts at cooperation over rivers, many relying on this assumption that conflict was a real and imminent possibility (e.g., Frey 1993; Naff 1994), and that absent explicit forms of formalized cooperation, the anarchic international environment would eventually assert itself, resulting in war.
These early studies suffered from some common problems. The first was a conflation of scale. While it is empirically evident that conflict over resources does occur at local and subnational levels, the picture is much more complicated at an international level, and conflicts at these different levels cannot be usefully compared. A second, related, problem was definitional. “Environmental security” is an imprecise term without a clear referent. Whose security are we interested in? The individual’s, the community’s, the state’s? Is “security” a concept that refers to the presence or absence of adequate resources, or to the ability of a state to maintain control over resources without resorting to war? A third problem was more of an elephant in the room: because international water wars had not occurred (and have yet to occur), the work dealing with this subject matter was entirely hypothetical. Researchers at the International Peace Research School (PRIO) conducted some large-N statistical studies in order to assess whether there actually is a link between water and general, unspecified conflict at an international level (Burgess, Owen, and Sinha 2016, 387). They found that arid riparians are more likely to have experienced conflict—but this was correlation only. Water conflict proves to be a frustratingly difficult subject matter to study.

There was increasing criticism that research on water conflict was missing the point. While there was a paucity of interstate conflict to study, there were plenty of instances of cooperation. These optimistic voices maintained the possibility of violent interstate conflict over shared rivers was exaggerated (Ohlsson 1995; Wolf 1999; Turton 2000; Wolf and Hamner 2000). Empirical studies were showing that shared freshwater, though it may be a tool or target in war, has in fact never been a direct causal factor in interstate wars (Dolatyar and Gray 2000; Uitto and Wolf 2002, 289). Scholars
increasingly began to focus their attention on the cooperation side of the conflict/cooperation coin. In IR, the neoliberal institutionalist approach came to dominate the rivers literature. The neoliberal institutionalist perspective focuses on how treaties or other formal agreements help states avoid conflict through reducing uncertainty about compliance and cheating, lowering transaction costs, and allowing for a certain amount of transparency through data sharing and monitoring (Zawahri 2009, 7). In explaining why treaties are far more likely to occur between riparians than war, some have pointed out that cooperating is a more rational response to scarcity (Alam 2002, Dinar 2009).

Scholars conducting empirical studies were able to show that cooperation, in the form of a treaty, is prevalent between riparians (the most complete dataset of these is the Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database, maintained since the mid-1990s). Dinar and colleagues examine the relationship between scarcity and treaties, finding that moderate levels of scarcity actually encourage treaty negotiation between riparians (Dinar 2009; Dinar, Dinar, and Kurukulasuriya 2011).

Increasingly, institutional mechanisms such as treaties have become the focus of IR literature on international rivers. From the IR neoliberal perspective, which is the theoretical standpoint from which most of these studies are conducted, institutions are actively cooperative in the sense that they cause states to behave in ways they otherwise would not (Keohane 1989b, 5). Often these analyses take a case study approach—unlike water wars, water treaties are prevalent, and they exist as actual documents with fixed prescriptions and institutional mechanisms that can be a starting point of an in-depth study. Nishat and Faisal (2000) look at how the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) between India and Bangladesh, which has been formalized in their
various agreements over the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river system, functions, and conclude that it lacks the authority to address ongoing disagreements between the two riparians. Zawahri (2008) looks at the equivalent to the JRC between India and Pakistan, the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC), and concludes the opposite: that it signifies active cooperation over water between the otherwise highly antagonistic countries because it has continued to meet yearly despite intermittent outbreaks of crossborder violence and war.

There is some recognition in such studies that treaties exist in a changing and uncertain political and environmental backdrop, but the complexity of the multiplying effects that emerge if these are considered dissuades many scholars from doing more than simply acknowledging that they exist. Treaty design is an easier topic to tackle, and one neoliberal institutionalism is primed for. Nonetheless, a number of scholars have attempted to include political or environmental circumstances in their analyses. Fischhendler and colleagues emphasize the importance of treaty design in facilitating continued cooperative relations between riparians in changing uncertain environmental circumstances, such as growing scarcity or degradation (Fischhendler 2004; Drieschova, Giordano, and Fischhendler 2008). A more recent study has found that political variability can be as destabilizing as environmental variability, and that institutions need to be able to adapt to both (Fischhendler, Dinar, and Katz 2011).

These studies, while they do take into account the broader circumstances within which treaties function, do not theorize how these circumstances interact with treaties. Their focus remains primarily institutional design, and their implicit and overriding assumption is the central tenet of neoliberal institutionalism: that institutions matter.
Certainly institutions matter, but the main question these and similar studies ask is *how* they matter, rather than *how much*. In order to address the latter question, it would be necessary to expand the analysis beyond the treaty itself, its prescriptions, and closely associated state behaviors (such as sending Commissioners to annual JRC or PIC meetings). In the interest of parsimony, scholars rightly seek to clarify and delimit their research concepts and variables, and level of focus. However, this can lead to some unexamined assumptions. If treaties matter, it must be because they are meaningfully cooperative. This naturally leads to the assumption that meaningful cooperation prevents conflict: the two are binary. Treaties are themselves clearly defined and delimited documents: while they can contain vague or ambiguous wording (and often do), as an extracted and exogenous variable in an analysis of conflict and cooperation they are fairly parsimonious. While some scholars have acknowledged that treaties may not always function as cooperative mechanisms, it has been posited as occurring because there are issues of noncompliance (e.g. Tir and Stinnett 2011) or because of factors exogenous to the treaty itself, such as increasing water scarcity (e.g. Drieschova, Giordano, and Fischhendler 2008). Bernauer and Siegfried come closest to proposing that treaties do not necessarily mean that there is cooperation: “…many international upstream-downstream water governance systems may involve more shallow or unstable cooperation than is evident at first glance” (Bernauer and Siegfried 2008, 497). However, they do not go so far as to suggest that water treaties can reinforce or create conflict.

There have been some challenges to conflict/cooperation binary. Zawahri suggests developing a more nuanced understanding of conflict and cooperation, and
introduces a third kind of interaction, that of unstable cooperation (Zawahri 2008). Unstable cooperation is defined by an evolution of interactions in which “states oscillate between moments of intense political flare-ups and behavioural altering cooperation” (Zawahri 2008, 287). This captures the long-term nature of the relationships riparians have over shared rivers as well as the fact that these relationships encompass more than just one “event,” such as a war or treaty negotiation. The definition of unstable cooperation also acknowledges that certain kinds of conflict (here seen as political flare-ups) can exist despite the presence of a treaty (Zawahri 2008, 298–299). Others scholars have sought to problematize the ways in which cooperation is often conceptualized as “good,” and conflict as “bad.” Cooperation may not have positive results, and likewise conflict can lead to constructive solutions (Fox and Sneddon 2007; Zeitoun and Mirumachi 2008). Additionally, some scholars point out that power, not a collaborative inclination, is the primary driver in riparian relations, and “cooperation” may be simply a nice face put on an inequitable and exploitative relationship (Selby 2003).

There have also been some scholars who believe that to understand the interactions riparians have over shared rivers, these interactions must be placed within their contextual environment. These studies generally see treaties as part of the broader relationship between riparian states, and often only peripherally consider treaties or elide them completely from the analysis. Faure and Rubin (1993) find that culture influences conflict resolution, and can have a particularly strong impact during the negotiation phase of treaty agreements. They define “culture” as “a system of widely accepted beliefs combined with a set of self-justified assumptions”(3). “Culture” is not a term generally used in IR–Faure and Rubin are a sociologist and psychologist,
respectively—but as will be seen in Chapter 4 of this study, their definition is similar to the concept of “state identity” in IR. Elhance (1999), a geographer, takes a more holistic view, examining, *inter alia*, the role of geography, hydrology, international and domestic politics, history, and even the “personal authority and political clout of national leaders” in riparian relationships (15). Allan (2001), another geographer, explores the role the perception states have of their water resources in how they interact with riparian neighbors. He argues that the solution to water scarcity and related conflict between arid countries (in particular the Middle East) cannot be found unless the larger historical and political realities are taken into account. Turton and Henwood (2002), both political scientists, provide a southern Africa perspective. They argue that the study of hydropolitics must expand beyond a focus on negotiations and treaties to include all water-related political interactions. Conca (2006), another political scientist, takes into account less formalized forms of interaction in a discussion of how alternative institutions could aid cooperation where treaties and other formal institutions fail.

The home disciplines of the above scholars are mentioned because it is no coincidence many of them are not political scientists, and are therefore not bound by the disciplinary constraints that encourage an overemphasis on the formalized aspects of interstate relationships. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that studies such as the ones cited above have a distinctly practitioner leaning. That is, they tend to focus on scarcity, the likelihood of conflict, and policymaking that could encourage cooperation between states. In this way they are very like the early environmental security studies, although they provide a more positive perspective and more constructive and creative policy solutions (for example, Allan [2001] proposes “virtual” water, which is the importation of
foodstuffs rather than domestic dependence on water-intensive agriculture). While these studies expand our understanding of interstate relationships over water, particularly in arid regions, they are generally descriptive in nature and do not attempt to apply a theoretical framework or develop a theoretical explanation (Conca is an exception).

In the last decade, a number of scholars have attempted to address both this notable lack of explanatory theory and the seeming ill fit between the major schools of IR thought—(neo)realism and neoliberal institutionalism—and international rivers as a subject matter. Several notable early critiques of the neo/neo monopolization of international waters analysis in IR lead to the establishment of a hybrid critical theory/human security/constructivist approach that has informed much of the emerging scholarship in the last decade. The first of these critiques, du Plessis (2000), noted the implicit rationalist and positivist approach of most of the water-related literature in IR, and advocated a constructivist or critical approach. Trottier (2003) introduced a neo-Gramscian perspective by examining the idea of water wars as a hegemonic one, and asks the question, who benefits from the water wars concept? Furlong (2006) specifically critiques the neoliberal institutionalist approach that tends to “black box” the state and ignore the workings of power by both depoliticizing ecological conditions and violence perpetrated by the state on its own citizens vis-à-vis water governance. In a critique of Furlong’s critique, Warner and Zeitoun (2008) cite their own 2006 creation of the concept of Hydro-Hegemony (HH) as a theoretical framework for analysis (which in all fairness Furlong may not have been aware of when her own 2006 critique was published). The HH framework tilts the discussion back toward a more neorealist concern with relative gains, but from a critical perspective that takes into account how
power asymmetries can create cooperative relationships that are actually not cooperative (this touches on one of the questions driving my own research: can a water treaty be considered successful if it is widely reviled in one or all of the signatory countries?).

Warner and Zeitoun (2008) bring into the conversation a key theoretical approach in the security studies subfield, the Copenhagen School (CS). Originating with Buzan (1983), the CS sees security concerns as having social origins: they are constructed via discourse (of various kinds, but primarily political) in a process called securitization. Critical to securitization theory is the idea that someone, or something, benefits in some way from this process. It is, in other words, inherently a process based on power relationships. While securitization may result in an issue being pushed beyond the bounds of “regular” politics (discussed further below), it is itself a political process in which actors seek the essential political resource: power. According to Warner and Zeitoun (2008), the Copenhagen School opens up a “conceptual space for showing how the deliberate construction of scarcity and its instrumentality fosters resource conflict…” (807). Most notably, it allows for a theoretical approach that can encompass complexity and politics as process: “The absence of war does not mean the absence of conflict or the presence of ‘peace’. Similarly, the existence of a treaty or some form of cooperation over transboundary water does not mean the absence of conflict” (Warner and Zeitoun 2008, 807).

Securitization is an increasingly popular lens through which to view riparian relationships. It should be noted that the literature uses “securitization” in several different but not entirely unrelated ways. The first way is in reference to the provision of
water, and generally applies in studies taking a human security approach interested in state provision of adequate water resources (see, for example, Gerlak and Mukhtarov 2015, and Burgess, Owen, and Sinha 2016). In these studies “securitization” can be taken to refer to “water security” rather than “water conflict,” “security” in this sense meaning a sustainable and equitable supply of water. While these studies reference the Copenhagen School, it is their methodology rather than subject matter that can be said to be securitization, i.e. they are securitizing water in order to reveal the effects of hegemonic water governance.

The other way of using the concept of securitization in recent literature is to study the securitization process itself—how it occurs, what it means, and how it impacts water governance. This research is still in its infancy, and as Nathan and Fischhendler (2016) note, there is a need for research that “trace[s] the construction of security moves, specifically how argumentation may frame an issue as under existential threat and what this entails . . . [and] that identifies what variables encourage securitization and what its implications are on cooperation . . .” (20). Nathan and Fischhendler (2016) themselves develop an extensive linguistic-based coding that allows them to analyze contextual triggers of securitizing moves that take place in the discursive realm and the largely negative impacts of these on negotiation processes. The systemized methodology is a step forward, however they admit that it is also restrictive: that it is necessary to correlate words with action and policy outcomes (36). Another study notable for its careful methodology is Mirumachi (2015), who developed the Transboundary Waters Interaction NexuS (TWINS) to analyze the processes of how actors engage over water issues. The TWINS system allows her to analyze discursively based interactions at the
domestic, regional, and basin levels. Mirumachi’s focus on official/formalized agreements and treaties solves part of the problem of linking discourse to behaviors: because formal agreements are themselves discursive, that is, written down, yet prescribe behaviors, they neatly bridge the gap between speech act and behaviors. However, by focusing exclusively on formalized agreements, we circle back around to the original problem this study seeks to address, the fact that formalized agreements do not constitute cooperation and they are themselves part of a broader discursive realm that reconstitutes itself in a continual political process.

This project seeks to add to this developing literature by synthesizing the study of formalized agreements, i.e. water treaties, with a critical constructivist analysis of how they function in their contextual environment. It bridges the gap between discourse, or the speech act aspect of securitization, and state behavior and policy outcomes via the concept of performativity. While the Copenhagen School is based on the idea that speech acts themselves constitute behavior, or action—that is, speech acts do the work of securitization—performativity brings this constitutive process one step forward into the “real” world through associating discourse with effects that may or may not align with the (assumed) intention of the speech acts. The Copenhagen School is fairly strict in terms of what it considers a securitizing speech act: it is a speech act that intentionally securitizes an issue in order to bring it outside of the realm of regular politics into an emergency realm so that emergency action can thereby be taken. It is, in Austin’s (1962) words, a type of “felicitous” speech act. But as Butler (1997) points out, the effects of discourse can be multiple and not necessarily wedded to the intentions of the speaker. The discourse itself is a form of performativity—of politics—that emerges from
an ongoing process of intersubjective contestation over meaning. It is therefore not just speech (or other forms of discourse), and a speech act is not just an isolated action. Performativity allows for the analysis of process, how discourse changes over time, because meaning is being constantly contested. Indeed, as this project maintains, this contestation is the political process itself. Related effects—or more accurately, related behaviors—take on significance in light of this process of contestation, and can thus be analyzed as the range of possibilities for actions within the context delimited by the securitizing (or not securitizing, as the case may be) discourse. In this study, I refer to this delimited context as the “realm of possibility” (discussed more in detail in Chapters 5 and 6).

This study also seeks to address some of the recurring challenges the water literature comes up against, regardless of epistemological or theoretical approach. One of these, mentioned above, is the problem of scale. Clearly domestic politics matter. Recently scholars have begun to shift focus from the state by considering the influence of individual actors, such as people working for environmental NGOs and other policy entrepreneurs (Zawahri and Hesengerth 2012), and how key actors interact, such as through alliance networks that can influence policy at multiple levels of governance (Suhardiman and Giordano 2012). Actor-focused research can certainly reveal how behind-the-scenes cooperation can work to influence what may be an apparently conflictual relationship at the state level. However, this study is ultimately concerned with state behavior. The solution in this case was to disaggregate the state into state actors or other policy influencers while maintaining the idea of the “state” as cohesive unit, as discussed in Chapter 1. Additionally, actor interests are held constant in this
study: it is assumed that ultimately actors seek power in the form of influence, even as their specific preferences may differ. The “state,” insofar as a “state” can act, seeks to endure. Its interest is ontological security, a sustainable, meaningful national idea of itself that is broadly shared among actors.

Another challenge this project seeks to address is the general lack of targeted, thorough theorization and systematic methodology in the water literature. While many of the recent studies have strong theoretical approaches (e.g., the Hydro-Hegemony literature), and others have rigorous methodologies (e.g., the TWINS typology approach and Nathan and Fischhendler’s [2016] quantitative discourse analysis, both discussed above), few studies combine both theory and methodology into a cohesive framework with explanatory power. This study seeks to do so, while fulfilling the disciplinary requirements of political science, specifically those of the subfield International Relations.

The rest of this chapter discusses securitization theory more in depth, and then outlines the framework of analysis, i.e. the theoretical/epistemological and methodological approaches.

**Securitization Theory**

While this study incorporates a number of different theoretical and methodological tools, securitization theory is the backbone of the project. It is a natural fit to the subject matter, hydropolitics, because in South Asia and other water-stressed regions that rely heavily on irrigation, water easily becomes politicized, and sometimes securitized. In other words, water ceases to be a matter of technical or hydrological concern, and becomes a political issue, often one of high politics. In regions where civilizations literally arose because of and in tandem with large-scale control of water for
irrigation, water and its control are conceived as fundamental to the existence of societies, and as strategic concerns of the state. These characteristics of irrigation societies and state power are discussed in the following chapter.

Securitization theory arose in the post-Cold War environment of "widening and deepening" security studies. Its early scholars, Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, who initiated the Copenhagen School, formulated a concept of security based on how a threat is "created," or constructed through a discursive process that occurs between a securitizing actor and an audience. A threat becomes securitized when it is presented, through linguistic discourse, as an existential danger to a referent object. Securitization of a threat allows for the use of exceptional measures to counteract it, i.e. actions that are outside the bounds of normal politics. In the Copenhagen School, successful securitization is considered to have taken place when the audience has authorized, or legitimated, the conceptualization of a threat as existential, thereby permitting the use of emergency measures to address it (Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998, 25).

What constitutes an existential threat, and who and what constitute the securitizing actors, audience, and referent objects, are not fixed. These change according to the sector within which the threat is positioned. Sectors are specific lenses through which the international system and the relationship between its constituent units can be viewed (Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998, 27). The Copenhagen School identifies five: military, political, economic, societal, and environmental. In the military sector the referent object may be the state, in the political sector it could be state sovereignty or ideology, in the economic sector the national economy, and in the societal sector collective identities such as religion (Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998,
The environmental sector is more complex. The threat could be to a habitat or species, but also to a relationship between humans and the environment, and in particular the ways in which the environment contributes to societal and state development. Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde define environmental security as “sustaining ecosystems that are necessary for the preservation of achieved levels of civilization” (84).

What binds these diverse sectors and threats together is the Copenhagen School’s position within the widening-deepening debate with regard to what constitutes the referent object, or object being threatened. It is not only the state, as it is in traditional security studies, nor is it the individual, as in human security. Securitization theory occupies a middle ground between these by retaining the privileged position of the state, but allowing for a more nuanced view of what states value as well as incorporating the relationship between state and society (Buzan and Hansen 2009, 213). The explication of the roles of securitizing actor and audience in enabling securitization allows for a focus on the process of securitization as well as outcome. This enables an analysis of what purpose securitization serves and who/what it benefits.

The Copenhagen School has been the brunt of a number of criticisms, among them that its exclusive focus on linguistic forms of discourse ignores unspoken forms of securitization and other important kinds of discourse, such as media images (Hansen 2000; Williams 2003). Recent securitization scholars have sought to move securitization theory past its origins in speech act theory to incorporate not only other kinds of discourse, but also securitizing behaviors and the context within which these occur. This version of securitization theory, sometimes designated the “sociological” variant (as
opposed to the “philosophical” variant espoused by the Copenhagen School), looks at “practices, context, and power relations that characterize the construction of threat images” (Balzacq 2011, 1). This could include, but is not limited to, the historical circumstances leading up to securitization, policy instruments, elite statements or actions, statements and actions made by nonelites, and representations in the media.

Sociological securitization theory also privileges the audience more than does the Copenhagen School. Because of its adherence to speech act theory, the original Copenhagen School theory focuses more on the speech act of securitizing discourse than on audience acceptance or legitimization of the securitization. This creates an ambiguity in the theory (Balzacq 2011, 179). It views security as a self-referential activity in that it is a rule-governed discursive practice, a creation of the securitizing actor, while at the same time it posits it as an intersubjective process. The intersubjectivity, however, occurs after the threat is securitized, when the audience must accept or legitimize it. There are questions as to whether this is really intersubjectivity, because it presents the audience as unimplicated in the meaning making. Sociological securitization theory seeks to address this shortcoming through broadening the field of what counts as securitization discourse, and by positioning the discourse contextually.

The incorporation of context and nonlinguistic types of discourse has several important consequences for the study of securitization. The Copenhagen School defines securitization by its outcome—whether it is successful or not—which tends to present securitization as a simplified and linear process (Wilkinson 2007). The sociological variant, because it recognizes securitization as a complex historical phenomenon, is more concerned with the process. Decoupling process from outcome
allows for the study of securitizations that may proceed in fits and starts, or those that lack an intentional component (Balzacq 2011, 15). Additionally, as Williams points out, “. . . to focus too narrowly on the search for singular and distinct acts of securitization might well lead one to misperceive process through which a situation is being gradually intensified, and thus rendered susceptible to securitization, while remaining short of the actual securitizing decision” (Williams 2003, 521). In other words, the meat of the securitization process may well be what occurs before the final “decision”–which, in many cases, may never come. For example, water is often securitized, but the result of this is not always, or even often, the undertaking of emergency measures outside the bounds of the political process. Indeed, the process of securitization itself is a political one, and it is the politics that matter here.

The importance of context and process becomes especially clear when analyzing the securitization of the environment, because of its complex relationship to the state and society. This is particularly true of rivers, which, as discussed earlier, possess aspects that are both environmental and strategic, essential to human survival as well as to the survival of certain ways of life and to the state. There are often two competing agendas, political and scientific/technical (Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998, 71), and there can be a multiplicity of actors. Additionally, as was mentioned above, the environmental sector “displays more clearly than any other the propensity for dramatic securitizing moves but with comparatively little successful securitization [outcomes]” (Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998, 74). This suggests that environmental issues are often used in securitizing discourse for purposes other than creating an allowance for extraordinary or emergency measures. This certainly seems to be the case with
international rivers, which are often the focus of security-related discourse but rarely (if ever) the cause of wars.

By looking beyond speech acts, and by not assuming the intention of securitizing actors is to allow for emergency measures regarding the securitized object, the sociological variant of securitization theory also allows for methodologies that go beyond traditional discourse analysis and use other kinds of evidence. Because context and process matter, historical sociology and interpretive process tracing can be added to the methodological mix. The following section discusses how this project operationalizes securitization theory for this project.

First, though, it is important to mention that this study departs from several of the key assumptions of securitization theory, and it is a secondary goal of this analysis to further our understanding of securitization itself. The first of these assumptions is that the “audience” that “legitimizes” the securitization is the general population, or the “masses.” As was discussed above, this formulation envisions a top-down process with a clear causal chain: elites make securitization moves, audiences legitimize, and then emergency action is taken. This study shows that the general population may not be the audience at all. Other elites can also be the audience, or the primary audience. This changes the causal formulation into a truly intersubjective one, in which securitization becomes performativity, an ongoing expression, creation, and recreation of a particular kind of politics. By conceptualizing elites as both actor and audience, the securitization process becomes an end in and of itself, part of a larger politics of state. The result of securitization, therefore, may in fact not be one of a “final” emergency action at all. As this study shows, the result may very well be quite the opposite: a political stagnation.
One final brief definitional explanation needs to be made before moving on to my methodological notes. Securitization theory quite naturally focuses mostly on securitization, but in one of my case studies, politicization occurs, not securitization. In essence, the analysis presented here conceives of securitization as an extreme form of politicization, with different effects but similar processes. In my analysis of the two cases, I show that while politicization and securitization are both part of political contestation over state identity, they impact the way water treaties function within their broader riparian relationships differently via creating different realms of possibility—that is, which actors can be heard and what behaviors they and the state can take.

**Methodological Notes**

The methodology of this project was designed to provide a systematic and thoughtful approach to what is a complex subject matter. It is primarily interpretive, though it contains some positivist analysis of certain evidence, in line with the goals of sociological securitization theory. What bridges the gap between the two methodological approaches is the theoretical framework, which creates the structure that carries the analysis forward. Here I outline the framework, review the theoretical tools I use and how they fit into that framework, and discuss the empirical evidence choices I made and the methodologies I used to analyze the evidence.

To quickly review, the research subject of this study is conflict that occurs between states that share water resources despite a treaty having been negotiated. To put it another way, its interest is in how treaties function within the wider political relationship between states. The questions this project seeks to answer are as follows.
1. What kind of conflict arises between riparian states that have negotiated a treaty over at least one of their shared rivers or river basins?

2. Why does this conflict occur?

3. How does this conflict unfold?

4. What are the implications of this conflict?

The general thesis developed to consider these questions in the context of the two bilateral case studies is that a water treaty's efficacy is determined by the way in which state identity is expressed through state behavior vis-à-vis its shared water resources. More specifically, the contestation of state identity is a political process that implicates the treaties and/or shared water resources more generally, and it manifests as politicization or securitization. Politicization will occur when a state sees itself as a “normal” state, i.e., an accepted and participating member of the Western-hegemonic international community. Such a state will share the international community’s values and norms related to international institutions such as treaties. Securitization will occur when a state sees itself as rejected or threatened by, or otherwise extremely peripheral to, the international community. Such a state will be suspicious and distrustful of values and norms related to international institutions such as treaties, and of the institutions themselves. Politicization and securitization of internationally shared water resources, therefore, are processes of domestic political conflict that manifest on the international political playing field, impacting state behavior and interstate relationships.

Securitization involves a narrowing of possible behaviors and possible actors, ultimately—in some cases—stagnating the political process and rendering a treaty unsuccessful (in that it creates distrust, not trust, regardless of how well it continues to “function”). Politicization has a wider field of possible actors and behaviors, allowing for
more policy influencers to impact the political process, thus allowing for more constructive and ongoing interstate interactions over shared water resources. The conclusion is that treaties function endogenously to state interests (rather than the other way around, as is typically considered the case).

