

# Hydro-securitization in the Indus River basin

An analysis of Indo-Pakistani security frames

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# Abstract

The animosities between India and Pakistan have been continuous since partition of British India over seven decades ago. Disputes over Kashmir and the rivers flowing through the region can be said to represent a nucleus of the tensions between the two countries. Due to environmental stress and population growth, hydropolitics is persistently being set under pressure. Three security frames, national, environmental and human security, will be presented and analysed in order to examine which framing is the dominant one. In the Indo-Pakistani context, elite decision-makers and state representatives consequently link the water discourse to the nation as such, thus encapsulating notions of national security with water issues on both sides of the border. By means of Securitization theory and frame analysis, this thesis seeks to investigate these acts of securitizing by analysing ‘speech act’ conducted by the actors in question, and how consolidation of the national security frame prevails. In addition, the riparian positions of the two countries have led to a view of India’s hydroelectric projects through a security lens from Pakistan’s perspective. Through construction of the threatening ‘other’, heightened tensions can be maintained to turn away focus from domestic discontent and cementing political power.

*Key words:* Securitization theory, India-Pakistan, Hydropolitics, Security frames, Transboundary waters

Words: 9981

## **List of Abbreviations**

CS – Copenhagen School  
IBWC – Indus Basin Water Council  
IR – International Relations  
IWC – Indus Water Commission  
IWT – Indus Water Treaty  
J&K – Jammu and Kashmir  
KHEP – Kishanganga Hydro-Electric Project  
LoC – Line of Control  
PCA – Permanent Court of Arbitration  
PIC – Permanent Indus Commission  
PM – Prime Minister  
WB – World Bank

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Forewords

“Water is the true wealth in a dry land; without it, land is worthless or nearly so. And if you control water, you control the land that depends upon it.” (Gleick 1993: 9)

“It’s India, it’s Pakistan, it’s Kashmir, and it’s water. How much more sensitive can you get?” (Naqvi, quoted in Sattar – Bhargava 2019)

Water is something that we, if we are lucky, come in contact with on a daily basis. It is a prerequisite for human life and development. Thus, it can be argued that access to water is a basic human right, in its indispensability for leading a life in dignity and security. Apart from drinking the water, the essential areas of use include food and energy production; adequate water supply for irrigation, agriculture, sanitation and consumption has been pivotal for human settlements throughout history until today. Rivers often connect regions of high rainfall with drier areas further down the line and are thereby an important transport mechanism for freshwater. It is a renewable and limited natural resource as well as a fundament for life and health, which makes it an inherently complex topic. It may be viewed as neutral; it follows its own cycle and flows freely with no respect of man-made national borders. Though, environmental and social conditions – climate change and population growth to mention the core problems – put an ever-increasing pressure on water, making it a scarce resource in many regions (Link et al. 2016: 495–496; Cahil Ripley 2011). Accordingly, allocation and distribution of this good becomes a highly political issue.

Peter H. Gleick has stated, in a report on water conflicts, that “one factor remains constant: the importance of water to life means that providing for water needs and demands will never be free of politics” (Gleick et al. 2012: 175–176). Indeed, the multi-level importance of water makes it a heated political issue and thus, a question of power. Jamie Linton’s monograph on water and its historical implications begin with the statement: “Water is what you make of it” (2010: 3). He then proceeds with quoting philosopher and social critic Ivan Illich: “Water

has a nearly unlimited ability to convey metaphors” (Illich quoted by Linton: Ibid). Its fecundity as the absolute essential factor for life on our planet, in combination with its transparent and fluent nature, perhaps also makes it a ‘perfect storm’ as a political battleground.

Indeed, emphasizing how this resource is of utmost political concern is the general aim of this thesis. The further, specified goal is to visualize the ‘securitization moves’, manifested in the statements of elite decision-makers in India and Pakistan respectively, which is being done with help of Securitization theory in combination with a methodological frame analysis. By presenting (or *framing*, which will be the pervading term used) water scarcity – and latching it onto the created, threatening ‘other’ – as an existential threat to the nation, policymakers gain political momentum. Accordingly, attention is diverted away from domestic issues and power positions become consolidated. The Kishanganga Hydro-Electric Plant and the surrounding dispute will be used as a case for highlighting how one security framing is still the predominant over others.

Climate change and water insecurity in combination with population growth as well as rapid economic development in different regions of the world will likely put more pressure on water resource dynamics. India and Pakistan belong to one of the most water-stressed and climate change-sensitive regions in the world, and in combination with a strong hydraulic mission in these countries, climate change is further facilitating securitization and militarization of transboundary water resources in the Indus River basin (Link et al. 2016: 499–500; Turton 2003). Indeed, adding to the ongoing tensions between the two nuclear nations, it is likely that global warming will only make the situation in South Asia increasingly complex.