The above is the framework of the study. A number of theoretical and methodological tools are used to rigorously and systematically move the research through each step, or phase, of the study in order to give the framework an explanatory function. The first phase of the study is water itself—what it represents in the South Asian region, how it has been used and controlled, and what this means to politics, to state power, and to interstate relationships. This project proceeds from the assumption that freshwater, in regions where society has developed in tandem with extensive control of water, is intimately tied to the state’s legitimacy and survival, and to its relationship with society. The following chapter explores this in depth through the lens of the concept of the “hydraulic society,” which is based on theories developed by Marx, Weber, and Wittfogel, and Scott’s (2009) work on the modern state’s methods of systematizing its control over the populous. The chapter establishes water—more appropriately, the control of water—in South Asia as intrinsically tied to state power and its relationship to society, and therefore a subject that is often “at hand” in the battles of contestation over state identity. It also discusses the cases more comprehensively, focusing on how the current water governance regimes came about and the links between water and politics vis-à-vis the Indus and the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river basins.
The next step in fleshing out the framework of the study is establishing the state identities of Pakistan and Bangladesh. This is done in Chapter 4. In this part of the study I base my definition of state identity on Campbell’s (1998 [1992]) work Writing Security, in which he discusses state identity as both performative and relational and expressed through discourses that emerge via this performative and relational enactment. In particular, Campbell developed the concept of “discourse of danger,” a type of “theology of truth about who and what ‘we’ are by highlighting who and what ‘we’ are not, and what ‘we’ have to fear” (48). (Securitization is, of course, a discourse of danger). Identity is amorphous, and is not just one “thing,” and cannot easily be described in empirical terms. In order to address this difficulty, I modified a systematized approach developed by Abdelal et al. (2009), which provides a methodology of establishing the identities of Pakistan and Bangladesh through analyzing four components that together inform state identities. These four components are constitutive norms, social purposes, relational comparisons, and cognitive models. Key to this conceptualization of state identity is the contestation of these four components. Identity is a moving target, and indeed it is the ongoing contestation over who and what “we” are—the performativity of this struggle—that is actually state identity.

Chapter 5 shows how this contestation becomes politics domestically and internationally, and how water and water treaties become implicated in that process. In other words, it shows how water treaties function endogenously to state interests in the broader relationship over water between riparian pairs. Securitization theory determines the methodology here, in particular iterations of its sociological variant. Balzacq (2011) designates three levels as implicated in the securitization process: actors, acts
(discourse), and context (35–36). The analysis in Chapter 5 identifies actors, audience, and discourse, and positions these in a context that gives the relationships between these meaning. As discussed above, both actors and audience here are elites—generally government officials, but in some cases other actors seeking to influence state policy, such as intellectuals, policy analysts, or scientists. While these actors communicate in a variety of ways, the discourse this project is interested in is that which is conducted in the English news media, which is created by, and for elites (the role of English media in South Asia is discussed further below; to summarize briefly here, English is the shared language of government both within and between India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and this is particularly so in terms of English language media, which has an international and regional as well as a domestic elite audience).

The media evidence used in this project is analyzed three ways: 1) quantitatively, to determine how much media attention relevant issues received and when this attention was received; 2) qualitatively, to determine how relevant issues are discussed; and 3) contextually, to determine how politicization and securitization impact the relationships between the riparian dyads over shared water. This third part of the analysis uses a modification of the methodology of process tracing. Process tracing involves an examination of sequences of events (including produced representations in media, official statements, policy moves, etc.). It is a longitudinal analysis that both generates observations (i.e., it determines, in part, the evidence used, because the act of conducting process tracing reveals observations), and links them “in particular ways to constitute an explanation of the case” (George and Bennett 2005, 207). It is a method that can be used to infer issue linkages between discourse and other forms of political
behaviors. The benefit of this method is that it can illuminate complex stories, where multiple variables interact. Where this study departs from traditional process tracing is that it is not interested in causal linkages; rather, it sees discourse and state behaviors as processes that together and performatively are a state and interstate politics of water. It uses an interpretive version of process tracing for the analysis. Further details regarding how the analysis was conducted, which include the process of interrogation of the evidence and a discussion of the contexts within which it is analyzed, are found in Chapter 5. The specifics of how the evidence was gathered for this project are discussed below, after the section on English language media.

**English Language Media and English Media Audiences**

The situations of English media in Pakistan and Bangladesh differ somewhat. While native language use has been promoted in both countries, Bangladesh has been somewhat more successful in incorporation Bengali in government operations and official documents (Banu and Sussex 2001, 128), particularly after the Bengali Language Introduction Act of 1987. English, however, has retained its role and prestige as an administrative/government/law/media/commerce language (124), and this is reflected in the pushback that occurred when English was deemphasized in education. Private schools and universities sprang up that taught English to the children of elites, and there were calls from all levels of society for a reintroduction of English in schools, as it was seen as the only way for someone to get ahead (134).

It is still the case that for many Bangladeshi government officials and civil servants English is their first formal language (141). This is partially because Bengali lacks the vocabulary and discourses associated with (Western-style) government and administrative institutions, and partially because of the aura of prestige associated with
English (142). There has been a resurgence of interest throughout the population in English, driven by globalization of the language (143). English language newspapers, however, are read primarily by the English-speaking elite, which is a very small portion of the population (136). During the time period analyzed in this chapter, all English newspapers in Bangladesh were privately owned (136–137). They are written by (elite) educated people for (elite) educated people, for the purpose of being read in English.

In Pakistan, which has many more native languages than does Bangladesh, English serves an additional purpose of being a government lingua franca. In the 1980s, then-President Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq promoted the use of Urdu, including changing the middle school curriculum to Urdu, but this proved unpopular, particularly among elite groups (Mahboob 2009, 179). Musharraf, who had received a graduate degree in Britain, was friendlier toward English, seeing it as essential for Pakistan’s entrance into the global economy (Mahboob 2009, 179).

English language newspapers in Pakistan, like those in Bangladesh, are circulated among the elite “opinion leaders,” while Urdu papers have a further reach among the general population (Siraj 2009, 44). The style of the Urdu papers is characterized as less serious, containing more of what would be considered entertainment articles on scandals, etc., and more religious elements (Siraj 2009, 44). There is a shortage of local papers, and a definite urban and upper/upper-middle class bias to the media (Siraj 2009, 44).

Pakistani papers get money solely from advertisers, of which the government is a major buyer (33 percent), and the papers are controlled by these advertisers (Siraj 2009, 44). While freedom of press is given lip service, in actuality the press can be
highly circumscribed through either a government withdrawal of advertising or a vast array of laws and regulations dealing with press freedom, most of which have been instituted in the last fifteen years (coinciding, not coincidentally, with the growth of electronic media). While Pakistan ostensibly has less press freedom than Bangladesh, both were categorized as “not free” by Freedom House in terms of press during the years this study focuses on. Bangladesh gained a “partly free” rating in 2010, which it maintained through 2015. Pakistan was upgraded to “partly free” in 2015.

In both Pakistan and Bangladesh, English language media is produced and consumed by those who occupy the power strata near or at the top of society. It is, therefore, truly a forum in which elites engage in conversation and debate. As English is the language of diplomacy between Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India, it should also be assumed that elites in all the countries are a secondary audience for domestic English language media. For example, my analysis of Indian media has shown that there is considerable intertextuality between Indian and Pakistani news, with articles on both sides echoing and citing each other. English media in the region, therefore, is both domestic and international, and reflects and is constitutive of politics at both levels.

**Gathering Evidence/Data for Analysis**

At the beginning of this project I identified the major English language newspapers in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, with the intention of choosing one or several as my sources. Information available on news sources varied by country. I identified the following as possible sources.
India

- *The Times of India* (1838): first most read (also most widely read English daily in world).
- *The Hindustan* (1924): second most read, especially in north.
- *The Hindu* (1878): third most read, especially in south (Tamil Nadu and Kerala).
- *The Telegraph* (1982): forth most read, especially focused on troubled north-east region.

Pakistan


Bangladesh

- *The Daily Independent*.
- *New Age*.

Finding archives for many of these sources proved difficult, both in terms of sources with online-accessible archives (physical archives are also surprisingly in short supply for many of these) and the dates for which archives are available. I sourced news articles from a number of databases, depending on where I found the most reliable access. "Reliability" was determined by several factors. How complete was the collection in the database? Which sources were available, and for what years? Could I be sure that the database contained all articles from a source for the years available, rather than just a selection? I found that the newspapers’ own online archives accessible through their websites were the least reliable, and I discarded them as a possibility.

The *Times of India* was the only newspaper that was accessible as an independent online archive. The rest of my evidence was sourced in the databases
Factiva and NewsBank. Factiva allows searches of single newspaper sources, while NewsBank aggregates sources. Therefore, for India and Pakistan I have search data from individual newspapers, while for Bangladesh I have search data for a collection of individual newspapers. This is a limitation in data that I feel will need to be addressed as I move forward with this project past the dissertation stage. However, this iteration of the study necessitated that I work with what data I was able to find.

One way I dealt with the limited nature of the evidence was to look for intertextuality between countries’ news media. For example, while I was able to source Pakistani papers *The Nation* and *Business Recorder* from the years 2004 and 2005, respectively, the *Dawn* was only available from 2012, outside of my date range of interest. However, The Times of India often quotes from the *Dawn*, and this intertextuality allowed me to in a sense “read” the *Dawn*. This enabled me to fill in my knowledge of how certain issues were being discussed in Pakistani media during certain times.

Another method I devised to analyze the evidence as fruitfully as possible was to avoid direct comparisons between dyad countries in the analysis. In this project I do not analyze a country’s elite discourses relative to its riparian partner. For example, do not compare levels of securitization in Pakistan versus India. While this would be an interesting and instructive exercise, not having access to an equal quality of data for each country precluded it. This project is interested rather in the comparison between discourses in Pakistan and Bangladesh, but here I also do not make direct comparisons that rely on the quality of the evidence I was able to gather. In the quantitative section, where I count article numbers based on keywords and years, I compare between years
in each country, not between countries. The latter kind of comparison would require that I was able to ensure not only that both countries’ newspapers were roughly equal in terms of readership, number of articles, freedom of the press, ownership of newspapers, etc., but also that I had access to all articles from each newspaper, that there were no duplicates in my search results, etc. While this would possibly be feasible, it was outside of the capabilities of this stage of this research project.

I proceeded to gather evidence in multiple revised searches based on what I found in the previous search. First, for each country I determined the most relevant keywords to use in searches. Some of these were general and the same for all countries, e.g. “water,” “water treaty,” etc. Others were specific to the particular water-related challenges and conflicts each country experienced (specifics of keywords and other aspects of the analysis are discussed further in Chapter 5; here I am providing the outline of my process). I then narrowed my group of search terms based on whether they appeared often enough to be significant data, and how they were used. Not surprisingly, many of the broader terms turned up so much data that was not relevant that they were ultimately not useful, while some of the more specific terms showed up so infrequently they could also not be meaningfully analyzed.

Once I had determined keywords for each country and amassed my data, the first step of the analysis was to scan it all for recurring themes, issues that tended to be linked, and words and phrases that tended to recur over and over. This stage involved taking copious notes both on these themes, linkages, and words and phrases, and writing a general analysis of these for each country. These initial analyses do not appear in the dissertation; however, they formed the basis of my subsequent more
rigorous examination of the data in that they allowed me to conceptualize how each country’s elites perceived water-related issues. It was during this stage of the analysis that I realized that contrary to my initial expectation that I would find securitization in both Pakistan and Bangladesh, in fact in Bangladesh what I was seeing was politicization. This was a breakthrough in my understanding of the cases.

My subsequent analysis of the data included article counts by year and keyword, a thorough examination of the processes of securitization and politicization, and finally the contextual embedding of the data in order to understand the implications of these different processes. This is detailed further in Chapter 5, where it is discussed in reference to the particulars of each case.

In the next chapter, the connections between water and governance, and water and politics, in the South Asian region are discussed. Additionally, the internationalization of the Indus and Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river systems, in 1947 and for the latter again in 1971, is reviewed, including an in-depth look at how these rivers became a matter of high politics at the creation of the newly sovereign states of Pakistan and Bangladesh.
CHAPTER 3
WATER AND POLITICS IN SOUTH ASIA

The purpose of this chapter is (1) to establish the importance of water generally to governance and politics in the South Asia region, (2) to look specifically at how water and politics became intertwined when the Indus and Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river basins were internationalized and the treaties were negotiated, and (3) to introduce some of the specific disputes surrounding water issues at the domestic and international levels during the time period of this study’s analysis. One cannot understand hydropolitics in the South Asia region without understanding both the general theory of the rise of civilizations in tandem with water control and the specific history of the establishment of Pakistan and Bangladesh as sovereign nations in the last century, and the significance of water to this history. The rivers of South Asia are more than just basin systems divided by sovereign boundaries and the source of ongoing political negotiations and conflict. They are a watering system that has enabled human life and society to develop on the Subcontinent for millennia. As all resources essential to humans, the water must be shared, and undoubtedly has been the source of conflict between human groups from time immemorial. But only in the modern period of history have these rivers been the source of antagonism between sovereign international states.

In the case of the Indus, it was to the new Pakistan (West Pakistan at the time) the country’s lifeblood, the main source of irrigation water for what was the largest contiguous irrigated area of the world—a desert that had bloomed, thanks to water delivery systems built by the British. For India, much larger and with many other water sources, the Indus was important as a resource only for its northwest region. However,
as a symbol of India’s self image as a sovereign secular state, it had broader implications: much of the Indus system’s upper part flows through Indian-held Kashmir, where the British-built irrigation headworks were located.

The situation between India and Bangladesh is somewhat more complex, as the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna is only one of many river systems shared between the two states. The Ganges, to India, is a sacred river (and recently has been granted rights on par with human rights), and as it flows through the north-central part of the country with many distributaries reaching down to the center of India, has been much more important in terms the development of civilization in India proper. The Brahmaputra, which flows through the northeastern part of India, joins the Ganges and the Meghna in Bangladesh.

This chapter establishes the link between water and politics both generally and specifically. That is, it first approaches water in broad theoretical terms, as a foundation of a land, a people, and a civilization, in order to show why one must consider water as a fundamental part of the political relationships between the countries of the South Asia region. Then the chapter discusses water in terms of the two riparian relationships that are the case studies of this dissertation, including a detailed review of how the river treaties came to be negotiated, and the functioning of the treaties up to the present day.

**The Premodern Era: Hydraulic Society**

Freshwater resources in the South Asia region have been one of the foundations on which civilization has developed. The region is climactically semiarid to arid, and as such, must rely on irrigation to develop any kind of extensive agricultural system. In Europe, where water is relatively abundant and crops are often rain fed, water supply has not been an issue of top priority to states or their political precursors in the same
way. In semiarid and arid or water-scarce regions, water supply in the form of expansive irrigation works is a prerequisite for the existence of any large society, and is implicated in governance of such societies, and possibly even in the type of rulers and governments that develop.

A few scholars have advanced theories on the links between large-scale irrigation works and the development of a specific kind of governments. The first of these was Marx, who outlined a theory for an “Asiatic mode of production,” which specified that in certain societies where large-scale irrigation was required, a centralized, despotic, bureaucratic government would arise to manage public irrigation works. Weber also considered the development of irrigation-based societies and their forms of rule to be fundamentally different from other types and prone to acquiring a strong centralized government that could maintain control over irrigation works in order to extract revenue from agriculture-based economies (what he referred to as “hydraulic-bureaucratic official-states”) (Worster 23).

Wittfogel, a German who fled to the United States during World War II, was the next scholar to take on the task of examining agricultural societies that developed around large-scale irrigation. His focus was China and India, and he also thought that the development of these societies took a different course than Western ones, specifically that they developed a special kind of despotic government, because of the need to manage water resources through manmade structures on a large scale. (Wittfogel 1957). Wittfogel’s thesis has been influential primarily in the fields of archeology and anthropology, informing theories of the origins of civilizations and states (Sanders and Price 1968; Carneiro 1970), but has not gained much traction in political
science, probably because it is also a historical theory, and Wittfogel failed to convincingly apply it to modern states (Worster 28–29).

Hydraulic society theories were rightly criticized for being too simplistic or confused about causality. In terms of the former, the most notable critic is probably Geertz, who writes about the Balinese irrigation system, “In fact the state role in…construction seems to be minor at best. . . . The notion that impressive irrigation works need highly centralized states to construct them rests on ignoring this fact: such works are not built in one blow” (quoted in Scott 2009, 346). Other scholars have argued that the causal arrow Wittfogel proposes is actually reversed: large–scale irrigation works are only made possible after centralized political organization (Kang 2006).

Both criticisms have merit, but what interests us about Marx’s, Weber’s, and Wittfogel’s theories is not their focus on what kind of ruling state developed in irrigation–based agricultural economies, their misperception that waterworks were created all in one blow, or whether they mistook the direction of the causal arrow. It is the link they draw between government and water resources that has relevance to this study. This link is a close one: the management of water resources and the power of the ruling class are, in a sense, one and the same. This point allows the theory to have continued relevance in the world of the modern state. Water development and management are linked to power and control of some humans over others. In hydraulic societies, or agrarian–based states, a primary source of authority of those in control comes from their ability to deliver water to the farmers who provide the basis of the economy. The power that rulers hold requires the knowledge and means to exert technological control
over water (Worster 1985, 38). In the contemporary world, in which rivers cross over sovereign state boundaries, the power of governments in semi–arid and arid regions with hydraulic societies also depends on their ability to negotiate access to a share of the water. Thus, water becomes inextricably linked to both domestic and international politics, and the interaction of the two levels of politics.

In the contemporary world this link between water and politics plays out in several ways. At the domestic level, we see either politicization or securitization of water and related issues such as dams and treaties. While politicization and securitization are qualitatively different, they both arise from the circumstance of water–related issues being a top political priority both domestically and in foreign relations. In countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh, where domestic water management leaves much to be desired in terms of technological control and supply, the preference of elites is to force the focus of the population to the international level. Thus, while most water access problems in these countries stem from domestic-level causes, the international-level issues bear the brunt of the blame in political discourse.

The Modern Era: Internationalization of Rivers

Pakistan

The Indus and the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river systems originate in the Tibetan Plateau in China, so the sharing of water in the region between separate sovereign entities is not new. However, during the time of Britain’s colonial rule of the Indian Subcontinent, water was seen as copious, and water access conflicts were primarily local. Even at the time of Partition, the view that water, as a renewable resource, would always be abundant, ruled water resource management. Indeed, it was commonly felt that river water left to run freely into the ocean was “wasted water”
Lilienthal 1951, 58). This perspective is part of what Scott (1998) has termed the “high modernist paradigm”: a “muscle-bound . . . version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature . . . and, above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws” (4).

This being the case, the immediate concern regarding the sudden internationalization of these two rivers at the time of Partition was how to create an agreement between India and its newly formed downstream neighbors, West and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), on how to share access, rather than a concern that there would not be enough water to be shared. This was particularly the case with the Indus river basin, which had been the object of the high modernist paradigm of water management during the British colonial era. The British had prioritized irrigation, and in particular large-scale infrastructure. A class of professional engineers built massive all-season canals, the flow of which could be controlled by a series of headworks in the upper reaches of the basin. This opened up millions of acres of arid land for new settlement, thus expanding the colonial empire’s revenue-producing territory (Gillmartin 1994, 1132).

During the British colonial period it was the Indus, rather than the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna, that was the focus of British water management and development. This process was, as Gilmartin (1994) points out, directly connected to gaining and maintaining power in the Indus region: “For the British, as much as for earlier Indus Basin states, the link between canal building, agricultural settlement, and political control was central to the construction of state power” (1132). Originally a way
of giving disbanded soldiers and other disaffected, and thus troublesome, Indians something to occupy them, canal building became in the region the main means of social control. The British attacked the Indus Basin with a zeal that has been described as almost missionary (Mustafa 2001, 821). The new settled communities that grew up around the construction and in newly irrigated land eliminated the security threat of roving tribes and pastoralists, as well as expanded the tax base. Additionally, the demonstration of superior Western technological know-how worked to reinforce and justify Britain’s colonial presence (Mustafa 2001, 821).

Therefore, when Partition occurred, the British-built water delivery system was the life-blood of what was, at the time, the largest contiguous irrigated area of the world—literally a desert that had bloomed. That area, after Partition, was located predominantly in West Pakistan, whereas the headworks that controlled the water delivery system were located in Indian-held Kashmir. This gave India effective control over West Pakistan’s water resources. If it so wished, it could shut off the water supply to its downstream neighbor, which, even if it was only for a short period of time, would result in devastation for the agricultural-based society.

During this time, the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna was not considered to involve such high stakes. The river system was not as developed, and East Pakistan was not a priority for the newly created Pakistani state, which had its center of government in West Pakistan. East Pakistan, comprised mainly of the Bengali ethnicity, was both ethnically and culturally different from West Pakistan, and was separated from it by the entire country of India. It was somewhat of a hinterland. The immediate conflict was between India and West Pakistan, both of which were deeply traumatized by the
upheavals and violence of Partition (as was East Pakistan), and shortly, involved in a war over Kashmir that soon became a concern to Western countries.

The United Nations was called in to mediate the conflict, and it asked that a plebiscite be conducted so that the Kashmiri people could decide on which country to join. While both India and Pakistan give nominal support to the idea, the plebiscite never took place because neither country would withdraw its troops from the region. Thus the territory has been in perpetual dispute, with Pakistan controlling the Northern Areas and Azad Kashmir in the west, and India controlling Jammu and Kashmir in the central and southern part.

With India maintaining control over the headworks of the Indus basin irrigation system, one of the immediate political and indeed existential concerns of the newly formed country of (West) Pakistan was securing its water access. Water, therefore, became an indelible issue for Pakistan both politically and in the popular mind. This was further reinforced when India shut off some of Pakistan’s water supply in 1948, which resulted in crop desiccation in Pakistan’s Punjab region as well as the cessation the city of Lahore’s water supply and some hydroelectric power supplies (Chapman 2009, 261).

This is the most well-known and documented instance of such an event, but there were likely other similar occurrences in the following years, before the Indus Waters Treaty was signed. One of these was witnessed by David Lilienthal, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) chairman from 1941–1946. He visited the region in 1951 at the behest of India’s prime minister in hopes that a solution could be found to the politically volatile water-sharing situation. While Lilienthal was in Pakistan, the flow feeding some canals was shut off for several hours. As canal waters lowered visibly, Lilienthal spoke
with people “so furious and worried they were ready to fight with their bare hands” (Lilienthal 1951, 58). The fear regarding water supply among the populace was palpable and real. This fear has informed Pakistan’s dealings with India over the Indus since the early years following Partition, and it has been exploited by Pakistani rulers in times of domestic stress, as is examined in Chapter 5.

**Bangladesh**

While the major water-related conflict post-Partition was over the Indus (as will be discussed in the following section, it was one of the major concerns of Western nations in terms of conflict in the region), East Pakistan, into which the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna river system flowed, also had concerns over water access that originate with Partition. Calcutta Port, located on the Hooghly River in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal (which borders Bangladesh), is prone to siltation, and India had long considered diverting the Ganges to provide water to flush it out. It began planning for this project in 1951, with the idea of building a barrage called Farakka on the Ganges just north of East Pakistan’s northern border to divert the water.

India and Pakistan engaged in political conflict over this plan for the next twenty years, with talks stalling and resuming intermittently and no major agreements reached (Dinar et al. 2007, 257). While the Indus conflict had finally resulted in a treaty in 1960, no such treaty resulted from the Ganges conflict. This could be attributed to the fact that Western powers were not concerned about the Ganges conflict. It was the Indus conflict, with its connection to Kashmir and the constant threat of war over the territory, that concerned the West and compelled the World Bank to step in and broker the Indus treaty (discussed in the next section). India, under no such pressure in the case of the
Ganges, consistently rebuffed Pakistan’s requests for joint action and international assistance on the Farakka Barrage issue (Dinar et al. 2007, 257).

By the time Bangladesh gained its independence at the end of 1971, Farakka was nearly complete, and the issue loomed large for the new state of Bangladesh. Bangladesh had friendlier relations with India than did Pakistan, and India had assisted Bangladesh militarily in its war against Pakistan for independence. However, India was by far the more powerful country, and had no reason to rush into negotiating a formal treaty with Bangladesh. India did enter into a Treaty of Friendship with Bangladesh in 1972, which stated that the two countries desired to cooperate over water issues and established the Joint Rivers Commission, but India has been careful not to enter into a treaty with Bangladesh that specifies permanent flow levels. Between 1972 and 1996, four agreements were made between the two countries concerning water flow from Farakka. In 1996 a thirty-year treaty, the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, was negotiated, set to be renegotiated (or expire) in 2026.

Much like the experiences in Pakistan of lowering canal levels in the years after its inception, Bangladesh also contends with a traumatic water-related memory that is intertwined with its birth as a country and has made water a major foreign policy issue with India up through this day. Farakka Barrage, located only ten miles north of the Bangladeshi border, came online in 1975. Although India had agreed to allow certain flow levels into Bangladesh during the remaining 1975 dry season and the dry season of the following year, the assassination of Bangladeshi president Sheikh Rahman in August of 1975 and the establishment of military rule in Bangladesh altered the relationship between the two countries. In 1976, Bangladesh experienced significantly
reduced flow levels during the dry season when India unilaterally began to divert flows at Farakka, (Swain 2004, 60), leading to a crisis much like the one experienced in West Pakistan in 1948. This was of such a concern to Bangladesh that it lodged a formal complaint against India at the 31st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1976, which resulted in a five-year agreement with India signed in 1977.

To the Bangladeshi mind, because the planning of Farakka began when it was still a part of Pakistan, Bangladesh has never had a say in, nor agreed to, its existence. It is widely thought in Bangladesh that India effectively got away with “stealing” Bangladesh’s water supply (personal communication, newspaper editor, Dhaka, 2008). In 1976 an Islamic scholar named Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani organized a “Farakka Long March” to demand that Farakka be destroyed. The march was consecrated as a national holiday held on March 16, the Historic Farakka Long March Day. The barrage looms large both literally and metaphorically over Bangladesh, both politically (domestically and internationally) and in the popular mind.

The Negotiation of Treaties: Water Conflict Solved?

The Indus Waters Treaty

The Indus Waters Treat (IWT) was finally signed by India and Pakistan (and the World Bank, who brokered the agreement) in 1960, thirteen years after Partition. However, negotiations for the treaty began shortly after Partition, which occurred in 1947. During this period, instability on the Subcontinent was of great concern to Western powers, which were beginning to recover from the devastations of a world war and dealing with the spread of communism. Peace between Pakistan and India was seen as essential to shoring up the region against this threat, and to the United States, emerging from its victories in World War II as the world’s self-proclaimed leader in
matters of democracy and economic development, the Subcontinent represented a chance to operate its “program for peace and freedom.”¹

Kashmir was seen at that time, as it is today, as the major stumbling block to peaceful relations between India and Pakistan. However, while today Kashmir is thought of as a religious, ethnic, and territorial dispute, at the time it was widely believed to be a conflict about the Indus, whose major tributaries flow through the Indian-held part of the region. It was considered of the utmost importance by Western powers, therefore, that a treaty be negotiated between India and Pakistan as soon as possible. When India’s Prime Minister Nehru invited David Lilienthal, the former Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) chairman, to visit India in 1951 to assess whether the TVA paradigm of integrated, large-scale management could be applied to the Indus case, the United States took it as a chance to assess the situation. Lilienthal met with President Truman before his trip, who stressed to him that the United States had never before faced such danger as it did now (i.e., communism) (Lilienthal 1966, 71), and Lilienthal was encouraged to add Pakistan to his itinerary (Lilienthal 1966, 65). Lilienthal thus departed on his tour of the Subcontinent with a significant diplomatic weight on his shoulders.

Lilienthal, not surprisingly given the particular lens through which he viewed development (i.e., integrated river basin management), returned from the trip convinced that a TVA-style project could help solve the Kashmir dispute, and thus bring about peace between India and Pakistan (Lilienthal 1951, 57–58). He wrote an article on the subject for Collier’s magazine (provocatively entitled “Another ‘Korea’ in the Making?”),

¹ So-labeled by President Truman in his inaugural speech in 1949. In the same speech he articulated the concept of an unequal world, divided between “developed” and “underdeveloped” countries.
which was read by Eugene Black, then-president of the World Bank. Within a month Black brought on the World Bank as technical advisor, mediator, and financer of a treaty negotiations process.

India and Pakistan both accepted World Bank assistance, and the following year (1952) engineers from both countries had an initial meeting in Washington, DC, under the watchful eye of a Bank-appointed engineer. Everyone met again in 1952 in Karachi, where they exchanged data and planned fact-finding field trips together (Khan 2007, 78–79). There was another meeting in Delhi in early 1953, and again in Washington, DC in September of that year. Things seemed to be on the right track, but when both countries presented their plans for the sharing of the Indus waters, it was found that that the two countries’ visions of equitable sharing were very far apart (Dinar et al. 2007, 276). It became clear that while both countries could be brought to the table, they could not be convinced to cooperate.

Eventually the World Bank had to give up its hope that any kind of integrated solution could be found for the Indus problem. Instead, it proposed a solution that was nearly the opposite: a physical/political split the river and its tributaries between India and Pakistan. To India would go the three eastern tributaries, to Pakistan the two western tributaries and the Indus proper (there are six rivers in the system, the five tributaries and the Indus itself). The problem of the upper portions of Pakistan’s three rivers flowing through Indian-held Kashmir was addressed through treaty provisions that India was not allowed to build any structures on those upper portions that would decrease or alter flow timing of water into Pakistan. Finally, in 1960, the Indus Waters Treaty was signed by both countries, with the World Bank signing as a neutral third
party (making it the only river treaty in the world signed by a non-riparian and international institution). The signing of the treaty was considered a huge success in the West. Although it would soon become apparent that “solving” the Indus problem would not create peace between India and Pakistan, the fact that the two countries have never gone to war specifically or overtly over water (rather it has always been over Kashmir as a territorial possession) has encouraged a very positive view of the IWT in the West that is highly at odds with how it is viewed in Pakistan (and to some extent India, as the agreement allots four-fifths of the water to Pakistan—not a fact widely cited in Pakistani news media on the conflict, it should be noted. However, it should also be considered that the Indus is critical only to several of India’s western states, while it is Pakistan’s major water source).

The Ganges Water Sharing Treaty

Negotiations for a treaty over the Ganges proceeded quite differently. First, while the IWT was negotiated with the view of creating cooperation—or at least nonconflict—as both countries proceeded with development of the river basin, India had already built a dam (Farakka Barrage) on the Ganges when negotiations began with Bangladesh. Second, the case provoked little interest or concern in the West. There was no Lilienthal or Black for the Ganges, something that is seen by some experts in Bangladesh as the reason Bangladesh ended in a situation in which its water is being “stolen” by India (personal communication, policy analyst, Dhaka, 2008). (The same view, however, is prevalent in Pakistan, so one could hypothesize that this kind of perspective arises rather from the circumstance of being a downstream riparian dependent on a more powerful, hegemonic upstream state for the majority of its water resources. Both Pakistan and Bangladesh have very high water dependency ratios, which means most
of their freshwater resources originate outside their borders. Pakistan gets about 78 percent of its water from external sources; Bangladesh gets 91 percent from external sources.)

After the Treaty of Friendship was signed in 1972 between India and the newly created country of Bangladesh, which established only that there would be discussions dealing with the water sharing issue between the two, India did not engage in meaningful negotiations with Bangladesh. For some years India refused to engage at all, and continued with unilateral water withdrawals at Farakka, but talks resumed after Bangladesh took the matter of the Farakka Barrage to the UN in 1976. This resulted, in 1977, in the five-year Ganges Water Agreement.

This Agreement, which was essentially a treaty, was generous in comparison to the 1996 thirty-year treaty, probably because of its short duration. Although any treaty was better than none at that point, India had no intention of locking itself into any permanent water-sharing solution. The 1977 treaty specified a 60/40 split of water during the dry season (with 60 percent going to Bangladesh). While this may seem to be to Bangladesh’s advantage, this provision could equally be read as a loss of 40 percent of Bangladesh’s water that it received prior to Farakka. The Agreement, however, contained a very important clause called the “80 percent guarantee clause,” which specified that during periods of unusually low flow, Bangladesh would be guaranteed 80 percent of their allocation regardless of how little water this left for India (Rahaman 2006, 201). The 1977 Agreement also specified a dispute resolution procedure and instructions that the two countries look into long-term possibilities of
augmenting the flow of the Ganges during the dry season. The latter of these provisions is missing from the 1996 treaty (Rahaman 2006, 202).

After the 1977 Agreement expired in 1982, it was not renewed. India and Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 1982 and 1985, but neither specified minimum flows to Bangladesh. Finally in 1996 the two countries signed the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, which watered down some of the provisions of the 1977 Agreement. Bangladesh’s share of water during the dry season decreased to 52 percent (with India getting 48 percent—these numbers are averages; the percentages shift depending on flow levels). Measurements have shown that flow into Bangladesh during dry season as decreased to 50 percent of pre-Farakka levels (Rahaman 2006, 204). Perhaps most importantly, the 1996 treaty does not specify and 80 percent flow guarantee. Rather, it simply states that if water levels drop unusually low, the two countries should meet to discuss allocation. This provides no guarantees to Bangladesh, and leaves the country in a precarious position that is dependent on the tone of the political relationship between the two countries at any given time. The dispute resolution mechanism in the 1996 treaty are also specified in fewer details than those in the 1977 Agreement.

The Ganges Water Sharing Treaty (GWST) differs from the IWT in a few important ways. The first is that it is significantly shorter. The IWT is primarily a technical document, and is over eighty pages long. The GWST is a three-page document, political in tone, and with the exception of the rather simple specifications for the relationship between flow levels and water sharing, is vague in its language. The dispute resolution procedure it outlines amounts to the governments of India and
Bangladesh meeting to work out their differences, whereas the IWT specifies a very specific procedure for working out disagreements. A final difference is that the IWT is comprehensive in that it covers the sharing of all surface water between Pakistan and India, while the GWST covers only the working of one dam on one tributary of a river basin system. There are many other rivers (50+) that flow from India into Bangladesh, and these are not covered by treaties.

The GWST also contains an inherent flaw that the IWT does not. Because it specifies how much water each country gets depending on flow levels, measurements had to be taken of average flow levels to arrive at the proper allocation amounts. These measurements were taken from the years 1949 to 1988. Since that time, because of upstream withdrawals of Ganges water in India, flow levels have decreased. This was apparent even in the years immediately following the signing of the treaty, resulting in a feeling in Bangladesh that India must be violating it (Hossain 1998, 142). The view of the GWST in Bangladesh, therefore, like the IWT in Pakistan, is not highly favorable, despite the relationship between India and Bangladesh being far warmer than that between India and Pakistan.

**Treaties Do Not Solve Everything**

**Domestic Water Problems**

At the international level shared water is largely a political issue, but the on-the-ground realities of water as a natural resource clearly play some role in the bigger picture. This role, however, is not that if a country that has transboundary water resources lacks enough water, it will—absent a treaty—go to war to secure its supply. The negotiation of a treaty is a far more likely outcome in such a situation. From the perspective of a state—and for a moment we will use the word “state” in the sense of a
“black box” that operates coherently—water is not a natural resource but a political one. The state, unlike the ultimate end user of the water, does not directly depend on water for survival. Rather, it depends on the people who depend on the water—a kind of once-removed or secondary dependence.

The state, of course, is not actually a black box, and so the domestic-level picture is quite complex. A state, regardless of its type of government, has competing factions at the highest levels of power. This is true of Pakistan and Bangladesh through all iterations of governments, military rule alternating with democratic or nominally democratic rule, since their inceptions. The many iterations of governments over the decades in both countries (these will be discussed in the chapter on state identity) are both a result and indication of political contestation. In both countries water has been and continues to be a major force in domestic politics because water is an extremely important issue generally and thus becomes intertwined with the machinations of those in power or trying to gain power, or otherwise influence policy. In order to understand how water politics work at the international level, there must be some understanding of the situation of water at a domestic level, because the two levels interact, through the filter of state identity, to produce the tone of bilateral relationships over shared water resources.

In both Pakistan and Bangladesh, water can be (in an overall sense) both overabundant and scarce, depending on the season. While flooding is an international concern because of the role big dams can have in flood control, it is the scarcity of water and the relationship of this to agriculture that is the major concern both domestically and in terms of international politics. Both countries’ economies—and thus
the livelihoods of large segments of the populations—are agriculturally based. An additional source of tension at the domestic level is that water is unevenly distributed, both naturally and because of human interventions. Allocation is just as politically charged domestically as it is internationally. The combination of the agriculturally based economy, the dependence of much of the population on agriculture for livelihoods, and uneven distribution produces an inherently insecure situation that is amplified by water dependence on an upstream, powerful neighbor.

**Pakistan**

Pakistan has a variable water supply throughout the year and its agricultural economy is highly dependent on irrigation: 90 percent of Pakistan’s food is grown in land irrigated by the Indus basin (Kamal 2009, 39). Because of British development of the Indus river during the colonial era, Pakistan has a system of irrigation that mitigates much of the natural variability of its water supply and allows for the growing of dry season crops with some sense of security that water will be regularly available. The fact that the headworks of Pakistan’s irrigation system are in Indian-held Kashmir negates much of this security, but the IWT between the two countries does guarantee India will not shut off Pakistan’s water supply. As the countries have fought a number of wars without India resorting to shutting off the water (although the threat has been made), it is difficult to imagine what kind of crisis would precipitate such an action.

Domestic water management in Pakistan leaves much to be desired. After Partition, Pakistan adopted the colonial structures of management and its legal institutions. Left intact as well were the systems of privilege and the status of local elites that was tied to water access—in particular, water access is tied to land ownership. Landowners are often not the ones who actually farm the land, and tenants have no
voice in land or water management (Kamal 2009, 32). This has resulted in a structure of water management that is based on unequal access and enables inefficiency and corruption (Mustafa 2001, 824, 829). Downstream water users are particularly vulnerable, and many do not get any water at all when their turn for access comes (Mustafa 2001, 827).

While it was once thought that the Indus carried more than enough water for both India and Pakistan (Lilienthal 1951, 58), in recent years it has become apparent that a high total water volume does not necessarily equal water abundance. Indeed, Pakistan is one of the most water-stressed countries in the world, and will become water scarce by 2035 (defined as an average availability of less than 1000 cubic meters per capita per year) (Briscoe and Qamar 2005, xiv–xv). Much of the reason for this scarcity lies in the water management system itself, not natural shortages. While Pakistan uses an astonishing 97 percent of its surface water supply every year (the Indus no longer flows into the sea for eleven out of twelve months), two-thirds of canal water is lost through seepage (Kamal 2009, 41). Pakistan has also focused its energies on supply-side management rather than more efficient irrigation systems or conservation education. Especially in the decades following Partition, Pakistan embarked on a large number of big water management projects, mostly funded by development aid and with the help of US and British engineering firms (Wescoat Jr., Halvorson, and Mustafa 2000, 394–395).

Unequal access to the Indus’s waters has led to antagonisms between provinces, most notably Punjab and its downstream riparian, Sindh. Punjab, the upstream neighbor and politically stronger and more populous province, is seen to be taking more than its fair share of water and leaving Sindh short. These provinces had
long had an antagonistic relationship over the allocation regime of the Indus, but after Partition the national interest superseded conflict resolution for Punjab and Sindh (Wescoat Jr., Halvorson, and Mustafa 2000, 394). The *Sindhi Association of North America*, which seems primarily concerned with the water-sharing problem between the two, alleges that the Pakistani party that negotiated the IWT was composed entirely of Punjabis, and Sindh’s needs and rights were ignored and signed away (Talpur 2001).

This conflict is featured in national media as much as the international-level conflict with India (Kamal 2009, 42), and is prone to much of the same inflammatory representation. Local and national civic organizations do not ignore the role of their own country’s government in creating unequal water access. The PMKM, a farmer’s lobby group that threatened a march on the Wagah border in April of 2009 to protest India’s water “theft,” has been almost as critical of the Pakistani government for its poor water management (*The News International* July 27, 2009). Pakistan’s own deficiencies in terms of water issues are politicized within the country. However, the rhetoric does not reach the level of vitriol one sees in the national-level media discourses surrounding India and the IWT. These discourses are highly securitized, and they lack nuance or any semblance of an attempt at a balanced discussion. These discourses represent the relationship between the two countries over water as a zero-sum game. Any gain for India is a total loss for Pakistan.

**Bangladesh**

One of the most significant challenges Bangladesh deals with in terms of its domestic water resources is that the water is not available at similar rates throughout the year. Most of the water arrives in the form of rainfall feeding the GBM basin during monsoon season, from June to September. Although flooding can cause damage and
losses, both of wet season crops and lives, flooding is at the same time an essential part of the agriculture economy. The relationship between when flooding occurs and labor needs in the agricultural sector is complex (Kolas et al. 2013, 12), and because flooding for the most part cannot be controlled, even during the wet season livelihoods in the agricultural sector in Bangladesh are insecure.

During the dry season in Bangladesh, irrigation is the primary watering system for crops (shrimp farming and other types of fisheries, which also rely on fresh water, are another important sector of the Bangladeshi economy; I am including these as part of the agriculture sector). Dry season droughts, declining groundwater levels, and increasing salinity of available water are all concerns. There is a general feeling among educated Bangladeshis and Bangladeshi experts on water issues that the government has not prioritized the water sector; for example, it has not worked to collect and store water during the wet season for dry season use (personal communication, university professor, Dhaka, 2008). An exception to this is the Teesta Barrage project on the Teesta river (the Teesta is also dammed upstream in India). There is also a feeling among Bangladeshi elites, both water experts and government officials, that water issues are politicized to an extent that policymaking becomes secondary to political conflict (Kolas et al. 2013, 65).

At local levels opinions among end users of water resources vary, in part because local conditions themselves vary, but also because accurate information on water issues can be scarce or biased as it filters down from the national-level politicization of the subject, mostly via news outlets. A recent study on local-level stakeholder opinions in three different regions of Bangladesh, however, shows some
interesting similarities of opinions among end users (Kolas et al. 2013). This study involved interviews with stakeholders along three tributaries of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin. The first of these, the Padma, receives flows from Farakka Barrage. The second, the Teesta, has been dammed in Bangladesh and upstream in India. The third, the Kushiara in northeastern Bangladesh, is downstream of a proposed hydroelectric and flood control dam site in India—the Tipaimukh Dam, which has long been a point of contention between Bangladesh and India.

The interviewed stakeholders in all sites mentioned drought during dry season as one of their biggest concerns. For those on the Padma, this is already a reality, as Farakka has impacted dry season flows. For those on the Teesta, the situation is quite different, because the Teesta Barrage in Bangladesh allows for irrigation during the dry season. However, many stakeholders in this area expressed concern about the upstream dam in India, saying that it has resulted in a significant loss of water flow into Bangladesh, even negatively impacting the operation of the Bangladeshi dam. For the stakeholders along the Kushiara, the fear of losing water to India if it builds the Tipaimukh Dam upstream is high. Farakka is largely a symbolic issue, because it already exists. It is the Tipaimukh project and the fears surrounding its impacts in Bangladesh that has been the hot-button water-related issue in Bangladesh in recent decades (it is by far the most-mentioned water-related issue in news media, as is examined in Chapter 5).

Besides the common shared fear of dry season water scarcity among those interviewed in the cited study, an interesting trend among the opinions of local stakeholders when contrasted to national-level elite interviewees emerges. While elites
are certainly aware of water conflicts with upstream India, they speak about water issues from a predominantly domestic perspective, listing the lack of government will and politicization of water issues as reasons for many of Bangladesh’s water problems. At the local level, stakeholders talked about India’s role in Bangladesh’s water problems. India looms large in the mind of the general population as the source of water scarcity or future water scarcity. This is the result of the politicization that occurs around water at the national level, which informs national news reporting of water-related issues. The two main competing parties in Bangladesh’s political system (the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party) use the international-level water issues, i.e. Bangladesh’s relationship with India over water, as a tool to discredit each other.

**International Water Problems**

What emerges from the above discussion is that in both Pakistan and Bangladesh, while domestic-level water management is a concern, national-level discussions that take place through media are very focused on India. The major difference between the two is that in Bangladesh its relationship with India over water is merely politicized, whereas in Pakistan the relationship is securitized. The chapter on state identity further explores why this is the case, and the relationship between politicization/securitization and state identity. This section briefly introduces specific disputes that have emerged in recent years between India and its downstream neighbors over water issues. These disputes are the lens through which the thesis of this dissertation is analyzed. They are detailed more thoroughly in Chapter 5, where the analysis is conducted.

As was discussed above, neither treaty is viewed very favorably in their respective downstream signatory countries. There is recognition that having treaties is a
positive circumstance in that they allow for continued, predictable interactions between
signatories. In other words, having a treaty is better than having no treaty. However, as
is the stance of this study, the treaties themselves cannot be viewed as entirely
successful because they are not viewed as such in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and both
countries continue to experience at times considerable political conflict with India over
water issues.

As has been discussed, the two treaties have a significant difference between
them: while the IWT essentially covers an entire basin (i.e. the Indus river and its five
tributaries), the GSWT covers one dam on one waterway. This means that most of the
shared rivers between Bangladesh and India are not covered by any treaty. This is an
important distinction, as one would expect to see significantly more conflict between
Bangladesh and India because of this lack of additional treaties. However, this is not the
case. The difference between the two treaties also brings into focus a characteristic of
international water treaties for allocation (rather than, say, navigation rights or pollution)
that is often overlooked. While allocation treaties superficially govern how much water
riparian countries get, the issue of allocation is intimately tied to dams and other
interventions on waterways. Some allocation treaties specifically treat this issue, such
as the IWT and the GSWT. When allocation treaties do not address dam building, the
issue of dams (or other interventions—though in the current era it is predominantly
hydroelectric/flood control/irrigation dams that are the major interventions on large
waterways) must be negotiated outside the ambit of the treaty, a situation that is ripe for
conflict (as can be seen in the example of the outdated treaty over the Nile and
Ethiopia’s plans for building a dam upstream of all the other Nile riparians).
When one discusses allocation treaties, therefore, what is really under discussion is interventions on the shared waterways, and it is these interventions that are the brunt of political conflict in relation to treaties. While the IWT is very specific about what kind of dams India can build upstream of Pakistan, there is still considerable conflict between the two countries despite the existence of the treaty. The GWST does not specify anything about dam building, but can and does serve as a guide for interactions between Bangladesh and India over their multiple shared waterways, some of which India would like to build dams on.

The cases in this study, therefore, while they begin with the functioning of these treaties, are wider in their scope, because the relationships between India and its downstream neighbors over water issues are themselves wider in scope than just interactions specifically within the ambit of the treaties. The treaties, as well as governing very specific issues, “work” within the bilateral riparian relationships in a more general sense, as a focus, guide, and even source of conflict in political interactions. Political conflict over water issues in both cases is centered on dam building.

**Pakistan**

Pakistan and India, unlike Bangladesh and India, conduct all their water-related interactions under the ambit of a treaty. The disagreements they experience, therefore, are guided by specified provisions. The IWT is very specific about how disagreements are to be worked through. If the two countries cannot come to an agreement themselves, the World Bank is to appoint a neutral expert (NE) to make a decision that both countries must abide by. Specific language is used in these cases: if a conflict is considered a “dispute” rather than a “difference,” the case is to be heard before a specially created Court of Arbitration. For forty years, disagreements between Pakistan
and India never necessitated this highest level of the resolution procedure. In the last fifteen years, there have been two instances where they have, both related to Indian dam building upstream on the rivers designated as belonging to Pakistan in the IWT. The IWT does not preclude India from building on these rivers, but it does specify that the dams must be run-of-the-river, i.e., do not significantly interrupt the flow into Pakistan.

The first of these conflicts was over Baglihar Dam on the Chenab. In January 2005, Pakistan asked the World Bank to provide an NE to decide the matter, as per the treaty’s arbitration procedure, and the NE issued a decision in 2007 that sought to balance both countries’ demands. In recent years the Kishanganga Dam on the Neelam River (a tributary of the Jhelum) has become the major water-related conflict between Pakistan and India. India began construction of the dam in 2004, and Pakistan in particular was concerned about the dam’s potential impact on a dam Pakistan is building downriver. Pakistan made a request for international arbitration as per the treaty in 2010. This time a Court of Arbitration was designated to take over arbitration, indicating the more serious nature of the disagreement. Its decision, issued in two parts in 2013 and 2014, was, like the Baglihar decision, one that attempted to balance both countries’ demands. As is discussed in Chapter 5, however, neither decision was necessarily viewed favorably in Pakistan.

**Bangladesh**

The major source of water-related tension between Bangladesh and India in recent years has been the Tipaimukh, a hydroelectric and flood control dam to be built on the Barak River in the state of Manipur in India. Planning for the dam began in 1984, and it has been a source of controversy in both India and Bangladesh because of its
expected impact, such as displacements of local populations, decreased water for
downstream agriculture and fisheries, and degradation of sensitive downstream
environments (Ahmed 2012, 52). The Tipaimukh is a massive project that is seen as
comparable to Farakka in terms of possible impacts on Bangladesh (Chowdhury 2011,
3). While there are other Indian dam projects upstream of Bangladesh, Tipaimukh has
received the bulk of political and media attention, especially since India signed building
contracts with construction companies in 2011 (D’Costa 2012, 153).

The above bilateral conflicts (conflicts because they have unfolded over
decades) are not the only issues under dispute between India and its downstream
riparian neighbors, but they are the ones that become the “at hand” referents of
securitization and politicization in Pakistan and Bangladesh. In the following chapter, the
state identities of these two countries are established. The chapter contains a thorough
discussion of what state identity is, the methodologies I used to analyze state identity,
and the role state identity plays in the securitization and politicization processes. These
processes are then analyzed in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 4
THE COMPONENTS OF STATE IDENTITY OF PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH

A Theory of State Identity

Identity is, simply put, messy. A person can hold multiple identities; they may be ascribed or acquired; identities may shift over time; they can be individual or group related. State identity is even more conceptually difficult, because what we call a “state” is not a single entity, nor is it properly a group. It is a conglomeration of elite actors of various kinds, a “general” population that can be subdivided into multiple and often overlapping groups, and formal and informal institutions—all of which are contained and operate within strictly defined territorial boundaries. How, then, can we define “state” identity? Answering this question is necessarily prior to determining what a state’s identity is and how it affects treaty-based relations between states.

The “state” is a conceptual category rather than an agent, and therefore cannot technically hold an identity. This does not mean, however, that state identity cannot be defined and evaluated. It must be understood that state identity is itself a conceptual category whose parameters and content can be delineated in a way that allows us to apply it to understanding state behavior. This application relies on the assumption that the state, in the realm of behavior, ceases to be a conceptual category and becomes the collective workings of its components—in the case of this project, specifically its elite actors and related institutions. These actors and institutions are influenced by state identity and express it through their actions, and indeed often define it. This being the case, state identity itself becomes something that is acted (out). In this sense it becomes tangible, and thereby empirically observable.
There is no consensus among scholars on how to define state identity, and more importantly, how to operationalize it (Abdelal et al. 2009, 17–18). State identity as a variable is problematic because it is amorphous and complex and, like all “things” that are really ideas, not completely explicable. In this way, however, it is like definitions of individual and group identities, which implicitly recognize that identity is about perception and self-understanding, and therefore both subjective and intersubjective in nature. Indeed, much of the work on state identity in some way relies on the extrapolation of individual and group identity definitions to the level of the state (e.g., Wendt 1992, one of the earlier works on state identity and interests).

In the field of International Relations, most work on state identity and related concepts such as norms and interests is in the subfield of constructivism, which is largely interested in how ideational, rather than material, concerns impact state behavior. Constructivism emerged in the early 1990s and its central concern is how states perceive themselves in relation to other states, and how this impacts actor or state interests and behavior. As Wendt (1992) observes, “Identities are inherently relational” (397). This is because for Wendt and other scholars interested in state identity, identities inform interests (398) which are necessarily acted upon in interstate relationships.

Despite the key role state identity plays in his work, Wendt (1992; 1994; 1999) does not address how to analyze identity in terms of specific cases. His concern is to build a constructivist theory of international politics (which emerged fully formed in his 1999 book, Social Theory of International Politics) rather than to operationalize the variable of state identity. This results in a conflation of identity with interests, and the
links between the two are left conceptually murky. A more specific constructivist
definition of state identity is supplied in *The Culture of National Security* (Jepperson,
Wendt, and Katzenstein 1996): it is defined as a label “for varying construction(s) of
nationhood and statehood” that “reference both . . . the nationally varying ideologies of
collective distinctiveness (‘nationhood’ or nationalism, for short), and . . . country
variation in state sovereignty, as it is enacted domestically and projected internationally
(‘statehood,’ for short)” (59). In other words, state identity both contains ideas
(ideologies, or perceptions of the national self) and is enacted domestically and
internationally. It is, therefore, something that can be both described and demonstrated
empirically.

This brings us closer to what a definition of state identity must include: both an
ideological and a relational component, and both a domestic and an international
aspect. Case studies that rely on this type of conceptualization, however, suffer from
inconsistency in terms of its operationalization because “identity” is often only implicitly
defined. For example, Tannenwald’s work on norms and the development of the nuclear
 taboo (1999; 2008) posits that the United States’ identity as a “civilized state” is part of
its decision not to use nuclear weapons after WWII, but does not outline a methodology
for establishing what, exactly, state identity is or its specific relationship to norms and
interests. Other case studies that specifically address the relationship between identity
and foreign policy similarly “black box” the concept of state identity (see, for example,
Barnett 1996; Telhami and Barnett 2002). A problem found in much of the case study
literature is that the concept of state identity makes no clear distinction between political
components and what could be termed cultural components and their relationship, or how identity and foreign policy are linked.

Berger (1996) attempts to separate the cultural and political by developing a methodology for the study of what he terms “political-military culture” and its influence on policy choices. He defines political-military culture as an aspect of ideological state identity from a domestic perspective: it is the “cultural beliefs and values” that influence “how members of a given society view national security, the military as an institution, and the use of force in international relations” (325–326). His systematized empirical project for establishing this cultural identity includes investigating historical experiences that inform domestic perspectives on military and related issues of national security—what he calls the “critical formative period” of a state’s new or reorganized existence—and then analyzing the political processes that create security policy (328–329).

Berger’s work, besides providing a definition that clarifies to some extent what (state) identity is and how we can analyze it, also addresses another challenge inherent in using state identity as an explanatory variable: how to link identity to policy, which he does through a careful situational as well as longitudinal comparison of both. This illuminates a key characteristic and conundrum of the literature on state identity: it is concerned both with establishing identity as a “thing” that exists, and showing that state identity, and thus interests, can change over time. The former is purely ideological, while the latter is performative and political, i.e. change occurs because a state acts on its interests, which are based on identity. None of the above-cited studies are able to address the contradiction that emerges here—that is, state identity is both static and changeable—because they treat it as an isolated variable: dependent (identity is formed
by historical circumstances), and/or independent (identity influences policy). A working definition of state identity must include a way of dealing with this contradiction. State identity and emerging interests may inform state behavior, but state behavior also informs state identity and interests. The two are mutually constitutive. In other words, state behavior is state identity in a performative sense (Campbell 1998 [1992]). A state, via taking action, is enacting, creating, and enforcing its identity, all at the same time.

This leaves us with a question, however. We have already established that state identity does have an ideological component, which necessarily must be analyzed as a static “thing” a priori to studying it as implicated in the process of performative political identity. This project takes the perspective that state identity and state behavior are mutually constitutive. Where, then, does the ideological component come in? I propose that the ideological aspect of state identity is not part of state identity but rather it informs state identity. In this sense, the ideological component I am interested in comprises the core characteristics of national self-perception that imbue state identity. These core characteristics are formed, as Berger (1996) establishes, in the critical formative period of a state’s history. They may change as a result of a cataclysmic event in a state’s history (e.g., losing a great war, as in Berger’s study of Japan and Germany), or as a result of an evolution over time that results in taking on a new role in world affairs (e.g., the United States’ emerging view of itself as a global moral leader after WWII, as in Tannenwald’s study of the nuclear taboo).

This study defines state identity as both performative and relational, and reliant on discourses created through this performative and relational enactment. Campbell’s (1998 [1992]) work is the basis of this definition. State identity is established and
performed via a process of creating a “discourse of danger” that is relational. A discourse of danger provides the state with a “theology of truth about who and what ‘we’ are by highlighting who or what ‘we’ are not, and what ‘we’ have to fear” (48). Foreign policy (in this study conceptualized as interstate relationships) emerges from this discourse of danger. As Campbell puts it, “Foreign policy . . . needs to be understood as giving rise to a boundary rather than acting as a bridge” (51). In other words, foreign policy is inherently exclusionary, and is based on an us/them dichotomy.

A state provides “the promise of security,” but its identity is not “secure” in the sense of being something that is established in one go and is then enacted via foreign policy (61). Rather, foreign policy itself constitutes identity as the state seeks to establish or maintain these discourses of danger—i.e. the attempted illusion of a secure “we” against the backdrop of an unfriendly other. What constitutes the “danger” differs among states, as does the acuteness of that danger. As is discussed in this chapter, Pakistan and Bangladesh have different conceptions of themselves vis-à-vis other states, and their discourses of danger vary accordingly.

For Campbell, there is no “prior” domestic or international realm: these emerge constitutively with the discourse of danger (62). However, threats are projected as existing in the external (international) realm because “the sovereign domain, for all its identification as a well-ordered and rational entity, is as much a site of ambiguity and indeterminacy as the anarchic realm it is distinguished from” (63). In other words, the insecurity inside a state reconstitutes/relocates outside of the state. It is contestation over identity within a state that embodies foreign policy, and specifically the nature of the discourses of danger that are enacted: “The need to discipline and contain the
ambiguity and contingency of the ‘domestic’ realm is a vital source of the externalization and totalization of threats to that realm through discourses of danger” (64). Foreign policy is “one of the boundary-producing practices central to the production and reproduction of the identity in whose name it operates” (68).

Politicization and securitization, therefore, emerge from a condition of contestation over state identity in the domestic realm: elite state actors seek, through foreign policy (either discursively or behaviorally), to advance one conceptualization of identity over another. The implicit questions that inform this contestation are: What kind of state are we? (In the case of Pakistan and Bangladesh, specifically: Are we secular? Religious? Both?); and a second question, tied to the first, What is our role in the region/world? (Specifically: How do we deal with other states and how are we dealt with by them?) As domestic elite actors seek to gain or maintain power, the answers to these questions are enacted on the domestic and international political playing field.

We have, then, a working definition of state identity: it is informed by ideological concerns that arise in a state’s formative period, which then become the basis of contestations over identity that are performed on a relational domestic and international political playing field. Here we see that state identity is not properly a “thing” that can be described, but rather an explanatory process that can be analyzed. While state identity certainly can evolve over long periods of time (or as a result of a cataclysmic experience, as discussed above), a state’s need for ontological security (Mitzen 2006)¹

¹ Mitzen’s theory can also explain “the apparent irrationality of conflicts among security-seekers that persist for long periods of time—‘intractable conflicts’ or ‘enduring rivalries’” (343), which is relevant to the relationship between Pakistan and India.
ensures that it can be stable enough over shorter periods to be analyzable. In order to analyze it, however, a methodology is needed.

The first part of such a methodology is to establish what comprises a state. The conceptualization of the state as a single entity that takes action is an illusion, albeit a useful one—a kind of shortcut—when studying international relations. As was stated earlier, properly speaking a state is a conglomeration of elite actors, a “general” and varied population, and formal and informal institutions, all contained and operating within defined territorial boundaries. A methodology of establishing a state’s identity can make use of these components. Although they are not in and of themselves an “identity,” they inform identity. Abdelal et al. (2009) propose a methodology that, while based in a positivist epistemology that conceptualizes identity as a variable, can be adapted for the purposes of this study. Their conceptualization of identity is, as they put it, “already implicit in almost all the research on identity” they surveyed, and their purpose in providing an analytical framework is to promote coordination in the study of identity across disciplines (or indeed within disciplines) (19).

They define collective identity in a general sense as a “social category that varies along two dimensions—content and contestation” (19). Collective identity is comprised of four “types” of content that “encompass the variety of meanings in social identities” (19–20). Contestation over this content is what determines the “fluidity and contextual nature of identities” (20). Adapted to my study, these “types” can be seen as the components that inform (state) identity. These four components are:
1. **Constitutive norms**, or the formal and informal rules that define group membership. These “define the boundaries and distinctive practices of the group” (19). In other words, they define who “we” are as a distinct people/state. Following Berger (1996), these can be identified by analyzing the narratives that emerged in a state’s critical formative period.

2. **Social purposes**, or the goals that are shared by members of the group. These goals emerge from the constitutive norms, and are often framed in moral terms, i.e. a state’s special existential role (22–23). Social purpose can be identified by analyzing the goals in the narratives of the state, as well as through the formal institutions of the state as set out in its founding documents.

3. **Relational comparisons**, or the definition of a group by what it is not, i.e. the way it views other groups. This is the part of identity that is formed by the distinction between “us” and “them,” and as Campbell (1998 [1992]) establishes, is often framed by a discourse of danger. While a state may have a number of “others” it defines itself against, in this study the focus will be the extent to which Pakistan and Bangladesh use India as this “other,” as for both India is the most immediately influential/impactful state.

4. **Cognitive models**, or worldviews or understandings of political and material conditions and interests. These models inform how a state sees itself in a broad sense in relation to other states in the international community. For the purposes of my study, evidence for cognitive models will be sourced from the time period I am specifically looking at, i.e. 2001–2012, and will include an analysis of the general international relations of Pakistan and Bangladesh in the post-9/11 era.

**Contestation**, the other dimension of identity, is “the degree of agreement within a group over the content of shared identity” (17). This refers to the domestic political realm, in which different groups vie for the right to define what the state is and what its policies should be—i.e., political power. A longitudinal analysis of political contestation within a state can reveal the scope of this contestation.

As the above indicates, state identity emerges at the nexus of history and the experience of a state within the international system (Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein 1996, 36). The following analysis uses this framework to establish the informing components of Bangladesh’s and Pakistan’s state identity. It is important to remember that in and of themselves, these components do not equal state identity as I
have defined it. Because state identity is enacted, or “performed,” it cannot be established via static components. However, as identity-informing factors, these components determine how states relate to other states. In this study, the goal is to show how identity impacts the way water treaties work within interstate relationships, i.e. their political effectiveness, as applied in the following chapter.

**The Components Of State Identity Of Pakistan And Bangladesh**

The chapter establishes the components that inform Pakistan’s and Bangladesh’s state identities using the interpretive methodology outlined in the above theoretical section. As was discussed previously, the purpose of this analysis is not to describe the two states’ identities but rather to lay an explanatory foundation for demonstrating how state identity is enacted on an international political playing field with regard to international institutions—in this case, water-sharing treaties. This chapter uses a number of sources, including interviews conducted by the author in the region in 2008, primary documents, and scholarship produced by regional and area studies experts and scholars. The discussion here is not meant to produce a specific picture of the culture or society of either country. Rather, it presents a general consensus of the elements of Pakistan’s and Bangladesh’s state identities culled from the aforementioned sources, analyzed via the methodology outlined above. What emerges is a complex yet clear account of two countries with strikingly similar experiences and characteristics, and also some key differences.

The choice was made to establish the historical starting point of this analysis with the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, and secondarily the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. This is not to ignore the immense and decisive influence the region’s colonial past has had on the trajectory of its modern development. However, the
purpose of this chapter is to discuss Pakistan and Bangladesh as independent states, and in particular their self-perceptions as such. Thus, while colonialism can be said to inform the shape of the region’s history and development to the current day and beyond (as indeed it does in most regions of the world), this is treated as an underpinning condition. The question here is not how colonialism shaped/changed the region, but what regional actors did within or despite the given circumstances.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, it provides an overview of the modern histories of Pakistan and Bangladesh, and outlines the similarities and differences between their experiences. Then, it analyzes the components of their state identities in separate sections, beginning with Pakistan (the older state and base case of this study). Last, it discusses the implications of the analysis and how it is can be used as an explanatory foundation for an exploration of the political efficacy of international institutions such as water-sharing treaties.

**Pakistan and Bangladesh Overview**

Partition in 1947 resulted in the establishment of an independent Dominion of Pakistan, which included West Pakistan, what is now called the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and East Bengal/East Pakistan, now called the People’s Republic of Bangladesh. The East and West territories of Pakistan were divided by more than just distance (about 1,000 miles): demographically they differed in significant ways. While both were majority-Muslim, the population of East Pakistan was larger and more homogenous, with Bengalis being the majority ethnic group. West Pakistan was comprised of a number of different ethnic groups that shared little other than religion (in a broad sense—perspectives on Islam naturally varied across groups). Territorially the two parts of Pakistan also differed: West Pakistan brought together under one
government separate provinces, princely states, and tribal areas, whereas East Pakistan was one province. West Pakistan became the seat of the central government, and its relationship with East Pakistan was contentious. A growing independence movement in East Pakistan finally erupted in a full-scale war in 1971, which resulted in the establishment of Bangladesh.

Both countries experienced traumatic beginnings. Despite the hope that Partition could be accomplished peacefully, it was horrifically violent. Hindus and Muslims were not neatly geographically divided, and an estimated 14 million people—Hindus, Muslims, and other groups—were displaced in the rush to relocate in either India or Pakistan (UNHCR 2000, 59). Estimates vary as to how many people were killed or died as a result of communal violence during this period, but it was most certainly a number in the hundreds of thousands. Likewise, Bangladesh’s fight for independence was traumatic and bloody. Indeed, the Bangladesh Liberation War exceeded Partition in terms of the scale of violent atrocities and displacements (Dummett 2011, n.p.; Dawson and Farber 2012, 38).

A traumatic origin is not the only similarity between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Both states have struggled to institutionalize functioning democratic governance, and both have experienced a series of coups and military rule. This instability has been informed by questions related to state identity, in particular the role of religion in government. The leaders of both the Pakistan and Bangladesh independence movements (notably Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, respectively) envisioned secular states. This is not to say they saw no role for religion in politics. The concept of secularism in these cases is not quite the same as that found in Western
countries. The Western concept of secularism is of a separation of church and state, or church and politics. Among South Asian Muslims, where Islam is considered to encompass an entire way of life rather than simply a belief system, Western-style secularism is difficult to accept or even imagine (Ollapally 2008, 44). Amartya Sen’s conceptualization of secularism can be used to illustrate how the role of the state in South Asia is perceived vis-à-vis religion: the state does not need to separate itself from religion; rather, “there must be a basic symmetry of treatment” of different religions and those who share the same religion (Ollapally quoting Sen, Ollapally 2008, 44).

The question both countries have grappled with is more to what degree Islam should be implicated with governance, rather than whether it should play a role at all—although, as will be discussed further on, commitment to secular ideals is somewhat stronger in Bangladesh. In terms of state identity, the question becomes: “Are we an Islamic state, or a state in which Islam defines who we are?” This struggle can be seen playing out both in the evolving institutions of government (e.g., constitutions) and in the contestations among political parties and between civil leadership and the military.

**Analysis of State Identities of Pakistan and Bangladesh**

To briefly review, this study operationalizes the concept of state identity via an interpretive methodology that allows for the analysis of the components of identity and its contestation. The components are as follows.

- **Constitutive norms:** who “we” are as a people.
- **Social purposes:** what we are as a state.
- **Relational comparisons:** who/what we are in reference to our “other.”
- **Cognitive models:** our state in reference to the international community.

Contestation is the struggle that occurs over these components. The components and contestation are identified via the following evidence.
Constitutive norms: the narratives and discourses of the state’s critical formative experience, including the independence movement and the early period following independent statehood, in particular speeches made by the independence movement leaders Jinnah and Rahman.

Social purposes: as defined by the narratives analyzed above as well as state institutions, most notably constitutions and other founding documents.

Relational comparisons: the discourse of danger a state develops to define itself against an “other.” Here the education system, which is where citizens of the state are formed, is used to explore the discourse of danger.

Cognitive models: the degree to which the state sees itself as a “normal” member of the international community.

Contestation: the changing domestic political landscape over time, in particular regime change and conflict between political parties.

In the following two sections the above framework is applied to Pakistan and Bangladesh for the purpose of establishing an explanatory basis for how state identity is enacted on the international political playing field.

Pakistan State Identity

Constitutive norms

The extremity and scale of the violence of Partition itself was discussed above in the context of establishing that the birth of the sovereign nation of Pakistan was traumatic and antagonistic. It is also important to note that communal violence between Hindus and Muslims had been increasing in India in the years before Partition (Talbot and Singh 2009, 67), which indicates the growing antagonism and binary opposition felt between the two groups. However, the purpose of this section is not to examine the
circumstances of Partition. Rather, it is an assessment of the discourses about whether there was a necessity for an independent Pakistan. Independent statehood was not a foregone conclusion (Jalal 1994 [1985]), but it was one that came to be seen as inevitable as British withdrawal from the region approached. A mapping of the process of changing discourse can reveal how “we as a people” came to be framed. In particular, the evolving ideas of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, leader of the All-India Muslim League political party and then Pakistan’s first Governor-General, are revealing of the fundamental incompatibility that was increasingly seen to exist between the region’s Muslims and Hindus.

In the decades before the British withdrawal from the region, the major concern of the region’s Muslims, a minority group, was how they would be treated in an independent India—specifically, whether they would be able to achieve adequate political representation. In the early part of his political career, Jinnah hoped some kind of Hindu-Muslim unity could be achieved, but this proved difficult both because the Hindu political elites were not interested in making many concessions, and the Muslim community itself was far from unified in terms of its goals (Jalal 1994 [1985], 8–10). In a speech he gave in 1935 to the Central Legislative Assembly, Jinnah advocated for a political solution to communalism. At this time, he identified Muslims as a “minority,” meaning they had a different language, race, and culture, and were a “separate entity in the State, and that separate entity wants [political] safeguards” (Jalal 1994 [1985], 14). His vision was for a cooperative solution to the sharing of power.

The Muslim League did not fare well in the 1937 elections, however, and it was after this that the discourse shifted from the potential for cooperative solutions to
framing Muslims and Hindus as oppositional and fundamentally different groups. In a 1940 speech to the Muslim League, Jinnah no longer spoke of Muslims as a minority that needed special safeguards. Rather, he characterized Muslims and Hindus as occupying irreconcilable social orders, of belonging to conflicting, nearly mutually exclusive, civilizations. Muslims were a “nation” unto themselves, which pushed the conversation toward the achievement of political autonomy.

The two-nation theory, as this was known, did not necessarily mean independent statehood for Muslims—while Jinnah did discuss sovereignty, he did not use the term “Pakistan” in the speech, and was vague as to what a final solution could be (Talbot and Singh 2009, 33). The two-nation theory did, however, reposition Muslims as being in political parity with Hindus. Both were nations, presumably of equal importance regardless of demographic size. In seeking to define Muslims as a nation rather than a minority, Jinnah in effect was advocating they have an equal say in an Indian government (Jalal 1994 [1985], 241). One of the problems Jinnah faced, however, was that Muslims were geographically dispersed and varied, and did not as a group possess any inherent cohesiveness beyond being Muslim—which itself did not necessarily connote that there was consensus among them. Jinnah had a civilizational view of Muslims—that is to say, he saw religion as inextricably bound up with a people’s history, ethnicity, culture, and social order, and Islam as defining a way of life. However, he increasingly began to simplify the conversation in terms of Islam, repositioning it as a unifying belief system. He ended his 1940 speech with the words: “Come forward as

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2 A text of the speech can be found at http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00islamlinks/txt_jinnah_lahore_1940.html.
servants of Islam. Organise the people economically, socially, educationally, and politically, and I am sure that you will be a power that will be accepted by everybody.”

Given this increasing tendency to emphasize the religion of Islam and the binary opposition between Hindus and Muslims as the reason for an independent Pakistan in the years before Partition, Jinnah’s first speech to the Constituent Assembly upon being elected first Governor-General of Pakistan is remarkable in its complete reversal, and indeed attempted obliteration, of religious difference. As will be seen in the next section, Jinnah’s vision for Pakistan as outlined in this speech was not attained, but his words on the event of this first speech are telling in that they establish the beginnings of the main source of political contestation in Pakistan: the role of religion in politics. Jinnah devotes a substantial section at the end of his speech to the subject. This placement is significant: by presenting the subject last (arguably the most important part of a speech), Jinnah indicates that it is his vision for what he hoped “we as a people” would be in the new country.

He begins by saying that while freedom of religion—for all, not just Muslims—was sacrosanct, he believed that eventually all differences would disappear, even those between sects within one religion (e.g., between Shias and Sunnis). As he put it, “We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State.” He ended with, “Now I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith

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3 A full text of the speech can be found at http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/constituent_address_11aug1947.html.

4 Reprints of the speech in Pakistan tend to redact this section, as it conflicts with the vision of Pakistan as an Islamic state.
of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.” This new framing is significant in that it establishes the idea of “we as a people” as Pakistanis, i.e. citizens first—and this framing was inclusive, rather than exclusive, of multiple religions. Jinnah’s death the following year, however, cut short any further direct influence he could have had on the attainment of this vision.

Social purposes

The preceding section traces the discourses surrounding the eventual establishment of Pakistan as an independent state. As it discusses, the question of political representation for Muslims in an independent India, and the growing awareness that this would not be satisfactorily achieved, was the basis for the Pakistani independence movement. The struggle for political sovereignty was framed by an increasing emphasis on fundamental and incompatible differences between Muslims and Hindus, with the eventual use of the religion of Islam as the rallying cry for independent statehood. Jinnah’s secular vision for the state as articulated in his first speech as Governor-General and then his early death left open the question of what role Islam should play in the new government (Ahmed 1997, 66–67). In this section, I examine the question of “what we are as a state” through an analysis of the Constitution of Pakistan, in particular the changes it has gone through as contention over this question played out in domestic political circles.

A constitution, as a founding document of a state, codifies the fundamental principles by which a state will be governed. As such, it will inherently be contested as a new country’s elites attempt to elucidate what the country is, what it stands for, and how this should be expressed in its institutional design and governing policy prescriptions. That Pakistan was not successful in creating a constitution until 1956, almost ten years
after its establishment, is indicative of the confusion surrounding the creation and identity of the new state. Pakistan’s raison d’être was murky, the result of a collision of historical and political circumstances and a forced sense of unity among groups that had been geographically dispersed before settling in the new state. As was discussed earlier, Pakistan was geographically and ethnically diverse—divided between West and East Pakistan, with the West Pakistan, the locus of political power, being a conglomeration of provinces, tribal areas, and previously independent principalities.

The delay in framing a constitution engendered fears within Pakistan that the country was not ready for democracy (Choudhury 1956, 243), and while there was a general agreement that Islamic principles needed to play a role in the functioning of the state, there was disagreement as to what exactly this meant (Choudhury 1956 244–245). Was Pakistan to be a truly secular state, which many believe was Jinnah’s intention, or should it be an Islamic state? After all, wasn’t the purpose of its existence to provide Muslims the opportunity to live according to Islamic traditions without interference or discrimination, and to give them the opportunity to establish their sovereign political will? In 1949 the adoption of the Objectives Resolution, considered a founding document of Pakistan, established the centrality of Islam to governance in Pakistan, beginning with the sovereignty of Allah.

The 1956 Constitution established Pakistan as an Islamic state (it was renamed the Islamic Republic of Pakistan) and it enshrined the principle of protection of Muslims’ right to live their lives in accordance to the Quran and Sunnah. Islamic education was made compulsory for Muslims, laws were to be made in accordance with the teachings of Islam, and it was ordained that the president must be Muslim. At the same time, the
Constitution established that it was the state’s responsibility to protect minorities from discrimination. Additionally, it included something similar to the American Bill of Rights: a guarantee to all citizens certain fundamental liberties, such as freedom of expression, worship, and association (Choudhury 1956, 249–250). In other words, the 1956 Constitution was an amalgamation of Islamic values and the values of a modern secular state, but in a way that did not fully express or fulfill either set of values, and at times set them against each other in what can be seen as a contradiction.

This Constitution was abrogated in 1958 by President Iskandar Mirza, who feared the influence of East Pakistan in the upcoming elections. He established martial law and appointed army chief Ayub Khan as administrator, who then promptly forced Mirza to resign and flee to exile in England. In 1962 Khan produced a new Constitution that contained some significant changes from the 1956 version. First, it changed Pakistan from a parliamentary to a presidential democracy, which shifted power to one executive who was to be elected indirectly, and it established an Advisory Council of Islamic Ideology to advise the government. It is important to note, however, that Khan originally did not include references to Islam in the new Constitution. It was only after public outcry that he incorporated Islam and Sharia into the preamble (a version of the Objectives Resolution) and created the Council (Hewitt 1997, 154). It also contained an interesting provision relating to the role of military in governing the country: any president must have held a role higher than lieutenant general in the military.

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5 A good summary of the evolution of Pakistan’s constitution and related political changes can be found at [http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/pakistans-constitution/p15657](http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/pakistans-constitution/p15657).

These changes were significant for a number of reasons. First, the establishment of a single, powerful executive and the indirect elections indicate that Khan and his supporters did not feel Pakistan was capable of functioning as a successful democracy, and that they were concerned about power struggles at the top reaches of the government. That Khan did not originally prioritize Islam in the new Constitution demonstrates that at this stage of Pakistani history, leadership was focused more on creating a stable state than establishing a religious state. The institutionalization of the military within the top leadership suggests that there was a deep feeling of insecurity about the state’s ability to maintain order and cohesion.

The final iteration of the Constitution was ratified in 1973 (and amended in 1985), and it contained concessions to religions parties while at the same time strengthening Pakistan’s democratic structure. It reestablished a parliamentary democracy (in the Westminster style) and direct elections. The Objectives Resolution was set as the preamble, and later established as a “substantive part of the Constitution,” while Islam was kept as the official state religion.

The delays in creating a Constitution, and contestation over its content, gives the impression of a state without a clear mandate, or unifying national identity, focus, or vision (Ahmed 1997, 43). For what purpose did Pakistan exist, and what, exactly, was it supposed to be? While Pakistan “was founded on the basis of a Muslim political identity” (emphasis mine), the institutional role of Islam has been a main issue of contestation since its founding (Saeed 2013). The ongoing conflicts over the content of the Constitution give us an idea of the boundaries of this struggle over state identity.

The section on contestation below explores how this played out politically, in particular via changing regimes. First, however, Pakistan’s perspective of itself in relation to India (relational comparisons) and the rest of the world is examined (cognitive models).

**Relational comparisons**

This section concerns itself with the “discourse of danger” Pakistan has developed vis-à-vis its main “other,” India. As discussed in the theory section, the discourse of danger provides the state with a “theology of truth about who and what ‘we’ are by highlighting who or what ‘we’ are not, and what ‘we’ have to fear” (Campbell 1998 [1992], 48). There are a number of ways of identifying a discourse of danger. This study looks at the education system, in particular the centralized one created by the government for the purpose of creating citizens of the state, because this directly implicates state identity. Who “we” are as Pakistanis is defined by who we are not, i.e. the “other.”

India is Pakistan’s natural other, and not surprisingly much of the discourse of danger percolating through the education system involves India as “enemy” (with the United States a close second). The two-nation theory, originally used to justify Muslim political equality and/or autonomy, also functioned to create a binary opposition between Hindus and Muslims in which Hindus were demonized (Durrani and Dunne 2010, 224). The education system in Pakistan, like its Constitution, has gone through a number of changes. While Islamic education was mandated for all Muslims from the beginning of statehood, it was under the rule of General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, from 1978 until his death in 1988, that an Islamization of the educational system (and society in general) gained speed (Lall 2008, 104). (It is important to note that there is some disagreement as to whether this process was Islamization or a gradual
desecularization—the former being a “top-down” phenomenon that cannot account for the “the slow exit of religious minorities from organised political life, [and] an increase in the cultural power of religious parties in dictating the religious content of state policies” [Saeed 2013].

A new curriculum for national schools created in 1979 “required the teaching of: the difference between the cultures of Hindus and Muslims; the need for an independent Islamic state; the ideology of Pakistan; the malicious intentions of India towards Pakistan; the Kashmir dispute; [and] the need for defence and the development of Pakistan” (Lall 2008, 112). A study of the social studies curriculum in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP, renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2010) found that the use of Islam as a defining boundary between Pakistanis and (non-Muslim) others is used to foment hatred in students toward Hindus (Durrani and Dunne 2010). One of the key components of this is the glorification of the military: “The textbooks create the myth of an ever-looming enemy ready to harm Pakistan. By fostering national insecurity, the army is portrayed as the defender and protector of Islam, the nation and national land” (Durrani and Dunne 2010, 225–226).

This glorification of the military is no accident: the 1979 reforms to the curriculum occurred during a period of military rule in Pakistan, which has experienced a number of periods of military rule, and the Pakistani military has played “a leading role in building Pakistani national identity on the basis of religion since Pakistan’s emergence as and independent country” (Haqqani 2005, 3). The loss of East Pakistan (Bangladesh) in 1971 in particular was a blow to Pakistan’s military as well as to Pakistani identity, and the growing use of Islam to serve as a uniting factor in a country experiencing a lack of
cohesion and growing separatism and militarism created a natural affinity between the military and religious parties. The 1998 National Education Policy states (the most recent policy update, in 2009, contains similar statements):

The ideology of Islam forms the genesis of the State of Pakistan. The country cannot survive and advance without placing the entire system of education on sound Islamic foundations. . . . We are not a country founded on its territorial, linguistic, ethnic, or racial identity. The only justification for our existence is our total commitment to Islam as our sole identity. (As quoted in Durrani and Dunne 2010, 222)

Textbooks have incorporated this in terms of a revisionist history of Pakistan’s origins, focusing on the fundamental mutual exclusivity of Islam and Hinduism (Haqqani 2005, 150), which echoes Jinnah’s increasing tendency to emphasize the same as Partition approached. What can be seen in the educational curriculum reforms is both the increased focus on the religion of Islam as the raison d’etre of Pakistan and the intensifying discourse of danger involving the Hindu other, which in turn served to justify military power.

Cognitive models

“Cognitive models” refers to how a state perceives itself in reference to the rest of the world. Generally speaking, “international community” is used here to indicate the Western-hegemonic order of states, with the implicit understanding that the United States is the current global power. This being the case, Pakistan’s relationship with the United States is fundamental to its cognition of itself vis-à-vis the international community. This section examines this relationship in the post-9/11 era, as this is the time period this study focuses on.

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8 A full text of the 2009 Education Policy can be found at http://moent.gov.pk/gop/index.php?q=aHR0cDovLzE5Mi4xNjguNzAuMTM2L21vcHR0bS91c2VyZmlsZXMyL2ZpbGUvTmF0aW9uYWwlMjBFZHVjYXRpb24iMjBQb2xpY3kucGRm.
As was mentioned in the previous section, the United States has been represented as an “enemy” of Pakistan, surpassed in this status only by India. This created a conundrum for the Pakistani government after 9/11. Like India and Bangladesh, Pakistan declared itself to be “with” the United States (given the choice proffered at the time, “you are either with us or against us”), an ally in the war on terror. The pressure on Pakistan to cooperate militarily was intense, as it shares a border with Afghanistan. Indeed, Pakistan became what could be called a close military ally to the United States, as it has allowed the United States to transport materiel through its territory for use in the war in Afghanistan, has engaged in joint military operations against Pakistan-based terrorists, and has even allowed the United States to launch missiles at Pakistan-based targets (Katz 2011, n.p.).

This is not to say that the relationship is friendly. Pakistan’s military alliance with the United States has been opposed by both liberal and conservative parts of society, and among elites the United States is seen as untrustworthy and as using Pakistan to further its own interests (Yasmeen 2013, 160–161, 164). This is a perception based on reality: while the United States considers itself to share “values” with India and Bangladesh, it shares only “interests” with Pakistan.9 Pakistan’s support of the United States has seemingly not won it many fans: it is one of Americans’ “most disliked” countries according to a 2007 poll (Li Huaibin 2015, 400). Pakistan is well aware of this status and the feelings seem mutual: a 2012 Pew survey showed that nearly three quarters of Pakistanis view the United States as an enemy.10

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9 As characterized by the US Department of State: http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3453.htm#relations.

While India is to Pakistan an existential threat, Pakistan’s relationship with the United States is underscored by this mutual distrust and the implicit understanding that Pakistan’s fate is in many ways controlled by American-led geopolitical realities. Pakistan is, in other words, a country that exists in a suspended state of suspicion with the international community as well as with India, and conflict that is always and both immanent and imminent.

**Contestation**

Contestation refers to the changing domestic political landscape, as elites with different visions of/for their state struggle to obtain or maintain power. In Pakistan, this has unfolded in a series of coups that disrupted democracy and ushered in periods of military rule (from 1958 to 1971, 1978 to 1988, and 1999 to 2007). As mentioned above, the military has used Islam to justify its power as well as forged alliances with Islamist parties (Haqqani 2005). This has been paralleled by an increasing Islamization (or desecularization) of society.

During the period of analysis of this study, which began with military rule under Musharraf and then democratic rule since 2007, and alongside its military alliance with the United States, Pakistan has been dealing with growing domestic militancy. The instances of suicide bombings, in particular, have increased enormously: between 1995 and 2006 there were 27; between 2006 and 2014 there were 405.11 As Yasmeen (2013) puts it, “Pakistan is currently engaged in multiple struggles: the dominant struggle between the militants and the government coexists with a parallel struggle on the meaning of Islam in Pakistan’s identity” (158). The continuing instability of the domestic

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environment is an indication of the magnitude of the conflict surrounding the question of Pakistan’s identity.

As Campbell (1998 [1992]) points out, domestic insecurity reconstitutes/relocates outside of the state and embodies the discourses of danger that are created by that state. In the case of Pakistan, it perceives itself as existing in a state of insecurity vis-à-vis its regional neighbors and the Western-hegemonic international community. It is not a “normal” member of the international community, which it views with suspicion. As will be shown in the following chapter, this becomes the identity that Pakistan enacts, produces, and reproduces on the playing field of international politics.

**Bangladesh State Identity**

**Constitutive norms**

Bangladesh shares with Pakistan some key characteristics in terms of its independence movement and eventual sovereignty. The first of these is political disenfranchisement. Much like the Muslim League in the run-up to the independence of India, the major party of East Pakistan, the Awami League, was not able to gain full inclusion or expression in state institutions, despite East Pakistan having the larger population. The second shared characteristic is that the Bangladeshi independence movement increasingly used a discourse of a fundamental difference between East and West Pakistanis that made it impossible to live harmoniously in the same state. The final characteristic is that of a bloody birth: like Partition, Bangladesh’s Liberation War saw large-scale violence and atrocities.

The growing sense of political disenfranchisement in East Pakistan was based on experience. West Pakistan was in many ways at a disadvantage politically relative to East Pakistan: it had a smaller population which was far more diverse than that of East
While political disenfranchisement was the source of the growing desire for independence in East Pakistan, like Muslims in pre-Partition India, East Pakistanis needed a uniting discourse to provide the impetus for the break from West Pakistan. The religion of Islam could not work in this case, as both East and West Pakistan were predominantly Muslim. Instead, a nationalism focused on Bengali identity emerged. Bengali is best understood as an ethnicity: the group spans India and Bangladesh, and those living in the former are predominantly Hindu. The cohesiveness of Bengali identity, however, was far from given. Surveys undertaken in the 1960s show a low rate of identification with “Bengali”—lower than identification as Pakistani (Islam 1981, 62). A feeling of unity had to be created. In the case of Bangladesh, much of the emerging
discourses of nationalism coalesced around language via the Bengali Language Movement that arose in response to Jinnah’s 1948 proclamation that Urdu would be the official state language (Islam 1981, 62).

While the above characteristics of Bangladesh’s independence movement are similar in kind to those of Pakistan’s, Bangladesh’s origin story also differs from Pakistan’s in some key ways. The first and perhaps most important of these is that it was more consciously secular. As the religion of Islam was increasingly used by the ruling elites of West Pakistan to create a sense of connection among its citizens, an opposing commitment to secularism developed within the East Pakistan independence movement (Rahim 2007, 565). A second key difference is that Bangladesh’s independence was one of breaking away rather than formation from scratch, and whereas the Pakistani independence movement was focused on the future inability of Muslims and Hindus to share political rule, in East Pakistan the independence movement was largely in response to the immediate oppressiveness/injustices of West Pakistani rule.

These characteristics are reflected in the defining speech of the Bangladeshi independence movement, delivered by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to a crowd of 2 million people on March 7, 1971 (the Liberation War began on the 25th of that month). The speech begins with a statement of what the people in East Pakistan want: freedom, life, and rights. Then the preponderance of the speech focuses on West Pakistan’s maltreatment of Bengalis, i.e., the denial of freedom, life, and rights (in terms of the use of “life,” Rahman was referring to, among other incidents, one that occurred in 1952, in

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12 A full text of the speech can be found at http://www.7thmarch.com/the-speech-text/.
which police killed student activists defying a law against organized protests that had been instituted by West Pakistan as a result of the growing unrest in East Pakistan related to the language law—the date, February 21, is now a national holiday in Bangladesh).

After giving a very detailed account of the most recent disenfranchisement related to the Awami League win and exclusion from government, Rahman frames the developing situation in direct revolutionary terms: “. . . the struggle this time is a struggle for our emancipation, the struggle this time is a struggle for our independence.” He decrees that taxes will no longer be paid (to Pakistan). Then he exhorts the people to not let West Pakistani elements create sectarian divisions between them: “Hindus, Muslims, Bengalis and non-Bengalis, all those who live in this Bangla [i.e., the nation] are our brothers. The responsibility of protecting them is on you. Ensure that our reputation is not smeared in any way.” The separation of “Muslim” and “Bengali” is significant, as it indicates a perception that being Bengali is separate from being Muslim, or in addition to, and vice versa. Equally significant is the link between (international) reputation and inclusiveness. That this is highlighted by Rahman in the defining speech of Bangadeshi independence indicates an awareness of not only the fact that the world was watching, but that how the world perceived Bangladesh mattered. And the way Rahman wanted Bangladesh to be perceived was as an inclusive, secular state, dedicated to Western international democratic norms.

On the 25th of March, 1971, West Pakistan launched a military operation against East Pakistan, and Bangladesh officially declared its independence the following day. What followed was a nine-month war that is widely considered to have been an
attempted genocide of the Bangladeshi people. After India joined the effort, Pakistan surrendered on December 16. An independent Bangladesh formed its first government as a sovereign state in April 1972.

**Social purposes**

Shortly after independence, Rahman, who had been imprisoned in Pakistan, was released, and he quickly assumed leadership in the country’s new government. Rahman’s party, the Awami League, had a majority in the constituent assembly, and Rahman and the Awami League were eager to push through their own vision of what kind of country Bangladesh should be (Jahan 1973, 203). The new Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh came into effect in December 1972, exactly a year after the country gained its independence.

The Constitution established a parliamentary democracy, and its preamble stated that “nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism” would be the new country’s fundamental principles. Islam was declared the state religion, but this first iteration of Bangladesh’s Constitution enshrined secularism as the basis of government and law, particularly in Article 8, which reiterates the fundamental principles in the preamble, and Article 12, which enshrined the principle of secularism via the elimination of: (a) communalism in all its forms; (b) the granting by the State of political status in favour of any religion; (c) the abuse of religion for political purposes; and (d) any discrimination against, or persecution of, persons practicing a particular religion.\(^\text{13}\) The Constitution was widely accepted, and while there were criticisms, there were no large controversies surrounding its adoption: the consensus of the different political parties and factions

seemed to be that having a Constitution, however imperfect, was better than not having one (Jahan 1973, 204). Compared to Pakistan's experience with framing a Constitution, Bangladesh's was swift, decisive, and remarkably free of ideological conflict.

This early cooperation, however, did not last. Rahman was assassinated in a military coup in August 1975. Martial law was imposed, and in 1977 Lieutenant General Ziaur Rahman assumed the presidency. He shortly thereafter pushed through a number of changes to the Constitution. These included adding "absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah" to the fundamental principles in the preamble and in Article 8, and removing any mention of secularism. The rewritten Article 8 also specified that this trust and faith in Islam would be the basis of all actions in the state, including governance and the making of laws. Article 12 was omitted entirely from the new Constitution. This replacement of secularism with Islamic values in the Constitution is indicative of the conflict that has defined Bangladeshi politics up through the present day. The Awami League has been and remains a strong advocate for secular democracy, and claims the Bangladesh Liberation War as a battle for these values (personal communication, son of former freedom fighter, Dhaka, 2008). The main opposition, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), founded by Ziaur Rahman, does not reject democracy, but perceives Bangladeshi nationalism as "an Islamic consciousness of the people of Muslim majority Bangladesh."14

There were two other changes that the 1977 rewritten Constitution made. One was that article 9, which read (all alternative spellings are as they appear in the

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14 From the history section of the official website of the BNP:
documents): “The unity and solidarity of the Bangalee nation, which, deriving its identity from its language and culture, attained sovereign and independent Bangladesh through a united and determined struggle in the war of independence, shall be the basis of Bangalee nationalism” was dropped. The second was that Article 6, which originally read: “The people of Bangladesh shall be known as Bangalees as a nation and the citizens of Bangladesh shall be known as Bangladeshies,” was changed to: “The citizens of Bangladesh shall be known as Bangladeshis.” This elimination from the Constitution of what had been the rallying cry of the independence movement, Bangali identity, is significant for several reasons. First, it severed the symbolic ties between Bangalis in Bangladesh and India. This, combined with Ziaur Rahman’s politicization of Islam, allowed him “to counter India’s political influence in Bangladesh. This eventually opened the floodgates for using religion for political purposes” (Rahim 2007, 568). Second, it gave the state greater power to “create” Bangladeshi citizens—a subject that will be explored in the next section.

What can be seen from these changes is that like Pakistan, there were competing visions of what the state of Bangladesh should be and stand for. This conflict, though, does not give the impression of a state without a clear mandate. There was from its inception a fundamental agreement that the Liberation War was fought so that Bengalis could create a sovereign, democratic state. The conflict was and is over the role of Islam in that state. While this is similar to the contestation experienced in Pakistan, Bangladesh has a more cohesive national identity, and a greater sense of itself as being a part of a broader international community of sovereign states, as can be seen in the guiding philosophies of its revolution. This being said, Bangladesh has
experienced instability in its democratic functioning, coups, periods of military rule, and the growing influence and institutionalization of Islam in governance and state institutions.

**Relational comparisons**

Bangladesh’s nation-building project, like that of Pakistan’s, has unfolded through the narratives of who “we” are as citizens of a state in relation to an “other.” However, the discourse of danger that has developed in Bangladesh has not attained the same heightened perception of imminent danger from the “other(s).” While Bangladesh as endured a history of contestation over identity that shares similarities with Pakistan’s, including periods of military rule and the institutionalization of Islam in government (as discussed in the previous section), the educational system, where citizens are formed, reflects the perception of Bangladesh that it is part of an international community of states rather than at odds with it or vulnerable to possible existential threats.

Rahman’s intention after Bangladeshi independence was to secularize education, but he was not entirely successful in this, in part because secularism as an ideal of the liberation movement did not necessarily translate into institutional settings. An early survey, for example, showed that only 21 percent of Bangladeshis wanted secular education, that is education with no religious content (Mohsin 2004, 472). Even so, Rahman and his party, the Awami League, did manage to create new history textbooks for Bangladesh (which previously had used West Pakistani texts) before his assassination in 1975. These early textbooks concentrated heavily on Bengali nationalism and the heroic story of the Liberation War (Rosser 2003, 146). At this time, Pakistan was Bangladesh’s natural “other.”
Following the coup of 1975, which ushered in sixteen years of military rule, textbooks began to take on an anti-Indian slant, though in a more subtle way than those written in Pakistan (Rosser 2003, 146). History textbooks in particular, which were updated in 1984 and 1996, sought to establish the people of Bangladesh as a separate and special nation through narratives of pre-Partition events that emphasized both the heroic nature of Bengali Muslims and their victimization by an alliance between the British and Hindus. In these narratives, such as the 1857 Revolt against British colonialism, Muslims, particularly those in the Bengal region, are represented as both the fomenters of the revolt and victims of betrayal by non-Muslims, who sought to gain British favor (Ghosh 2014, 28–30). A similar story is told about the 1905 partition of Bengal into Muslim and Hindu regions (the current territory of Bangladesh echoes the Muslim region created by this partition). The partition, perpetrated by the British, was at the same time also a story of the exploitation of Bengali Muslims by Hindus (Ghosh 2014, 31, 33).

Social studies textbooks in Bangladesh have gone through considerably more changes than history textbooks. Since democracy was restored in 1991, each successive regime, either the Awami League or the BNP, has sought to rewrite the modern history of Bangladesh in ways that emphasize different political actors and their roles in nation building (Rosser 2003, 147–153). These changes have echoed the contestations over state identity that have played out in Bangladesh since its inception, and their primary focus is domestic. In other words, the projection of internal conflict and insecurity outside of the state, as seen in Pakistan, is not as evident in Bangladesh. Additionally, social studies textbooks in Bangladesh use the difference of ethnic
minorities located in the state to consolidate a Bengali/Bangladeshi identity (Abdullah 2009).

The official education policy of Bangladesh also differs significantly from Pakistan’s. While Pakistan’s emphasizes Islam as the basis of its education system, Islam is mentioned only a few times in the most recent Bangladeshi National Education Policy (2010). The first of these is in a separate section on madrassas (religious schools). The second is in a chapter on “Religious and Moral Education,” which specifies that religious and moral instruction should include “fundamental teachings of every religion,” and contains specific teaching points of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and “other religions,” such as those of indigenous people (29–30).\(^\text{15}\)

The picture that emerges here is that the discourse of danger in Bangladesh is subtle and largely historic in nature, and also that it is more internally focused than that of Pakistan. This indicates that Bangladeshi state identity is not as informed by a sense of imminent existential danger, nor is the “us vs. them” dichotomy as stark and antagonistic. As is seen in the following section, this is echoed in Bangladesh’s relationship with the international community.

**Cognitive models**

Bangladesh, from the beginning, sought to establish itself as an active member of the larger international community through multilateral diplomacy, and is a party to far more international human rights and humanitarian law treaties than Pakistan (thirty-one as opposed to Pakistan’s nineteen).\(^\text{16}\) Its foreign policy is considered moderate.

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\(^\text{15}\) A full text of the policy can be found at http://www.moedu.gov.bd/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=338&Itemid=416.

Bangladesh is also home to a very active civil society, and is well known for its many NGOs, which are often funded with foreign aid (Lewis 2011, 743). Bangladesh has made great strides in the last few decades in terms of economic growth, easing poverty, increasing primary school enrollment, and closing the gender disparity in education. These successes, along with others such as improving child and maternal health, increasing life expectancy, and reducing population growth have gained recognition and praise from the international community (Sobhan 2013, n.p.).

Unlike Pakistan, Bangladesh is not a strategic military partner of the United States in the post-9/11 War on Terror. However, it is an ally, and the United States considers Bangladesh to be a country with which it shares common values, and stands “shoulder-to-shoulder” with the country in defeating extremism, which in Bangladesh, like Pakistan, has increased in recent years. This language is in stark contrast to the way the United States represents its relationship with Pakistan, which is, as discussed above, a strategic alliance based on shared interests and marked by mutual wariness.

Bangladesh’s concerted effort to reach international development goals, its active civil society, and its moderate and friendly relationship with the United States and broader international community is in line with Rahman’s vision for the state. The independence movement was not just about liberating the people of East Pakistan from the oppressive rule of West Pakistan, but also about establishing sovereign status within and participation with the international community. Whereas Pakistan was a sui generis experience in creating a state, the leaders of the Bangladeshi independence movement saw themselves as participating in a war of independence that echoed other

such wars, particularly the American Revolution (personal communication, son of former freedom fighter, Dhaka, 2008). Thus from its earliest days, it identified with the international community and the United States.

Contestation

Like Pakistan, Bangladesh has experienced a series of military coups and disruptions of democratic rule throughout its history. However, a functioning democracy has been achieved in the last two decades. The first Prime Minister to complete a full five-year term was Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League in 2001. The only successful “coup” since then has been the military-backed caretaker government that ruled extraconstitutionally, but with general public support, from 2007 to 2008, at the end of which the Awami League swept the elections and power was once more handed over to civilian leadership.

Bangladesh has also experienced its share of heightened internal violence in the last decade and a half, including protests surrounding elections, suicide bombings (which occurred in the first half of the 2000s, culminating in 2005 with a coordinated attack of 350 bombs around the country19), protests and violence surrounding the trials of war criminals (mainly members of the Jamaat-e-Islami Islamic political party who were accused of supporting Pakistan during the Liberation War), and the recent spate of “hacking” deaths. The major site of contestation in Bangladesh, however, is political, and occurs via conflict between the two major political parties, the Awami League and the BNP. Neither of the two major parties is extreme, although the BNP, the conservative party, allies itself with smaller Islamic parties, most notably Jamaat-e-

Islami, in what could be called a marriage of convenience for both (personal communication, Jamaat-e-Islami leader, Dhaka, 2008). This has not necessarily translated into success at the polls, and it resulted in the BNP boycotting the last elections in 2014, allowing the Awami League to again take control of the government.

**Conclusion**

The above analysis seeks to establish the components of state identity of Pakistan and Bangladesh via a methodology that allows for the capture of identity as both a type of self-perception that can be empirically demonstrated and the basis of a performative political process. What emerges from the discussion here is that Pakistan and Bangladesh, while sharing many characteristics of kind in both history and political experiences since sovereignty, have very different conceptions of themselves vis-à-vis their hegemonic neighbor India and the international community more broadly.

Pakistan has struggled since Partition to forge a cohesive state identity, and it is the less stable state. Domestic political contestation over state identity has played out in successive regime changes from civil to military, increasing Islamization/desecularization, and growing domestic terrorism and militarism. The US-led War on Terror has further complicated Pakistan’s identity, as it has found itself in a position of closely allying with a state it considers an enemy. What we see in the case of Pakistan is an acute case of the relocation of these internal instabilities, insecurities, and contestations outside of the state via a discourse of danger that creates a narrative of Pakistan as at the very least at odds with the outside world, and possibly in danger of imminent existential threat.

We see some similarities in Bangladesh—the domestic political situation is hardly more stable, there is growing extremism, and contestations over state identity just as
fierce, but the discourse of danger is mild and for the most part is confined within the state as political fighting between the two main parties unfolds. While contestation focuses on many of the same issues we see in Pakistan, in particular the role of Islam in politics, there is a stronger commitment in Bangladesh to some form of secularism, as well as a conception of itself as a “normal” member of the international community.

As was discussed in the theory section preceding the analysis in this chapter, these components of identity, and in particular the contestations over them become, on the playing field of international politics, performative identity, as state actors enact, produce, and reproduce their conceptions of what their state is and should be. The following chapter examines how this impacts the political efficacy of international institutions—in this case, water treaties. The previous chapter on the civilizational role water plays in irrigation-based arid areas established that water is central to both the development and existence of societies in South Asia. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, water is an at-hand issue that becomes implicated in the creation of discourses of danger because of their traumatic formative experiences—both states at their creation began enacting identities vis-à-vis India that involved serious water insecurities.20

As will be shown, the issue of water and the water treaty between Pakistan and India (the Indus Waters Treaty) becomes highly securitized as it is implicated in the performative discourses and behavior of Pakistani state identity, which impacts its political efficacy negatively. While the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty between Bangladesh and India is politicized, it is implicated mainly in the political infighting

20 Compare this to the geographically isolated United States, which tends to create enemies that are ideologically but not necessarily imminently dangerous—communism during the Cold War, for example, and in the current era Islamic fundamentalism. This explains why the United States views Kashmir as a religious/ethnic-based conflict—this is how the United States frames danger. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, danger is (partially) framed as an issue of resources, specifically water.
between the Awami League and the BNP, and it continues to operate effectively politically.
CHAPTER 5
WATER TREATIES AS ENDOGENOUS TO STATE INTERESTS

The previous chapter discussed the components of the state identities of Pakistan and Bangladesh in order to establish an explanatory framework for an analysis of the political efficacy of the Indus Waters Treaty (Pakistan and India) and the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty (Bangladesh and India). This chapter analyzes how water becomes implicated in this political process of performing and producing identity. It is, therefore, an exploration of the politics of water. Rather than only looking at the treaties themselves—that is, their de jure prescriptions and whether these are followed—it recognizes that treaties function within a broader political relationship between states, and that this impacts treaties’ efficacy in the long term. In other words, treaties themselves are political: alongside their de jure functioning they are also implicated in political processes.

This study’s premise is that state identity, which is performative, informs the way that treaties function in relationships between states. In particular, domestic contestation over state identity, and the discourse of danger that emerges from this contestation, determine whether a treaty can be considered successful, i.e., functional in some way (in a broad political sense), or not successful, i.e., not functional. As was discussed in the previous chapter, this is because insecurity/instability (or a high level of contestation) within the state relocates outside of the state as a state enacts its (internally contested) identity on the international political playing field. Foreign policy and international relations, then, become practices of boundary production rather than bridge formation (Campbell 1998 [1992], 51). Water treaties, in the region examined in
This study, are taken up in this process because of the high profile and emotive nature of water issues in the international relations between the states.

This chapter connects performative state identity with how water treaties work within bilateral relationships through an examination of elite political discourse in media (discussed further below) and related state behaviors. It relies on a conceptualization of state behavior established by Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein (1996) that sees policy (or state behavior related to policy) as emerging from and interacting with the relationship between the “environmental structure” of the state—i.e., its institutions and cultural norms—its identity, and its interests (52–53). While they acknowledge that the relationship between these elements is complex and nonlinear, to simplify the process they position the environmental structure as informing identity, which then informs interests, which are expressed through state behavior.

This study agrees with this basic concept of the relationship between state interests and state behavior. Where this study departs from this conceptualization is that it does not seek to establish such a strong causal linkage between these elements. Rather, it sees identity and interests as mutually constitutive. In this chapter, state interests are conceived both in disaggregate and aggregate form. As was discussed in previous chapters, a state is a conglomeration of institutions, a general population, and elite actors (policy makers or influencers). Contestation over a state’s identity is performed via interactions between elite actors both domestically and internationally. From this disaggregated perspective, state interests are the interests of these actors: to gain or maintain power, or to influence policy (which is another form of power-seeking, at least in the sense that power is influence).
In aggregate form, a state is a “black box” which operates within an international state system. Ultimately, a state can be said to “act” in a certain way when its behavior coheres into an analyzable set of practices. This can occur when policies are decided on, but it can also emerge over time as a set of practices attaching themselves to polices: a de facto politics operating alongside a de jure politics. In both cases, a state’s guiding interest, after maintaining its physical security, is maintaining its ontological security (Mitzen 2006), which can be defined as the need to experience a stable sense of self (342). This chapter maintains that the way water treaties function within interstate relationships is an expression of both the interests of elite actors as they contest state identity, and a state’s interest in maintaining ontological security. That is to say, the way water treaties work is endogenous to state interests. This chapter focuses mainly on disaggregated state interests (i.e. elite actor interests), which in turn function in a way that secures the state’s more general interest in ontological security.

As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the institutional structure of the state is important insofar as actors function within this structure, which forms material boundaries of action. However, the concern of this study is the nonmaterial boundaries of performative identity: “. . . non-material structures affect which actors participate in power seeking or policy influence, and what they see as the realm of possibility: how they think they should act, what the perceived limitations on their actions are and what strategies they can imagine, let alone entertain, to achieve their objectives” (Burchill et al. 2009, 222). "High" contestation at a domestic level leads to a "strong" discourse of danger, i.e. securitization. "Low" contestation (or in this case, "lower") becomes politicization, i.e. a milder discourse of danger. These two unfolding political
circumstances allow for a treaty to either work or not work (in the case of securitization, it does not, or at least not as intended). Securitization is both engendered by, manifests, and reinforces distrust of international institutions. Securitization entails the narrowing of the realm of possibility to one that involves threat, danger, and vulnerability.

Politicization has a wider realm of possibility that includes a broader range of issues (most notably, environmental), more types of elite actors (e.g., civil society actors as well as government actors), and light or no focus on outside threats and danger and state vulnerability.

It follows, therefore, that the policies that this study is interested in are not necessarily institutionally derived (either emerging from state institutions or from the treaty-prescribed allowable behaviors). Rather, its interest is in behaviors that occur despite or alongside official policy. Because this study views the state primarily in disaggregated form, with a focus on elite actors, political discourse becomes a key piece of evidence in determining how water treaties function politically. As was discussed in an earlier chapter, media, rather than being a way that elites communicate with the masses, is a way that elites communicate with each other (Davis 2003). This is especially the case in Pakistan and Bangladesh when it comes to English-language media. English in both countries is a language of elites, and they are the prime audience for national English media. Political discourse in media, therefore, is part of political behavior, as state actors express and enact (contested) state identity through discourse.

This chapter proceeds as follows. The first several sections introduce how I approach my analysis of how international water treaties function politically within the
broader relationship between states and the methodology I use. The next section details the specific disputes that arose over water during the time period of analysis and establishes political timelines of the domestic contestation in Pakistan and Bangladesh during the timeline of this study (2001/post-9/11 to ~2012). As will be seen, the historical timelines reveal the formal political events of contestation—for example, elections and changes of government. The timelines are strikingly similar in both countries, and thus alone cannot account for the difference seen in Pakistan’s and Bangladesh’s relationship over water with India. It is through discourse, more specifically, elite discourse in media, that the nature of water politics in each country unfolds.

Following the historical timelines, news media is analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively to demonstrate how politics become political, in the sense of manifesting in an ongoing performative way. This section establishes the nature of political discourse vis-à-vis water treaties and related issues. As is shown, in the case of Pakistan water politics becomes part of a discourse of danger, i.e. it is highly securitized. In the case of Bangladesh, it is politicized, without the attendant strong discourse of danger. This demonstrates how high contestation and low contestation enter the boundary-making politics on the international political playing field, respectively. The next section then discusses how securitization and politicization create/are created by different realms of possibility—in the former, a narrow one, comprised of fewer possible behaviors and actors, and in the latter a wider one, with the attendant widening of the field for more behaviors and actors. This section contains a merged analysis of both discourse and state behaviors, in particular the bilateral relationships governed by or impacted by international water treaties, to show how the two treaties work in these relationships.
How Bilateral International Water Treaties Function Politically/A New Approach to the Study of Water Treaties

Earlier chapters explored how water plays a role in the origin stories of societies and states in South Asia. Water, and particularly control of it, informs the existence of these societies at a deep level. In terms of their modern statehood, in both the cases of Pakistan and Bangladesh water has become implicated in the formation of boundaries, and is an integral part of the boundary-producing practices of these countries. It is, therefore, integral to the discourses that emerge from domestic contestation over the content of state identity. Water becomes part of the performance of identity, i.e. it becomes political, part of political performance.

An analysis of water treaties, then, must look beyond the treaty’s prescriptions and related state behaviors, i.e. the de jure working of a treaty. The impact of treaties is broader than its procedural aspects. Institutions such as treaties are embedded in the sense of being contingent on state identity and the way it is expressed through state behavior. Institutions such as treaties are “constitutive of actors as well as vice versa” (Keohane on the “reflective” perspective of institutions, 1989a, 382). Treaties work in two ways, the first being de jure, based on treaty prescriptions. The second way is more amorphous, as it is emergent from the embeddedness of the treaty.

For example, the IWT establishes a Permanent Indus Commission (PIC), the job of which is to regularly meet to discuss and negotiate issues related to sharing the Indus under the ambit of the treaty. Like the dispute resolution process, the PIC has functioned largely as it should even through periods of intense tension between Pakistan and India, for example after the December 13, 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament allegedly perpetrated by Pakistani-based terrorist groups. Although India
immediately suspended diplomatic relations and all travel to and from Pakistan and both countries began a military buildup, the PIC met in Delhi in May 2002 (with the Pakistani Indus Commissioner, Jamaat Ali Shah, traveling via Dubai; Zawahri 2009, 2).

An analysis based solely on the meetings of the PIC and the arbitration procedures results in the impression that the IWT is working as it should and that resolutions to disputes were achieved. However, the relationship between India and Pakistan over water is comprised of more than just the procedural facts. The countries are required to attempt resolution at the bilateral level before asking the World Bank for assistance, and this can involve meetings between top-level government officials not directly associated with the PIC. Additionally, because water is one of the top foreign policy issues between the two countries, it almost always appears on the agenda of top-level bilateral meetings. There is an “invisible” timeline of state behaviors vis-à-vis water, the behaviors that occur outside of the ambit of the treaty, parallel to, yet beyond the scope of, the procedurally mandated actions.

The cases in this study, therefore, while they begin with the functioning of these treaties, are wider in their scope, because the relationships between India and its downstream neighbors over water issues are themselves wider in scope than just interactions specifically within the ambit of the treaties. The treaties, as well as governing very specific issues, “work” within the bilateral riparian relationships in a more general sense, as a focus, guide, and even source of conflict in political interactions. Political conflict over water issues in both cases is centered on dam building, and to a lesser extent on the treaties themselves.
Treaties are meant to create trust through prescriptive iterated interactions and reducing unknowns. This carries over into other areas. States that readily accept international norms will exhibit trust in even unpopular treaties, and this ability to interact from a basis of trust in processes of negotiation will be seen in other areas. In the analysis below, which examines the politics surrounding disputes over dams and dam building by India, the disputes in one case occur within the ambit of a treaty (the Indus Water Treaty between Pakistan and India), while the dispute in the other case does not (the dispute between Bangladesh and India over the Tipaimukh dam). The expectation would be that the dispute would be more severe in the latter case, as there is no treaty to guide interactions. However, the water treaty between Bangladesh and India (the GWST) functions as a guide for interactions over other water issues in that it represents and creates trust, and Bangladesh accepts the broader guidelines of international norms related to negotiations over water rights.

Framing the Analysis

The Specific Disputes Over Dam Building

As has been discussed, one characteristic of international water treaties for allocation (rather than, say, navigation rights or pollution) is that they are often, at their core, about dams and other interventions on shared waterways. The Indus Waters Treaty specifically and in detail addresses this issue. However, the IWT is an uncommon treaty in a number of ways. More common is the format of the GWST, which governs water allocation more generally and does not include specifications for interventions. This being said, the GWST is a treaty that prescribes allocation at a specific dam site (the Farakka Barrage).
When one discusses allocation treaties, therefore, what is really under discussion is interventions on the shared waterways or their possibility, and it is these interventions that are the brunt of political conflict in relation to treaties. While the IWT is very specific about what kind of dams India can build upstream of Pakistan, there is still considerable conflict between the two countries despite the existence of the treaty. The GWST does not specify anything about dam building, but can and does serve as a guide for interactions between Bangladesh and India over their multiple shared waterways, some of which India would like to build dams on. Below, the major disputes between these riparians over dams during the time period of analysis are detailed.

**Disputes between Pakistan and India: Baglihar and Kishanganga, and the Wullar Barrage**

Pakistan and India, unlike Bangladesh and India, conduct all their water-related interactions under the ambit of a treaty. The conflicts they experience, therefore, are guided by specified provisions. The IWT is very specific about how conflicts are to be worked through. If the two countries cannot come to an agreement themselves, the World Bank is to appoint a neutral expert (NE) to make a decision that both countries must abide by. In the case that a conflict is considered a “dispute” rather than a “difference,” the case is to be heard before a specially created Court of Arbitration. For forty years, conflicts never necessitated this highest level of the resolution procedure. In the last fifteen years, there have been two instances where they have, both related to Indian dam building upstream on the rivers designated as belonging to Pakistan in the IWT. The IWT does not preclude India from building on these rivers, but it does specify that the dams must be run-of-the-river, i.e. do not significantly interrupt the flow into Pakistan.
The first of these conflicts was over Baglihar Dam on the Chenab. Pakistan immediately objected to the plan when India proposed it in 1992, maintaining that it did not conform to the technical specifications in the treaty. Over the next thirteen years, the two countries failed to come to any agreement. In January 2005, Pakistan asked the World Bank to provide an NE to decide the matter, as per the treaty’s arbitration procedure. The NE, Dr. Raymond Lafitte, issued his decision in 2007, asking India to reduce the height of the dam and size of the reservoir. The decision was represented as a win in both countries, but it was not necessarily considered so, particularly in Pakistan. Lafitte made his decisions “taking into account the best and latest practices in the field of construction and operation of hydro-electric plants” (Lafitte 2007, 5). In other words, he used information not available at the time the IWT was signed. This meant a decision that was more favorable to India than might have been some decades ago, particularly regarding inclusion of a spillway for sedimentation control and support for India’s calculation of the peak discharge of the design flood. In reference to the latter, Lafitte maintained India’s higher calculation because “climate change, with the possible associated increase in floods . . . encourages a prudent approach” (Lafitte 2007, 8).

Nevertheless, Pakistan was required to accept the outcome, as the IWT specifies that the NE’s decision is final. With the Baglihar conflict “solved,” in recent years the Kishanganga Dam on the Neelam River (a tributary of the Jhelum) has become the major water-related conflict between Pakistan and India. India began plans for this dam in 1988, and Pakistan rejected them (as it does all Indian plans for building upstream dams on the rivers designated by the IWT to belong to Pakistan). India finally began

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1 This decision took on new significance in light of the massive flooding in Pakistan in the summer of 2010.
construction of the dam in 2004, and the issue heated up. Pakistan was concerned in particular about the dam’s potential impact on a dam Pakistan was building downriver.

No resolution was reached between the two countries, and Pakistan made a request for international arbitration as per the treaty in 2010. This time a Court of Arbitration was designated to take over arbitration. Its decision, issued in two parts in 2013 and 2014, was, like the Baglihar decision, one that balanced both countries’ demands. India was allowed to keep building but within certain specifications. A significant aspect of the decision was the application of international environmental laws concerned with downstream harm of dams (Sidhu 2013, 156–157). In particular, this resulted in a decision that was the opposite of the one taken in Baglihar: in the case of Kishanganga, it was ruled that India could not use drawdown flushing to clear sediments at the dam site (Sidhu 2013, 156). So this decision was more favorable to Pakistan than the Baglihar decision.

A final dispute between Pakistan and India, that over the Wullar Barrage (in India referred to as the Tulbul Navigation Project), should be mentioned because it exemplifies the intractability of conflicts over water between the two countries. India proposed the dam in 1984, and Pakistan disputed it to the Indus Waters Commission in 1986. No resolution was found, and India ceased construction on the dam while the two countries continued to negotiate. Unlike the Baglihar and Kishanganga disputes, this one remains unresolved.

**Dispute between Bangladesh and India: the Tipaimukh dam**

The major source of water-related tension between Bangladesh and India in recent years has been the Tipaimukh, a hydroelectric and flood-control dam to be built on the Barak River in the state of Manipur in India. Planning for the dam began in the
late 1970s, and it has been a source of controversy in both India and Bangladesh because of its expected impact on downstream populations, agriculture, and fisheries (Ahmed 2012, 52). The Tipaimukh has received the bulk of political and media attention in Bangladesh, despite being only one of many upstream projects planned in India, because it is seen as comparable to Farakka in terms of possible negative consequences for Bangladesh.

While India has been interested in building the dam since the 1970s, the Tipaimukh began gaining attention by Bangladeshi political and civil society actors in 2005 when the issue was brought before the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC), a formal forum established by India and Bangladesh upon the independence of the latter in 1971. While the statute of the JRC contains basic tenets of cooperation, there are no formal dispute resolution mechanisms specifically governing negotiations over shared waterways. Nonetheless, India and Bangladesh have engaged in consistent and continuous bilateral exchanges over shared the proposed Tipaimukh dam.

India has sought to allay Bangladeshi concerns over the dam in various high-level meetings, and has invited Bangladesh to partner in the planning of the dam. In 2009 a ten-member parliamentary delegation from Bangladesh was given permission to tour the site by helicopter (although they could not complete the mission due to bad weather). In 2012, the prime ministers of India and Bangladesh signed the Framework Agreement on Cooperation for Development between India and Bangladesh, which contains three mentions of shared water in its preamble and twelve articles. This document is notable in that it specifies “common basin management” of shared rivers, a

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central international standard for modern water resource management.\textsuperscript{3} A subgroup was created under the Joint Rivers Commission in 2012 to study the dam’s downstream impact.\textsuperscript{4} The Tipaimukh has become somewhat of a test case in terms of bilateral cooperation over shared waterways between the two countries.

What is important to note about this case and the Pakistani case detailed above is related to the fact that the dispute(s) between Pakistan and India unfolded within the ambit of the treaty and followed treaty-prescribed resolution procedures, while the dispute between Bangladesh and India is not governed by a treaty. As was discussed previously, this distinction is significant for several reasons. The first is that the disputes between Pakistan and India, when examined solely on the basis of their resolution, as is done above, appear to have been worked out successfully, while the dispute between Bangladesh and India has not (yet) been resolved. The second reason is that this would be the expected outcome: where there is a treaty, particularly one that specifies dispute resolution procedures, disputes can and will be resolved, thus justifying the conclusion that the treaty is successful. The analysis below challenges this perspective.

\begin{center}{\bf Changing Governments in Pakistan and Bangladesh}\end{center}

The historical experiences of Pakistan and Bangladesh and their domestic politics, particularly during the time period of this analysis (2001–2012), are strikingly similar. Both have equally traumatic histories and memories of unilateral action by India that resulted in a loss of water. Additionally, both have negotiated treaties with India over shared water resources that are, in the world of treaties, considered successful in

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{3} The Agreement is available at http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dl/5218/Framework+Agreement+on+Cooperation+for+Development+between+India+and+Bangladesh.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{4} A timeline of some of these events is available at http://www.hidropolitikakademi.org/en/tipaimukh-dam-what-is-the-current-position.html.
both their provisions and prescriptions for iterated interactions. In terms of domestic politics, both Pakistan and Bangladesh experienced major periods of flux around 2008: in Bangladesh a state of emergency that lasted nearly two years ended with elections that ushered in a new government, and in Pakistan long-time President Musharraf resigned and a new government was elected. There are enough similarities of the political timelines of Pakistan and Bangladesh during the period of study that domestic political events can be held constant.

**Basic political timeline of Pakistan, 2001–2012**

Amid his support of US efforts in Afghanistan and crackdown on domestic terrorist groups (two were banned in 2002), President Musharraf, who had seized power in 1999, held elections in 2002 in which his party (the Pakistan Muslim League) won and legitimized Musharraf’s rule by forming a coalition with several other parties. Over the next five years Musharraf began a military defensive against militants in the areas near the Afghan border and created a military-led National Security Council. Alongside this increased militarization of politics Musharraf amassed greater personal power, including the right to dismiss parliament if it did not support him. When Musharraf won the election in 2007 and was challenged by the Supreme Court, he declared emergency rule and created a new Supreme Court.

Despite his growing despotism—or because of it—Musharraf was forced to resign in 2008 when the two main governing parties forged an alliance for the purpose of impeaching him. The progressive center-left Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) won the election later that year. The post-Musharraf government inherited a very unstable domestic situation of increasing militancy and economic crisis. In the run up to the 2013 elections there were bomb attacks around the country, many targeted at political
candidates and party headquarters. The conservative center-right Pakistan Muslim League won.

**Basic political timeline of Bangladesh, 2001–2012**

When Sheikh Hasina of the Awami League (the center-left party) stepped down as Prime Minister of Bangladesh in July 2001, this marked the first time in the country’s history that a PM had served out a five-year term. A caretaker government was established until an election took place in October. A coalition party lead by Khaleda Zia’s Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) won. The Awami League became increasingly hostile toward the BNP-lead government, calling for dozens of strikes throughout 2004 and beginning a year-long parliamentary boycott in 2005.

In October 2006 there were widespread violent public protests against the caretaker government chosen to take over when Khaleda Zia left office (having completed her five-year term). This ushered in a period of domestic unrest. Violence continued in the run up to the election in January, and a state of emergency was declared, postponing the election. Shortly thereafter Sheikh Hasina was arrested for corruption by the caretaker government, and Khaleda Zia was put under house arrest. Elections did not take place until December 2008. This time the Awami League won by a landslide. Political conflict between the two main parties continued in the years following the election. The BNP boycotted the election in January 2014, and Sheikh Hasina continued as Prime Minister.

**Analysis**

The basic political timelines above establish the linear manifestation of political contestation in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Changing governments, including elections and the resulting change in leadership and formation of new governments comprises
politics, but is not all there is to politics. The discourses that emerge during these processes of change and related state behaviors are also politics, and it is in these discourses and behaviors that the nature of contestation can be known. Likewise, while the above timelines of dam-related disputes establish a framework for the bilateral interstate interactions over water, they do not in and of themselves provide a full accounting of the politics of water. In this section, elite discourses and related state behaviors are examined in order to show how state identity becomes political practice in a way that impacts how water treaties work within bilateral interstate interactions.

The first part of this section analyzes articles quantitatively, by both total article counts and keyword counts, for each year of the time period of analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to establish when and how much water treaties and related issues emerged in elite discourse. When compared to the basic political timelines, an interesting trend is revealed. Water issues are indeed “picked up” by political elites and civil society actors during times of political contestation—although not in expected ways. This part also establishes that water issues are political rather than literal in how they are discussed. That is to say, treaty- and water-related discourses do not necessarily follow on official water-related interstate interactions (e.g., dispute resolution procedures). Rather, they are complexly linked to a number of domestic and international behaviors.

These links between discourse and behaviors are explored through a qualitative analysis of the contents of news articles. This part applies the politics as performative theoretical framework by linking discourse to state behaviors. Essentially, the
politicization or securitization that occur via discourse in media are produced by and produce narrower or wider realms of possibility within which behaviors occur.

**Keyword Searches and Quantitative Analysis: Pakistan and Bangladesh**

Article searches for this project were done in a progressive way that built on the one before. The first search was done by multiple keywords both general and specific in order to assess as wide a number of water-related topics as possible. These keywords included for Pakistan: water; river; flood; drought; global warming; Indus; Indus Waters Treaty; IWT; Baglihar; Kishanganga; Kishenganga (an alternative spelling); Kashmir; Chenab; Jhelum; Neelum-Jhelum. The more general terms were also searched in combination with the specific ones: for example “flood” with “Indus.” Many of these keyword searches turned up no articles at all (global warming, for example), while others turned up mostly articles that were not relevant (water, for example, most often appeared in articles about domestic water issues). Irrelevant articles were discarded, and from the remaining articles it was determined that treaty- and water-related news articles tended to focus on a specific subject matter: India’s upstream dam building. Based on this, three keywords were chosen to compile the collection of articles to be analyzed: Baglihar; Kishanganga (its alternative spelling, Kishenganga, turned up only a scattering of articles, and so was discarded); and Indus Treaty. The total tallies for all years searched are included in Table 5-1.

The first interesting find is that articles about Baglihar far outnumber those for Kishanganga. This seems unusual in that the Kishanganga arbitration was the second time Pakistan sought international arbitration on a dam issue, and the Kishanganga dam was considered more critical strategically, as it would impact a dam Pakistan was building downstream. What can be gathered from this is that media attention does not
necessarily follow on the substantive content of issues or even broad consensus on their interpretation—there are other influences at play in terms of how and when news media focuses on certain subject matters.

A breakdown of articles by year reveals an interesting pattern: article numbers for all keywords jumped significantly around 2009/2010. For example, a tally of searchable articles by year for the keyword “Indus Treaty” published in *The Nation* and the *Business Recorder* shows that article counts rose somewhat in 2005 and 2008, and significantly in 2010 (see Table 5-2). It will be recalled that 2005 was when Pakistan sought international arbitration for the Baglihar dam. No significant events occurred in 2008. It was in 2010 when Pakistan sought international arbitration for the Kishanganga dam. While these article counts are for the keyword “Indus Treaty,” this indicates that although Kishanganga received far less media attention than Baglihar, the year Kishanganga went to the International Court of Arbitration, media attention to the treaty soared—but apparently without a concomitant focused attention to the actual current event of the arbitration request. Again, this indicates that news media discourses did not necessarily literally represent current events.

Finally, a keyword-search of articles related to Baglihar and Kishanganga shows that the spread of articles also belies the assumption that the intensity of attention to water issues necessarily corresponds to events. A keyword search for “Baglihar” in *The Nation* in the year 2005, not surprisingly, showed a significant increase in articles from the previous year, but only eleven articles appeared in 2007, the year of the resolution (see Table 5-3). This pattern is even more interesting when it comes to the Kishanganga dispute. In this case, the years in which events occurred, i.e. 2006 and
2009, when Pakistan informed India that there was a “dispute” and a “second dispute,” respectively (official terms marking specific steps in the treaty-prescribed dispute resolution procedure), very few articles appeared. In 2010, when Pakistan filed a request for international arbitration in the case of Kishanganga, only 15 articles about the dam appeared. However, Baglihar appeared over twice as many times as Kishanganga that year (although still not a lot: see Table 5-3).

The much lower count of Baglihar articles in 2007 is perhaps the most surprising find, as this was the year that the arbitration decision was issued. The lack of articles could be attributed to the fact that the decision, though officially hailed as a win in Pakistan, was not considered entirely favorable. However, one would expect that regardless of whether the decision was considered a win or not—or something in between—there would have been more reporting on it in the media. After all, this was the outcome of the first time Pakistan had requested outside arbitration for an Indus dispute. Possible reasons for this are discussed after a quantitative analysis of Bangladeshi news media below.

Keyword searches for Bangladesh were carried out in the same way: a number of keywords were chosen, including broad and specific ones. A stark difference from Pakistan emerged in the Bangladeshi news media: almost no articles on the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty appeared. Additional searches of treaty-related words, including a general search of just the word “treaty,” did not turn up many more. However, the Tipaimukh dam showed up consistently in water-related articles, and was clearly the most discussed water issue in Bangladesh news media during the search years. A subsequent search turned up a trend that interestingly seemed to parallel that found in
Pakistan: media attention to the dam jumped significantly in a certain year, this time in 2009 (see Table 5-4). As will be recalled, this was the year that a Parliamentary committee attempted to tour the proposed dam site by helicopter. Prior to a content analysis, it was not possible to say if this sudden and very high jump in article numbers could be attributed to this event—however, considering that the dam emerged as a high-profile issue in 2005 when it was brought before the Joint Rivers Commission, it seemed likely that the aborted site tour was not the only factor influencing the intensified attention to the Tipaimukh beginning in 2009.

The article counts reveal trends in terms of when and how much water- or treaty-related issues received media attention, but they do not tell us why that attention intensified when it did. In fact, the article counts are somewhat confusing: they do not seem to follow on important water-related events. For example, in Pakistan in 2005, when Baglihar was the issue of the day, there were far more articles about Baglihar then the treaty, but in 2010, when Kishanganga was the major issue, articles for “Indus Treaty” and “Baglihar” both outnumber those for “Kishanganga.” Something changed between these two significant years in terms of how water issues were discussed in Pakistani news media. Even more interesting is the fact that in the two cases, media attention intensified the most in specific and consecutive years: 2009 (Bangladesh) and 2010 (Pakistan). A content analysis of a span of articles in the next section is embedded in a timeline of key bilateral events in order to provide answers to the questions that emerge from this quantitative analysis.

**Qualitative Analysis of News Media in Historical Context**

The last section established that media attention to treaty and water issues in Pakistan and Bangladesh focuses on specific issues, and intensified during or over
specific years in the period of study. This section looks at the content of news media attention to these issue: how they are written about, the actors who are involved, and the behaviors they take. This part of the analysis shows how securitization or politicization emerges from contestation between elite actors over what comprises state identity. The analysis of the content of news media, therefore, is embedded in an historical analysis. The section looks at Pakistan and Bangladesh separately, beginning with Pakistan.

Each country-specific section begins by establishing whether contestation (over state identity) can be characterized as high or low (relative to each other: both states can be considered to have relatively high contestation compared to more stable states). Then the analysis moves on to how the relating securitization (accompanying high contestation) or politicization (accompanying lower contestation) is expressed. Then how securitization and politicization relate to the realms of opportunity each state operates within—that is, what behaviors are done by which actors—is analyzed in terms of how it impacts the international relations of water between the bilateral country pairs.

First, however, let us revisit the concept of contestation (over identity) and how that is conceptualized in this study. As will be recalled, state identity is comprised of components (constitutive norms, social purposes, relational comparisons, and cognitive models), and contestation is a measure of the disagreement that occurs “within a group over the content of shared identity” (Abdelal et al. 2009, 17). As I discussed in the previous chapter, this occurs within the domestic realm as different groups vie for the right to influence or control policy, i.e. political power. These groups are often legitimate political groups, such as political parties, but may also be civil society groups, and may
sometimes be illegitimate political groups, such as militants/terrorists. The higher the
contestation, and in some cases the nature of that contestation, relates to state stability.
When there is high contestation and the state is unstable, this domestic insecurity
reconstitutes/relocates outside of the state in the form of a discourse of danger
(Campbell 1998 [1992]) that is and produces boundary-creating behaviors on the
playing field of international politics.

Pakistan: securitization

There are a number of groups contesting state identity within Pakistan. As
established in the chapter on state identity, the major fault lines occur between the
government and militants, and parallel to that, between differing concepts of the
meaning of Islam in Pakistan’s identity (Yasmeen 2013, 158). The post-Musharraf
government inherited several severe problems: domestic terrorism and a deteriorating
economic position. Until 2007, yearly suicide attacks in Pakistan were in the single digits. Then, suddenly, they increased tremendously. In 2007 there were 57, in 2008 61, in 2009 90, and in 2010 58. After that they decreased slightly, with the lowest count being in 2012, with 32.\(^5\) National debt doubled between 2006 and 2013.\(^6\) Opinion polls carried out in Pakistan show that the resignation of Musharraf and the restoration of democracy in the country did not coincide with improved public perception of the economy and general conditions in the country. In fact, the percentage of Pakistanis reporting they were satisfied with conditions in the country dropped sharply in 2009 (from 25 percent to 9 percent), and continued to be very low (14 percent in 2010, 6

\(^5\) http://pakistanbodycount.org/suicide_bombing.

percent in 2011, 12 percent in 2012, and 8 percent in 2013). Opinions on the economy show a parallel trend.

It was during this period (notably, after the newly elected government took office) that water-related discourse became increasingly securitized, particularly from 2010 onward. The securitization of water can be grouped into three thematic types: (1) water and war; (2) enemies within; and (3) enemies abroad. The first of these, “water and war,” is perhaps the most obvious: “water wars” have been a topic in Western policy discourse for decades. As researchers have adequately shown, states do not go to war over water (that is, over only water), but water easily gets picked up as an issue related to war in regions where allocation is a strategic foreign policy issue. Exactly how water is connected to war in news media can vary, however. In Pakistan, articles fall into two camps: the possibility of a war over water with India, and India’s “water terrorism” against Pakistan.

A keyword search of “war” in articles in The Nation related to the Indus Waters Treaty shows a trend similar to that found in the keyword searches discussed above. In the years prior to 2010 there were very few articles that made the connection between war and water: one in 2005, one in 2007, and two in 2009. Then, in 2010, there were over a dozen. Some articles sought to allay fears of a water war, for example one on February 10 that reported on a visit to Pakistan by the Indian Indus Water Commissioner, G Ranganathan, to do site inspections and to meet with his Pakistani counterpart, Syed Jamaat Ali Shah. Ranganathan was quoted as saying, “This [war]

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7 http://www.pewglobal.org/database/indicator/3/country/166/.

8 The Nation was chosen as the source of articles used in the qualitative analysis because it is more broadly representative of elite opinions than the Business Recorder, which while it has a broad readership, is more specifically oriented in terms of content.
impression is incorrect and is based on negative propaganda by some elements.”

However, such reassurances seem to have little effect: more common are articles that present India’s behavior as “water aggression” (March 9) and a “sheer violation” of the IWT (March 16). India’s plan was to “strangulate Pakistan economically by using water as a weapon” (April 11), and warnings were issued that war would be the inevitable conclusion if disputes involving water and Kashmir were not resolved (September 19; this kind of statement is more alarmist than it might seem, as water and Kashmir are intimately intertwined, and both are seen as zero sum issues). By the end of 2010 the atmosphere had grown so heated that Jamaat Ali Shah, who had held the post of Water Commissioner since 1993, was dismissed.

In February 2011 it was announced that a “peaceful protest” by farmers’ groups was to occur at the Pakistan/India border to protest “Indian water theft;” the warning was issued, however, that the farmers “vowed to wage war” on India if it continued to deprive Pakistan of its fair share of water (February 26; again, this is fairly alarmist, as it is taken as a given that India is stealing water). In March, it was reported that the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee had issued a report that warned of an inevitable war between Pakistan and India if water issues were not resolved, and it advised negotiating a new treaty (March 12). This same article criticizes the report for not connecting water disputes to the Kashmir issue, and intimates that the dispute mechanism built into the treaty was not working. It should be recalled that one dispute had been “resolved” in 2007—the Baglihar—and that this result should be called into question indicates the increasingly negative attention on water. Indeed, for some it was clear that Pakistan and India were already engaged in a water war, albeit a cold one (May 19). By mid-2011
articles about India’s water terrorism began to proliferate, and warnings of a (real) water war regularly appeared through 2013.

This increasing direct securitization of water issues was accompanied by the naming of enemies both within and outside of the state. The new government was quick to blame the previous administration (under Musharraf) for allowing India to get away with upstream construction, and Water Commissioner Jamaat Ali Shah was an easy target to personify this blame. The first article to make this connection appeared in February 2010, in which the “previous government” was severely criticized for focusing only on the American-led war on terror at the expense of allowing India to push through with its dam construction (February 12). Here no particular person is singled out for condemnation. Subsequent articles, however, name two “conspirators”: Musharraf and Jamaat Ali Shah. These and their cronies were influenced by “anti-Pakistan elements” (June 17, 2010) who convinced them to act against Pakistan’s interest and for India’s interest. Musharraf’s government was accused of ignoring water issues in favor of assisting the United States on counterterrorism, allowing India to get away with upstream dam construction, i.e. further its control of Pakistani water. Musharraf was out of reach for the new government, but Jamaat Ali Shah was not: as mentioned above, he was removed from his post in late 2010 and put on a “no exit” list to prevent him from fleeing the country (and possible further punishment).

This identifying of specific, personified enemies within Pakistan in the increasingly securitized environment surrounding water issues enabled a shift of attention from the new government’s inability to “solve” any of Pakistan’s water disputes with India. The post-Musharraf government, like any new government that purports to
radically depart from the previous, was under pressure. Alongside the securitizing articles that began appearing in 2010 were ones that criticized the new government for not taking action on water issues. An early one featured Jamaat Ali Shah obliquely blaming the previous government for not constructing enough dams domestically, and putting the onus on the new government to address this (March 10; this is an indication of the increasing antagonism within the country surrounding water issues, as by the end of the year Jamaat Ali Shah would be out of a job). An article in June criticized Jamaat Ali Shah and Islamabad for not actively or publicly and officially accusing India of stealing water, thus “clinching the issue in favor of India”—i.e., siding with India (June 10). For the government, excising Jamaat Ali Shah—portrayed as an Indian sympathizer or apologist—became a way of externalizing the domestic enemy, akin to the discourse of danger being projected into the international sphere.

Besides “externalizing” domestic enemies, articles from this time period also show a growing distrust in the international community and the United States. The World Bank, which denied funding for the Bhasha Dam in Pakistan, is characterized as having “joined in the conspiracy to prevent Pakistan from developing its water resources, as well as ensuring the Indian sabotage of the Indus Waters Treaty” (July 3, 2010). The World Bank is further described in the same article as being under United States control, and the United States is castigated for its apparent preference for India over Pakistan despite all the assistance Pakistan rendered in the war on terror.

The 2011, when US Senate Foreign Relations Committee issued the report on the possibility of a water war between India and Pakistan and questioned the long-term
viability of the IWT, the above-mentioned editorial in Pakistan’s The Nation in March decried the idea of renegotiating a treaty, despite Pakistan’s extreme dissatisfaction with the current one. The editorial expressed a concern that Pakistan could not count on the support of the international community or the United States in creating a new treaty that would benefit Pakistan. The World Bank would not want to continue as guarantor (indeed, the IWT is highly unusual in having a guarantor), and the United States would take India’s side: “Capitol Hill . . . is full of pro-Indian elements” (March 12, 2011). This is a clear and “strong” discourse of danger. It presents the United States and IGOs as enemies, and identifies anti-Pakistan conspiracies in both. Pakistan is presented as a victim: vulnerable, exploited, and deceived.

This distrust of the international community and its institutions (including IGOs such as the World Bank, treaties such as the IWT, and the processes through which these operate) leaves Pakistan in a state of perpetual insecurity and imminent crisis, and with few solutions to its water disputes with India outside of the treaty-prescribed resolution procedure, which cannot address all disputes (the Senate report, for example, reports that India has thirty-three projects under development on the rivers in the region [pg. 9], and Pakistan, which has the right as per the treaty to object to any Indian building plans on Pakistan’s three rivers, generally does object). Pakistan does not view the international community as does a “normal” nation, but rather it sees itself as excluded from the community and threatened by it. This state identity combined with

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the intractability of its water disputes with India, creates a situation in which
securitization of water issues can occur.

**Pakistan: the realm of possibility**

The previous section established how securitization of water issues developed
and was expressed. This section relates that securitization to interstate relations by
focusing on the related realm of possibility: the behaviors that are possible within this
securitized environment and the actors who are involved. As will be shown,
securitization occurs because of, and results in, a narrowed realm of possibility, in which
a specific type of interstate iterated interaction over water emerges. This section
discusses what was mentioned in the introduction above: the international relations of
water that are “parallel” to the ones prescribed by the treaty, i.e. PIC meetings,
information sharing, and dispute resolution using treaty-prescribed procedures. As was
discussed, if only these treaty-prescribed behaviors are looked at, one comes away with
the impression that the treaty is successful, and that Pakistan and India successfully
share water. This is far from the case, however. Here we examine the *politics* of water.

While securitization of water issues in news media increased greatly around
2010, in our time period of analysis the roots of securitization can be traced back to
2001, when a terrorist attack was perpetrated on the Indian Parliament on December
13. India immediately withdrew its High Commissioner from Pakistan, ceasing all
diplomatic contact and travel between the two countries. Immediately following the
withdrawal of the High Commissioner, a “high profile” seminar convened in Lahore to
discuss the possibility of India using water as a weapon of war, and how to respond
(Waslekar 2005, 49). This indicates how closely tied water is to the quality of the
relationship between the two countries.
As both countries amassed troops at the shared border and the threat of war loomed, Indian state officials began to intimate that abrogation of the IWT could be a possibility if Pakistan did not cooperate with India on dealing with crossborder terrorism. On December 27 it was reported in the *Times of India* that the Minister of State for External Affairs, Omar Abdullah, said that because Pakistan was failing to respond to diplomatic initiatives, stronger measures were being considered, including trade sanctions, withdrawal of most-favored nation status, and abrogation of the IWT. The following day, an anonymous Union Cabinet minister was reported to have told the *Times* that abrogation of the treaty could indeed be a “last resort in the diplomatic offensive” with Pakistan (December 28, 2001). While this minister sought to downplay fears that India would use water as a threat or weapon of war, it was not ruled out entirely.

In February 2002 an article in Pakistan’s the *Dawn* accused India of “putting the operational part of the Indus Water Treaty under virtual suspension” because there had been no exchange of information between the two countries’ Water Commissioners since the December 13 attack. The article also claimed that India had cancelled a scheduled inspection of the Baglihar dam site by Pakistani engineers, and had additionally sent Pakistan a bill for RS 5 million for providing water data to Pakistan since 1989. Indian officials flatly denied that there had been a suspension of communication between the Commissioners (and indeed they would go on to meet in May of 2002 as scheduled). Additionally, the bill was allowed under the treaty (and the

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10 Archives for the *Dawn* were unavailable, and accessible archives for other Pakistani English-language newspapers rarely go back further than 2003/4. However, considerable intertextuality between the *Dawn* and the *Times of India* allows for a wider analysis of Pakistani media. For example, the article discussed here was reported on in detail in the *Times*. 


article in the *Times* makes a point of mentioning it was sent before the attack on Parliament). In the case of the cancelled inspection, an Indian official had this to say: “We did not say that no inspection will be allowed. But the dates have to be mutually convenient. Only a tentative date was given, not a final one” (February 21, 2002).

The above establishes what the “normal” tone is of the relationship between Pakistan and India over the IWT and water issues. This tone, or underlying pattern of behaviors, is iterated in the same way as the behaviors that align with the prescriptions of the treaty (e.g., annual PIC meetings and information exchange). Pakistan exists with the constant implicit vulnerability of being downstream of a neighbor that could, if it wanted, wreak substantial havoc via holding back water or releasing huge quantities. When political flare-ups occur, which most often are not directly connected to water, the IWT becomes involved because it is one of the oldest and ongoing areas of dispute between the countries (the other being Kashmir, which is related to water). Pakistan accuses India of violating the treaty, and India uses delay tactics such as the postponement of the Baglihar inspection.

These exchanges, which take place largely through media discourse, can be seen as posturing. However, as India’s delay tactics show, there are related state behaviors that over time express and build distrust and suspicion. These behaviors occur outside the ambit of the treaty but inform the environment in which it works. At the PIC meeting in May 2002, Pakistan informed India that it would seek a Neutral Expert for Baglihar if the disagreement between the two countries could not be resolved within three months (Gaur 2009, 87). India responded that it did not need Pakistan’s permission to build the dam, and that construction would go ahead as planned (Gaur
2009, 88). It is not entirely true that India does not need Pakistan’s permission—according to the IWT, Pakistan has a right of objection to any project India builds on the rivers designated as belonging to Pakistan. Such exchanges establish threats from both sides of the table: whether or not such threats are carried out, they contribute to an environment of mutual distrust and suspicion.

Pakistan’s threat to go to the World Bank for arbitration was the first intimation of a shift in how the IWT functions. Up to this point, India and Pakistan had successfully negotiated bilaterally over disagreements that arose over water sharing (Zawahri 2009). Following the December 13 attack, however, water issues began to be referenced in relation to war in news media, and Pakistan’s stance began to change. It should be remembered that this was a period of heightened global and regional insecurity. Only three months previously, the 9/11 attacks had occurred in the United States, precipitating the war in Afghanistan, which shares a border with Pakistan. At the same time that news media began to connect water with war, Pakistani-based jihadi groups took up water issues as a rallying cry (Waslekar 2005, 50).

In February 2004, the Pakistani and Indian foreign secretaries issued a joint statement after the recommencement of diplomatic relations at a meeting in Islamabad. As usual, water issues featured among the important areas for dialogue, and it was decided that secretary-level talks would be held in July that included India’s Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project on the Jhelum (one of the rivers designated as Pakistan’s). This project has been stalled since the 1990s, when India stopped construction because of Pakistan’s objections. No mention was made of Baglihar or Kishanganga, possibly because these two dams were too contentious. The Pakistani

paper The Nation reported on July 29, 2004 that the heads of both the Pakistani and Indian teams, the countries’ respective water secretaries, reported “positive and constructive” talks, with the teams exchanging data and discussing the technical aspects of the project. Hope for a positive resolution was expressed. However, it is clear the talks were considered solely for show: the same article expresses Pakistan’s perspective that the Wullar project, like the Baglihar, is in violation of the IWT.

From 2004 through 2008 the relationship between Pakistan and India seemed to be steadily improving, with high level talks (composite dialogue) and cooperation on a number of issues. Water, however, was not one of these. India provided a nominal show of “goodwill” and support for ongoing talks over the Baglihar by providing additional technical data to Pakistan in December 2004 (The Nation, December 15), but cooperation never went any further. Pakistan continued to take an increasingly hard line, requesting a Neutral Expert for the “difference” (technical term as per treaty) over the Baglihar in January 200512 and continuing to reject all Indian plans for the Kishanganga dam. In May 2006, The Nation published an op ed written by Dr. Syed Nazir Gilani, the Kashmiri head of a Kashmir-based NGO (Jammu and Kashmir Council for Human Rights), who accused both India and Pakistan of exploiting Kashmir for political purposes and not allowing Kashmiris the right to their own water resources (May 17; the article also contained a very rare reference to the fact that the IWT does not contain any environmental provisions). As this article points out, water is very much a political tool between the two countries, an issue that shadows their major interactions.

In May 2008, Pakistan shelved plans for a dam called the Kalabagh. This dam had been proposed by Musharraf in 2004, but disputes between stakeholders could not be resolved. The abandonment of the project was immediately framed in existential terms and as an opportunity for relative gains by India in terms of building dams. As the Chief Coordinator of the Indus Basin Water Council Pakistan (IBWCP) put it, it was “the last nail in the coffin of Pakistan’s defence,” and “a gift to India,” which was “actively constructing controversial dams” on Pakistan's rivers without notifying the latter—a clear violation of the IWT (The Nation, June 5). He also strongly criticized Pakistan's Indus Water Commissioner Jamaat Ali Shah for being ignorant about India’s upstream construction plans, which included a “secret mega plan being financed by Israel and an NGO to deprive Pakistan of its water.” The treaty-prescribed meetings of the PIC were “deception and cheating.” This shows a politicization of water issues (which focuses on domestic disputes) tipping over into securitization (the shifting of blame to the international sphere and framing of the issue as existential).

Pakistan’s post-Musharraf government formed in September 2008. In November 2008, gunman fired on civilians in a number of sites in Mumbai, India, causing over 160 deaths. India blamed the attacks on Pakistan-based militants, and in February of the following year Pakistan, no longer able to deny its problem with militancy because of the increasing domestic attacks, admitted that the Mumbai attacks may have been planned in Pakistan. The event, however, was a major setback for Pakistani-Indian relations. Talks between the two immediately ceased, and any cooperation over water issues

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stagnated. This began the period of increasing securitization of water issues in Pakistan.

In November 2009, Pakistan’s Foreign Office spokesman accused India of using delay tactics to avoid high-level meetings, and that “India was not sincere about resolving Kashmir and water-related disputes with Pakistan.”\(^\text{14}\) The cessation of meaningful talks between the two countries continued into 2010. In June 2010 Pakistani Prime Minister called for the composite dialogue to resume “to resolve all outstanding issues, including Kashmir and water.” The Indian Prime Minister responded that talks would only resume when Pakistan stopped allowing terrorists to use its territory for planning attacks.\(^\text{15}\) It wasn’t until July 2011 that the relationship began to thaw, with a meeting between the respective foreign ministers in New Delhi, and not until April 2012 that the countries’ respective prime ministers met—also in New Delhi. This was the first meaningful meeting between prime ministers in seven years.

As can be seen from the above, a number of political actors are involved in the politics of water. With some very few exceptions, however—for example, Dr. Gilani, a civil society actor, or the farmers’ group mentioned in the last section—most are government officials of some kind. Additional actors are the militants who increasingly took up water as a justification for crossborder violence. This is what one can expect in a securitized environment: voices related to the securitization of water are prioritized. In the case of Pakistan, these are largely those of actors who are in some way connected to the government, and thereby political power, or violent antigovernment elements. The


high contestation in Pakistan, in which water becomes a political tool that is securitized, ensures that these are the voices that get heard.

The narrowed realm of possibility and the actors involved influences the international relations of water in a specific way. Securitization is constitutive of a particular characteristic of how the water treaty between India and Pakistan works in their relationship, or rather, does not work: stagnation. Despite the existence of the IWT, Pakistan considers all Indian dam projects on the three rivers that “belong” to Pakistan to be in violation of the treaty. PIC meetings do not resolve these disputes. The treaty’s dispute mechanism may work, as can be seen in the cases of Baglihar and Kishanganga, but the internationalization of these disputes points to an overall dysfunction of the treaty itself, which was intended as a bilateral mechanism, with the idea that the World Bank would get involved only as a very last resort (Sidhu 2013, 157). The Wullar Barrage project exemplifies the stagnation of the relationship between India and Pakistan over water issues. High-level discussions about the Wullar produce nothing more than joint statements that discussions have taken place and reports of their overall tone (i.e., cooperative or contentious).

This circumstance of stagnation is the result of the zero-sum game that water issues are perceived as in Pakistan. Any gain for India is a loss for Pakistan. While the two countries have cooperated on smaller water-related issues (Zawahri 2009), the strategic issue of big dams increasingly has no solution within the bilateral forum. Instead, there is an increasing securitization of water issues within Pakistan. Pakistan exhibits no trust in the institution of the treaty, as exemplified by the constant accusations that India is violating the treaty. Additionally, Pakistan, though it appeals to
the international community (via the World Bank) for assistance in Indus disputes, shows little trust in that community. While the IWT stabilizes the relationship between India and Pakistan, it certainly does not function as treaty institutions are intended: to create trust. Instead, it functions in a negative sense, by at the very best removing the possibility of violent conflict (i.e. armed) over water and at its worst, by increasing distrust.

As the above analysis shows, securitization increased in the period after the new government had been formed in 2008. This is one possible explanation for why we saw an increased focus on water issues in news media around 2010. An explanation for why articles increasingly focused on the treaty rather than specific dams during this time could be that the treaty itself is seen by Pakistan to be untenable and the disputes arising within its ambit as intractable. Pakistan’s distrust in the treaty, India, IGOs, and the international community more generally expresses its identity as an “outsider,” not part of the “normal” community of states. Politically, this manifests through high domestic contestation and the emergent securitization of treaty and water issues. Ultimately, the political efficacy of the treaty itself is impacted: it is neither successful nor functional in terms of creating trust and iterated positive and progressive interactions between Pakistan and India.

**Bangladesh: politicization**

This section, like the one above, begins with an analysis of how domestic contestation manifests in water-related discourse, and then moves on to the associated realm of possibility and Bangladesh’s water-related interactions with India. As will be shown, water issues are politicized in Bangladesh but not securitized. Bangladesh’s state identity, while certainly contested, is overall more stable than Pakistan’s as well as
more that of a “normal” state that sees itself as a member of a broader international community, however peripheral its position may be in that community. Associated with this is a greater respect for and trust in international institutions, which in the case of Bangladesh extends even to informal interactions with India over shared waterways.

Bangladesh’s relationship with India over shared waterways serves as a good comparison to Pakistan’s case because there are a number of similarities between them that illuminate some key differences. In Bangladesh, as in Pakistan, we see a generally negative toward India regarding its water treaty and related issues. Perhaps even more so in Bangladesh, the feeling is that the country is severely disadvantaged by the current water-sharing regime at Farakka Barrage (as regulated by the GWST). Like Pakistan, it is unlikely that any water-sharing regime would be viewed as entirely nonexploitative in Bangladesh because of India’s position of power both geographically and politically. While Pakistani elites may express dissatisfaction and antipathy toward the IWT and India’s alleged exploitation of Pakistan’s water resources, historical fact can be marshaled to show that Pakistan had its say in the creation of the IWT and all of its provisions. Such is not the case for Bangladesh. While certainly Bangladesh had its say in negotiating the GWST, it did not have any say in Farakka Barrage, the building of which began before Bangladeshi independence. In other words, Bangladesh started out with an already narrowed field of outcome options.

Like Pakistan, Bangladesh has just one (major) water treaty with India: the GWST. It took far longer to negotiate than the IWT: thirty-five years, and the treaty is not permanent; it will expire in 2026. The treaty is widely considered unfair (personal communications, newspaper editors; political party leaders; hydrologists; policy
analysts, Dhaka, 2008). As one interviewee put it, there was no Eugene Black (president of the World Bank who helped sponsor the India-Pakistan treaty negotiations) in the Bangladeshi case to ensure Bangladesh’s side was fully considered. This indicates a fundamental condition of the relationship of Bangladesh to India: India does not need to be very concerned about Bangladesh’s interests. Unlike Pakistan, which militarily is on an equal footing with India, Bangladesh poses no existential threat to India. This being the case, it would seem that there would be very strong antipathy within Bangladesh toward India and water-related issues, perhaps even on par with or more severe than what we find in Pakistan. However, this is not the case. Unlike Pakistan, Bangladesh does not create a zero-sum game when it comes to Indian dam construction. Bangladesh displays trust in international institutions, including the GWST. It also shows an acceptance of international norms in its relationship with India over water issues.

This is not to say that there isn’t substantial disagreement on the part of Bangladesh with India regarding water issues—in the last ten years, the Tipaimukh Dam in particular. Protests against India are organized by citizen groups, and the “traumatic memory” of the commissioning of Farakka is memorialized every year on Farakka Day, when people march and show patriotism. This is reported in Bangladeshi media much as the “traumatic memory” of Pakistan—the cutting off of water in 1948—is often mentioned in Pakistan. The difference is that the discourse emerging from this dissatisfaction and insecurity vis-à-vis water resources does not reach the vitriolic, hyperbolic level it does in Pakistan.
Like Pakistan, Bangladesh has experienced contestation throughout its history that has manifested as a series of military coups and disruptions of democratic rule. During our period of study, however, some political stability existed, with each successive prime minister finishing out their five-year term. With the exception of the popularly supported caretaker government that ruled for a period between 2007 and 2008 while elections were postponed, government has proceeded as constitutionally mandated. Contestation, however, is often fierce between the two major political parties, the Awami league and the BNP. They have different visions for the country, with the Awami League seeking to maintain more of the secular values of the independence movement, and the BNP allying with a conservative Islamic party, the Jamaat-e-Islami, which would like to see Bangladesh integrate Islamic institutions into government (personal communication, Jamaat-e-Islami leader, Dhaka, 2008). While Bangladesh, like Pakistan, has not escaped growing instances of domestic terrorism and a faltering, sluggish economy, the main types of contestation that emerge in media discourse are conflict between the two major political parties, and between the government and civil society actors.

As was shown in the quantitative section, media attention to water issues increased precipitously in 2009, and focused almost exclusively on the issue of the Tipaimukh Dam. Notably, this was after the prolonged rule of the caretaker government and the Awami League sweeping the subsequent elections in 2008. The discourse surrounding the dam, however, rarely, if ever, reaches the level of securitization, and certainly not in any regular or sustained way. Rather, it is highly politicized. That is, water (or the dam, in this case) becomes one lens through which the two political
parties challenge each other and vie for power, and through which civil society challenges and seeks to influence government policy. This politicization is evident in three characteristics of media attention to the Tipaimukh: (1) India’s role is not the main focus of most articles and treated relatively mildly; (2) there is strong criticism between the two major political parties; and (3) discussion of water issues are framed in terms of international norms.

While keywrod searches for “Water Treaty” and “Ganges” did not turn up many articles, they nonetheless provide a good example of how Bangladeshi coverage differs from that found in Pakistan. It will be remembered that in Pakistani media, a strong discourse of danger emerged, which in this analysis is sorted into a three-category typology: (1) water and war; (2) enemies within; and (3) enemies abroad. These categories offer a useful place to begin a comparison with Bangladeshi media.

As was discussed above, in Pakistani media war with India was increasingly mentioned in conjunction with water. In Bangladeshi English language media, this is never the case. A July, 2009 article that refers to India’s “water aggression” is an exception to the generally nonaccusatory approach taken toward India (New Age, July 17)–and it is important to note that this article is quoting a private sector expert, not a government official. While India’s upstream dam building is acknowledged as an existential issue for Bangladesh—a “life and death problem” (May 8, 2005)—coverage of such issues is most often what could be termed fair or unbiased reporting. An April 2007 article states, “Sources at the Bangladesh water resources ministry said withdrawal of water upstream by India through more then 300 dams and diversion canals has resulted in a gradual decline in the Ganges flow and last summer recorded the lowest in 50
years.” This is by any standards alarming. The article continues that at an upcoming meeting in New Delhi, the “Bangladesh side will highlight the issue and call upon the Indian authorities to ensure [a] bigger flow of water.” This is the standard tone taken toward India in most articles relating to the GWST.

In 2008, amid food shortages in Bangladesh and rising food prices globally, Dhaka sent a protest letter to New Delhi about the continued low water levels flowing into the country from Farakka, among other water-related problems. An editorial states, “These are issues that Bangladesh must address with the Indian authorities in their bid to reach a regional long-term solution to shared river resources. Needless to say, it is not in the bilateral or individual interests of either country to violate the terms of such understandings. We will be looking to Delhi’s reply to Dhaka’s protest letter” (April 6). Two key themes stand out here that are typical of the way water conflicts between Bangladesh and India are framed in the analyzed media. One, discussed further below, is Bangladesh’s interest in “regional” solutions. The other is the weight given to Bangladesh’s responsibility in the bilateral relationship. Bangladesh here is not a victimized state in danger of imminent attack. It is an equal partner to India, a partner that can and should influence how water sharing between the two countries proceeds.

In the Pakistani media analyzed above, we saw how certain Pakistani state actors were maligned in order to shift responsibility for ensuring Pakistan’s fair share of water from the government. As discussed, these “enemies within” were essentially externalized, and became part of the discourse of danger projected outside of the state. In Bangladeshi media this does not occur. The “enemies within” are the two main political parties, which use emotive water-related issues as a way of criticizing each
other. In 2009, after the Awami League came to power, a State Minister was quoted as saying that the previous (BNP-led) government failed to implement the GWST (in the sense that Bangladesh did not receive treaty-specified flow levels) because of its “political weaknesses.” He went on to say that the Awami-led government would “implement the treaty by strengthening the friendly ties with India.” Notable here is that it is Bangladeshi state, in the form of the previous government’s officials, that is blamed for the failed implementation of the treaty, and India is presented as a friend. This is nearly the opposite of the externalization of danger seen in Pakistan. It could be termed an internalization: rather than an outward-focused securitization of water-related conflict, here we see a politicization that remains primarily a domestic conversation.

This is not to say that Bangladesh does not consider the broader international community as playing a part in its international relations regarding water. But here, too, we see a stark difference from the Pakistani media’s attention to “enemies abroad,” i.e. IGOs, foreign governments, and institutions. Bangladesh is interested in regional solutions to its water issues. This is not just because the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna is a regional river basin. It is also because Bangladesh perceives the international community and its institutions as legitimate and supportive of its interests. This places the discussion squarely within the emerging international norms regarding scientific, environment-focused river basin management rather than bilateral piecemeal agreements. Appeals for more studies and information gathering by experts are often made (e.g. December 21, 2009), and environmental concerns are raised by civil society actors/experts (e.g., The Daily Star, May 28 and July 19, 2009). Civil society actors/experts play a large role in the media-based discussions, including calling on
IGOs (e.g., the United Nations; *New Age*, May 17, 2009) to assist Bangladesh in creating multilateral solutions that involve all riparians (in addition to Bangladesh and India, China, Nepal, and Bhutan) and citing international water law as a guide. Like the articles that portray India as a “friend,” the discussions regarding international norms also tend to be framed in terms of criticism between the two major political parties.

What emerges from this analysis is that Bangladesh sees itself as a “normal” nation, as part of an international community of nations and beholden to its norms regarding both international institutions and water issues. Indeed, international institutions and norms are seen as serving Bangladesh’s interests—even when they are not functioning as they should, such as was/is the case of the GWST. This state identity creates and emerges from the politicization of water issues but not securitization. This in turn enables a wider realm of possibility that impacts how the international relations between Bangladesh and India unfold on the international political playing field.

**Bangladesh: the realm of possibility**

The politicization of water issues in Bangladesh occurs both within a wider realm of possibility and enables it. In this section, the politics of water between Bangladesh and India are examined in reference to the Tipaimukh Dam negotiations. As was explored in the section above on the Pakistan-India relationship over water, the politics of water encompass interstate relations that are parallel to but not necessarily part of the prescribed interactions required by a treaty. In the case of Bangladesh during the time period of analysis, the Tipaimukh Dam emerged as the most politicized water-related issue. Above we saw that even when the GWST is not working as expected, it is still considered a valid agreement by Bangladesh, and can be considered to “function” insofar as Bangladesh and India continue to negotiate over shared water resources.
The GWST, as the only formalized agreement between Bangladesh and India over water, functions as an example and guide for interactions that occur outside the ambit of the treaty. Here these interactions are related to the politicization of the Tipaimukh in order to show how that politicization affects the efficacy of ongoing negotiations over the dam.

The Tipaimukh Dam has been an issue of ongoing discussions between Bangladesh and India since 2005, when it was first brought up in the forum of the Joint Rivers Commission, but as was detailed quantitative section, politicization of the issue exploded in 2009 after the new Awami League-led government formed. Early in 2009, the government asked India to suspend all dam-related construction until further negotiations could occur (New Age, March 4). In May, Khaleda Zia, leader of the opposition party (BNP), was quoted as saying the Farakka Barrage was built during an Awami League (AL) regime, which did not protest, and that the AL should “strongly protest” the Tipaimukh (New Age, May 3). This established the general tone of the politicization of the issue between the two parties, which focused on the government’s actions vis-à-vis India and the dam and whether they were sufficient.

The new government began planning a joint meeting with India to visit the dam site, with AL leader Sheikh Hasina promising that the Bangladeshi group would be composed of lawmakers from all parties (Daily Star, May 28). Additionally, she stressed the need for regional cooperation for development. By June 2009 it was reported that the meeting was set to go forward (Daily Star, June 17). Reportage surrounding the meeting from that point forward largely concerns BNP criticism of the Awami League for not including enough representatives from the political right in the group that was to
meet with the Indians or for proceeding without obtaining enough information first (i.e., for being unprepared; *New Age*, July 19). By July, the BNP was collaborating with water and environmental experts to collect its own information with the ostensible purpose of giving it to the government so that it would make a “bold decision” regarding the dam, which the BNP claimed to be entirely against (ibid). The BNP leader Khaleda Zia was quoted as saying that Indian environmentalists were also against the dam (ibid. This was not an untrue statement—the dam will have environmental impacts in India and there is a lot of domestic antipathy toward the project).

As the date for the dam visitation approached, BAPA, 16 a Bangladeshi environmental NGO, planned a protest in the form of a “human chain” against the dam (*New Nation*, July 11). Another environmental NGO, Nirvik, planned a “long march” toward the dam site, which would include “roadside meetings and view exchange meetings with participation of socio-cultural and environmental organisations and personalities, local media . . . and elites . . .” (*New Nation*, July 11). Numerous other civil society groups, including think tanks and academia, organized meetings and forums to discuss the Tipaimukh’s possible downstream impacts in the run-up to the parliamentary delegation’s visit to the site. Meanwhile, the BNP announced it would launch a “global campaign” against the dam by requesting that world leaders intervene to stop its construction (*New Age*, July 14). This was a purely politically motivated threat, as it coincided with joint meeting between the Indian prime minister and Sheikh Hasina in which the Indian PM issued the assurance that India would not move forward with the dam without arranging for a comprehensive study that involved the Bangladeshi

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16 Bangladesh Paribesh Andolan.
side (*Daily Star*, July 16). Meanwhile, the parliamentary group set to visit the dam site was cut to only AL members (*Daily Star*, July 24), a move that was strongly protested by the BNP (*Financial Express*, July 29).

The much-discussed dam site visit never occurred, but not for lack of trying. The team visited India and made two attempts to land at the site by helicopter, both times having to turn back due to bad weather conditions (*New Age*, August 2). Nonetheless, the visit to India was hailed as an overall success because the Bangladeshi side was able to obtain assurances that the dam was indeed intended for hydroelectricity, not irrigation (thus would not result in significant water losses downstream; *Daily Star*, August 15). Additionally, the Indian side provided the Bangladeshi delegation with information from its studies, including expected discharges from the dam during the dry and rainy seasons (more and less, respectively), which would benefit Bangladesh (*New Age*, August 2, same article as above citation).

BNP opposition did have an effect on the government’s support for the dam. After the visit, Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina pulled back from her previous position of strong support (*Daily Star*, August 23). During her first state visit to India since the 2008 elections, in January 2010, Sheikh Hasina again sought and received assurances from the Indian prime minister (Singh) that India would not move forward with dam construction without consulting Bangladesh. The meeting was framed in terms of “common resolve” and “mutual benefits” (*Daily Star*, January 14), terms in line with international norms of cooperation, and starkly different from the framework of relative gains seen in the Pakistani case.
In 2011, India contracted with Nipko to begin construction of the dam, a move that caused some consternation on the Bangladeshi side (Financial Express, July 11). While India continued to reassure Bangladesh that it would not move forward with construction that would harm Bangladesh, understandably the contract with Nipko caused Bangladesh to question this. Media attention to the issue during this time was less politicized than in 2009, and more civil society voices on the dam’s potential impact, particularly environmental, were given space. In 2012, India agreed to cooperate with Bangladesh on an environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the Tipaimukh, and provided information and reports from the EIA India completed in 2007 (on impacts in India).17 Bangladesh subsequently employed several independent organizations to assess different aspects of the dam (the Institute of Water Modeling and the Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services—both of these began as government initiatives but are considered independent in terms of research, i.e. “scientifically independent” [GEGIS website]).18

Progress on coming to an agreement on the Tipaimukh Dam continues forward, albeit slowly (which is normal for this type of project). The situation cannot be characterized as stagnation (as in the Pakistan-India case). Neither can it be characterized as a zero-sum issue, in which any gain on the Indian side is seen as a loss on the Bangladeshi side. The dam, unlike those India is proposing to construct upstream of Pakistan, is not represented as a security issue. Rather, the major conversation over the dam continues to be about its possible environmental impact and

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the effects of this on people living in the area. While a top-level government consensus over the dam stalls—largely due to the fact that in both countries the project lacks popular support—progress on information gathering and exchange continues (Daily Star, August 28, 2012) and politicization of the issue has receded since 2009.

The “normal” tone of the relationship between Bangladesh and India over water that emerges from the media analysis is one of mutuality, at least in terms of how it is portrayed and expressed via discourse. This is not to say that there are not real disputes between them—shared water resources are in essence an issue of relative gains when it comes to allocation. However, the two states make a point of voicing a stance of shared values such as mutual benefits and negotiated cooperation, and their behaviors of iterated reassurances on India’s side and a willingness on the Bangladesh side to display a general trust in this indicates Bangladesh operates from a self-perception of itself as a normal nation and member of an international community that interacts within the bounds of certain norms that guide interstate relationships. Additionally, this extends to Bangladesh’s willingness to trust India’s intentions: self-perception tends to be projected, and there is an assumption that despite whatever disputes arise, India is also operating as a normal state within the bounds of these international norms of behavior.

What also emerges from the analysis of Bangladeshi media is the role civil society plays in the evolving political discourse, and in particular the role of nongovernmental actors. While nongovernmental actors are present in internal debates within Pakistan—the farmers' lobby in particular stands out, as do jihadist groups—they do not contribute to or participate in the elite English language media discourse either
directly or indirectly. In Bangladesh this is not the case. Experts in many fields, but particularly environmental, have a voice in the both the discussion and politicization of water issues, most often calling for “more information” to be acquired or produced, for international law to be followed, and for regional cooperation. Discourses originating in civil society in Bangladesh also fall within the bounds of international norms having to do with water and environmental protection and management.

The above is evidence of a more expansive realm of opportunity than is found in Pakistan. A number of voices participate in the politics of water, including state actors, civil society experts, and even Indian voices (e.g., environmental experts in India). The wider realm of possibility enables more voices to be heard, but also is a result of a multitude of perspectives. Consequently, there is more space for positive and constructive state behaviors, and while state officials are the main political actors vis-à-vis water issues, nonstate actors also play a role, for example in the joint study being conducted between the two countries. Politicization, such as occurred in 2009 over the Tipaimukh, does not result in a significant narrowing of this realm of possibility.

While the GWST does not have any direct bearing on the Tipaimukh, as it covers only one of dozens of shared waterways, an expanded view of its role shows that it represents, in Bangladesh, a successful instance of treaty negotiation even if the treaty itself is viewed negatively. It works in the relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh beyond its specific prescriptions for water sharing at Farakka in that it creates a basis of trust that opens the door to further consideration of negotiations over other waterways and dam projects. While discord and disputes certainly exist between Bangladesh and India over sharing water, the stagnation present in the Pakistan-India
case does not exist. Bangladesh relates to India from the perspective of a “normal state,” within the established practices established through international institutions and norms.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this analysis was to demonstrate that international water treaties are political. That is, they are implicated in a broader political playing field that includes both domestic and international state behaviors that are themselves performative of state identity. Domestic contestation over state identity, either high or low (or not as high), becomes a realm of possibility that enables politicization or securitization of water issues. This in turn impacts the political efficacy of the treaties and the related issues they influence. In this way, treaties function as endogenous to state interests, insofar as state interests are an expression of political jockeying at the domestic level and the way this translates to state behavior at the international level.

In this chapter, the field of inquiry was broadened beyond the de jure prescriptions of water treaties to encompass the politics of water between the bilateral country pairs of Pakistan/India and Bangladesh/India. Analysis of elite media discourse was used as the method of applying the explanatory framework of state identity introduced in the previous chapter. Elite English media discourse in Pakistan and Bangladesh is a focused representation of the voices of political “influencers” of various kinds, or political actors, because English is the dominant language of both domestic and international politics in the region. While the material and analysis used here is not exhaustive, it adequately shows the “tone” of both domestic political contestation and international political interactions between the country pairs. As was shown, water issues were highly securitized in Pakistan when domestic contestation was particularly
high, i.e. after the end of the Musharraf era and the institution of a new government, concomitant to the projection of that contestation into the international sphere in the form of a discourse of danger. In Bangladesh this kind of discourse of danger was not seen. Domestic contestation, while high, was not as high as found in Pakistan, because there is a stronger sense of shared state identity—of being a normal nation beholden to international standards and norms. Water issues in Bangladesh, while sharing a similar emotive and existential role to that found in Pakistan and thus similarly being “at hand” as a political tool, are merely politicized.

Water treaties, and their sphere of influence, are politically efficacious only insofar as the political relationship between the signatory states is functional. State identity, as it is contested domestically and performed internationally, is the informing factor. In cases where there is high contestation, such as Pakistan, a strong discourse of danger, i.e. securitization, becomes the influencing framework for international relations. The accompanying realm of opportunity is narrow, and allows for a specific type of perspective and interstate interaction over water: distrust of institutions, and intractability. As the contrasting case of Bangladesh shows, where there is an identity of the state as “normal,” there is only politicization the realm of opportunity widens. The additional actors and issue areas (e.g. the environment) allow for progressive, albeit slow, forward movement on water issues. The IWT and GWST in these cases function very differently. The IWT, while being a more comprehensive treaty in both content and coverage, and followed more closely in terms of its de jure prescriptions, does not result in ongoing trust between its signatories. The GWST, on the other hand, while being far less comprehensive and prescriptive, and apparently less functional in the sense that
India does not or is unable to adhere to mandated flow levels, conversely does “work” in the sense of creating and representing a basis of trust and shared values between signatories that even extends to interstate interactions over share water resources that do not fall within the ambit of the treaty. In both cases, the way the treaties work within interstate relationships is political and endogenous to state interests.

This chapter considered state interest in two forms: disaggregate and aggregate. State interests in the disaggregate are represented by state and other political actors, all of whom seek to influence policy via obtaining or maintaining power. In the aggregate, the state becomes a “black box” with a general sustained interest in maintaining its ontological security, which can be defined as a stable sense of self (Mitzen 2006, 342). The need to have a stable sense of self, particularly while experiencing domestic instability in the form of contestation over state identity, can account for the ongoing nature of what can be seen as the irrational and counterproductive functioning of institutions, as in the case of the IWT. While it certainly would seem that a state’s interest would be to support the intended establishment of trust and cooperation adhering to a treaty, this is not the case with Pakistan. The securitization of the treaty and the attendant discourse of danger seen in that case is rational in the sense that it expresses and maintains Pakistan’s sense of self as an outsider, vulnerable, and mistreated. This identity, once embedded in political processes, becomes essential to those processes and to the sustained performance of political actors and thus the continued existence of the state in both an imagined and real sense.
Table 5-1. Total article counts by keyword.

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Table 5-2. Article counts for keyword “Indus Treaty.”

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CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS AND MOVING FORWARD

This study was originally undertaken to answer questions that arose when I was working in the policy world. As an academic project, it has marshaled the tools available within the discipline of political science, and particularly the subdiscipline of International Relations, to both answer these questions and further the conversation in the international rivers literature regarding hydropolitics. This project became, over the course of its development, an attempt to address some gaps in that literature. The most glaring of these is the way in which “cooperation” is considered to have occurred if a treaty is negotiated, and is considered to be occurring if the treaty is adhered to. As this project has shown, conflict and cooperation are not necessarily binary, nor are they simple conditions. Political interactions are nuanced and multifaceted, and as such, more complex understandings of both cooperation and conflict are needed. In other words, cooperation and conflict need to be understood as political types of interactions, and thus part of ongoing and evolving iterations of expressions of state identity.

When this is understood, it becomes possible to analyze types of conflict that are otherwise elided in IR research. In the case of this study, this is conflict that occurs despite or even because of the existence of a water treaty. While many scholars are making forays into this research topic, particularly by using securitization theory, there are as of yet few studies that attempt to create a comprehensive theoretical framework and integrated methodological approach to the subject. This dissertation is a preliminary attempt to do so. It seeks to develop a way of analyzing the working of water treaties that can help us understand and perhaps predict how interstate relations over water will unfold as pressures on freshwater resources increase in arid and semiarid regions. By
implication, it also seeks to contribute to our understanding of the working of treaties more generally, as endogenous to state interests. As has been shown, the performative political process of enacting state identity determines how water treaties work within interstate relationships. A state identity that is at odds with the international community and its norms is likely to become a strong discourse of danger that impacts the efficacy of a water treaty in states where water is an issue of high politics. This is the case in Pakistan. The Indus Waters Treaty has done the opposite of what a treaty is intended to do: it has not necessarily increased trust—indeed it seems to have created distrust—and it has institutionalized an intractable conflict in the shape of a stalemate.

The case of Bangladesh is quite different. Certainly, its relationship with India over shared water could not be called seamlessly cooperative. It is highly politicized within Bangladesh, and, as in Pakistan, there are real feelings of vulnerability and bitterness toward India. But there is a relationship with India over challenging water issues that remains political; i.e., there is momentum, and there is progress. It is halting and slow moving, but this is not out of the ordinary for such issues. This is even more striking when one considers that the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty is not a comprehensive treaty like the IWT. The GWST covers a dam that has already been built. It does not cover any other of the many shared watercourses between Bangladesh and India. Additionally, it should be mentioned that Bangladesh, unlike Pakistan, does not have the nuclear bomb, and is thus ostensibly in a more vulnerable position than Pakistan generally. In such a case, IR theory would predict more conflict than what is found between Pakistan and India. Pakistan and India balance each other militarily, and India has good reason to not have conflicts over water escalate. However, in reality war
with either of its riparian downstream neighbors is undesirable—and it should be noted that military violence between Pakistan and India does break out at the border regions anyway. Despite the prediction that we would find more conflict in the Bangladesh case, we find less. This can be attributed to the fact that Bangladesh does adhere to the international norms represented by the GWST. It sees itself as a member of good standing in the international community (albeit peripheral and oft forgotten), and it exhibits trust in good faith interactions and negotiations over shared waterways.

In terms of furthering the discussions in the literature with which this dissertation is in conversation, there are two major contributions I have sought to make beyond furthering our understanding of hydropolitics and international water conflict. The first of these is the transposition of the relationship between state interests and treaties. Work within the constructivist theoretical approach, which is the primary approach of this dissertation, generally posits that state interests are endogenous to treaties. In other words, treaties, and the norms they express and represent, change state interests (presumably by making state interests more cooperative in various ways). This conceptualization is based on the assumption that a treaty is static and itself does not change. While this is true in terms of a treaty’s de jure characteristics, it is not true of how it “works” politically over time. This dissertation proposes that the relationship between state interests and treaties is the other way around. Treaties, in this case water treaties, in terms of how they function within the broader riparian relationship, are endogenous to state interests. State interests, as they are expressed via ongoing contestation over state identity domestically and internationally, impact the political
efficacy of water treaties, and thus how “well” they work within the broader riparian relationship.

The second contribution this dissertation makes is to securitization theory. This has been discussed in detail previously, so briefly here to summarize: it has been proposed in this study that rather than allowing for further extrapoltical actions, securitization can also have the effect of stalling political processes. The implications of this for securitization theory are complex, and call into question the role of intention of securitizing agents, and the role of the audience, which is usually considered to be a state’s general population. In this study elites are both agent and audience, and one of the key stages of securitization—the audience’s “go ahead” to make an issue one of security and thus one that can be addressed through emergency measures—never actually takes place. Whether this is a circumstance that is specific to the securitization of environmental issues, or can be applied more broadly to securitized issues, requires further investigation.

To return to the questions that were the impetus of this project and the ones this study seeks to address, have they been answered? To review, the questions that drove me to pursue a PhD in the first place are as follows: First, why is there such a difference in how interstate water relationships and these water treaties are viewed in the West and in the region (i.e. successful vs. unsuccessful)? Does the fact that the treaties are viewed negatively in Pakistan and Bangladesh mean that they are not working as they should, or are not “successful” treaties? If there already exist significant antagonism and disputes over water between hegemonic India and its downstream riparian neighbors, what can we expect as water scarcity in the region grows? To address the first question,
I think the response can be the same as the point I make above: from a high-level and unnuanced perspective, a treaty appears successful simply for existing. It may also be the case that the Western-hegemonic international community, which developed the norms and expectations surrounding institutions such as treaties, is prone to viewing such institutions as wholly positive. To answer the second question, the fact that the IWT and GWST are viewed negatively does not mean they are unsuccessful. The IWT is unsuccessful for far more complex reasons, while the GWST is at least nominally successful, as shown by this study. The third question I discuss in the final part of this wrap-up.

In terms of the questions this study sought to address specifically, I will answer the first three at once:

1. What kind of conflict arises between riparian states that have negotiated a treaty over at least one of their shared rivers or river basins?
2. Why does this conflict occur?
3. How does this conflict unfold?

It is clear from this study that conflict over shared water resources can and does arise between riparian states that have negotiated at least one international water treaty. This conflict is primarily political, and unfolds discursively but also within contexts of political interactions in ways that have implications for state behaviors. As this study shows, conflict is more likely to occur in situations of high contestation over state identity, which manifests in securitization and a narrowed realm of possibility for both the types of state actors who influence policy and enact state behaviors on the international political playing field. In the two case studies presented here, conflict between Pakistan and India is severe enough and sustained enough to have negative
consequences for their interactions. The two states could be said to be in a constant and intractable conflict, with the major consequence being an inability to move forward on water-related disputes without internationalizing these disputes, as occurred with the Baglihar and Kishanganga dams. These dams are only two of many proposed projects by India upstream of Pakistan. While the dispute resolution procedure encoded in the IWT has thus far been able to address these disputes, the fact that both requests by Pakistan for outside arbitration, which was intended to be a very last resort, have occurred within the last 15 years is telling. We can expect that disputes between the two countries will increasingly be internationalized in this way, which, as Sidhu (2013) points out, can be considered a failure of the central bilateral mechanism of the treaty (157).

Bangladesh’s case is interesting because the GWST will expire in 2026, at which point it can be renegotiated or allowed to lapse. As this study shows, Bangladesh cannot really be considered to be in constant conflict with India over water resources. There are disputes, but none that rise to a level that significantly stymies ongoing political interactions between the two countries over water resources. Based on evidence available, we can expect either a renegotiation of the GWST or another formalized agreement. While it would seem that these temporary agreements favor India, in actuality they could end up being in Bangladesh’s interests as water stress increases in the region. Bangladesh may be able to negotiate more favorable terms based on updated flow measurements. While 2026 is still a decade off, and as history has shown, circumstances can change suddenly and drastically in unexpected ways, based on current evidence it is reasonable to assume that Bangladesh and India will continue to negotiate political solutions to shared water resource challenges.
The final question I sought to address in this dissertation is what the implications are for the conflict we see in the Pakistan-India case, both for these countries, and by implication for other similar riparian relationships. What can we expect as pressure on global water resources increases and climate change alters existing water resources (presumably in ways that decrease dry season supplies in already arid or semiarid regions, although this is in itself not entirely predictable at this point)? My conclusion here is much like the one I make above. It is likely that Pakistan and India will experience increased conflict as their inability to politically negotiate solutions in a bilateral forum increasingly comes into play. There could be calls on both sides to renegotiate the IWT, though we can expect both countries to approach this option extremely cautiously. While Pakistan is far from happy with the IWT, it is also aware that the IWT favors Pakistan in terms of allocation (four-fifths of flow levels). Because Pakistan is distrustful of the international community—renegotiations would in some way involve the international community both because it will be a possibly volatile situation and the World Bank is a current signatory—its major fear will be that India will manage to garner support for alterations to the treaty that favor India. This being the case, the very permanence of the treaty and Pakistan’s identity as a vulnerable “outsider” state may in the end force a more drastic solution. However, as of yet there is no reason to predict that any such solution—for example abrogation or war—is imminent.

Moving forward, I see possibilities for both expanding the research here presented and testing my theoretical and methodological approach on other cases. Additionally, this dissertation, which was born from my experiences in the policy world, has a usefulness there. There is some recognition that the IWT could become a serious
problem in the coming decades, but there is still reluctance to accept that water is a significant source of the ongoing antagonisms between Pakistan and India. Indeed, many in the policy world are unaware that most of the tributaries to the Indus flow through the disputed region of Kashmir. This is a serious oversight, and one that needs to be remedied if we are to fully understand the possibilities for volatility in the region. Alongside this, it is perhaps time to examine the institution of water treaties themselves, and whether they really can support the cooperative interstate relationships we believe and expect them to support. The aim of this study has never been to posit that water treaties do not serve any positive purpose–clearly, they do. Rather, it has been this study’s goal to question the perspective that treaties are entirely constructive and successful instances of cooperation, and to offer a systematic way of examining and analyzing how international water treaties work that can give us a more nuanced understanding of their efficacy.
LIST OF REFERENCES


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kendra Patterson received her PhD from the University of Florida in the fall of 2017. She received her BA from Global College at Long Island University and her MA from the Australian National University in Canberra. Before beginning her doctoral research, she worked at the Stimson Center in Washington, DC on a project whose goal it was to analyze security challenges from the perspectives of people living in the regions where the challenges are located. It was during her travels in South Asia during this time that she recognized that access to freshwater is one of the security challenges of most concern in that region. Her current research involves analyzing political conflict over internationally shared rivers in South Asia and beyond.