## 1.2 Research question

The aim with this study is to examine to what extent India and Pakistan construct the disputes over water as an ‘existential threat’ to their respective national security. In doing this, Securitization theory and a fitting frame analysis will be used. Further, I will concentrate on one dam, the Kishanganga Hydro-Electric Plant, and the surrounding dispute, during a time frame of approximately ten years, from the beginning of 2008 through 2018. By that means, the thesis seeks to capture the mutual securitization dynamic by looking at both India and Pakistan and how they, through speech act, establish and maintain a state of hydro-securitization.

The research question is as follows:

What is the dominant security frame in the ongoing water securitization in India and Pakistan and what does it reveal about the security dynamic between the two countries?

The sub-questions, to help me structure and clarify what to investigate, are as follows:

- Which types of security frames can be observed?
- What do the different security frames comprise?
- What are the facilitating conditions for securitization?
- What are the implications of the framings?
- At the expense of what does the dominating frame prevail?

### 1.3 Limitations

This study will be limited to some security frames, consequently leaving other frames outside of the scope of investigation. One obvious perspective is the economic sector; a main reason of India building hydroelectric power plants is to utilize energy for its growing population.

This thesis also leaves out the fact that the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) excludes China and Afghanistan from the Indus River management completely, something that has met widespread critique (Zawahri – Michel 2018: 703). Further, the perspective of Kashmiri actors are being left out from the study as such, as well as Kashmir as a critical region to claim in terms of Muslim and Hindu identities (see Kinnvall – Svensson 2010).

Statements from local actors in India and Pakistan respectively, are not being reviewed. This will be further elaborated in the following chapters.



## 2 Background

### 2.1 India–Pakistan-conflict

India and Pakistan together consist of just over 1.55 billion people, around one-fifth of the world's population (United Nations 2017), with roughly 300 million of them living in the proximity of the Indus River basin, depending directly upon it (Khan – Adams III 2019: 3). The relationship between India and Pakistan is complicated, due to a vast array of historical and geopolitical events that consequently led to four wars and several skirmishes between the two countries. The wars and disputes over the Kashmir region can be seen as a nucleus of the problems between the two countries (Johnson 2005). On the biggest threats of the post-Soviet era, Richard Nixon wrote: “Nuclear powers have never fought each other, but the clash between Muslim Pakistan and Hindu India over the disputed Kashmir territory could erupt into world's first war between nuclear powers” (1992). Largely, the tensions stem from the independence and subsequent partition from British rule in 1947, which has been described as a ‘conflict formation’ (Buzan – Wæver 2003: 4, 101–102). Muslim majority areas were then given to Pakistan, whilst Hindu majority areas were given to India. The state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was especially delicate since it had a Muslim majority in combination with a ruling Hindu maharaja who initiated atrocities against its Muslim population and thus further fuelling tensions. The failure to resolve the Kashmir fate peacefully led to many conflicts of national identity and sovereignty that lay both between and within the two countries (Bose – Jalal 2004; Johnson 2005: 11).

Very few issues emerging from the partition have proved to be as difficult and problematic as the territorial dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir (Bose 2003), it is viewed as the biggest security threat in the region as well as an obstacle to regional cooperation (Sahni 2006: 154), as Pakistan's ‘jugular vein’ and India's dubbing of it as its ‘inseparable’ and ‘integral part’ (Tadjbakhsh 2011: 9). Less well known, perhaps, is the role of Kashmir as a source of water, mainly via the three rivers of Indus, Jhelum and Chenab, where India constitutes the upstream country, and Pakistan being the downstream country (Qureshi 2017). Thereby, the dispute over Kashmir is said to have taken a hydro-strategic turn (Ahmad 2009). After partition, an independent commission conducted to draw an international boundary decided that India would become the upper riparian, and Pakistan the lower riparian state. A major challenge was the fact

that it contained a complex and interdependent irrigation system built during colonial times to be run under a single administration. Hence, the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan oftentimes overlap water disputes. Some even say the conflict is, at its core, about water. It is safe to say that the Kashmir dispute and the water sharing disputes are deeply intertwined (Qureshi 2017; Ranjan 2016; Singh 2008). This is highlighted by research on the region, stating “[w]ater is a flammable issue that can easily be used by [...] state actors as well as for purposes of political positioning, to fuel hatred and conflict” (Alam et al. 2011: 40).

## 2.2 Indus Water Treaty

Naturally, transboundary rivers tend to ignore artificial political boundaries, something which vastly complicates governance and management of hydro politics. When dealing with transboundary water bodies, the heart of the problem is oftentimes that upstream countries can, at any time, reduce, stop or pollute the water flow to the downstream country. Where relations are hostile between upstream and downstream countries, as in this study, treaties that regulate these common resources are fundamental to avoiding potential conflicts.

The Indus mainstream rank among the world’s greatest rivers. Originating in the Tibetan Plateau in China, the Indus system of rivers include six major tributaries, with one of them, Sutlej, originating alongside the Indus mainstream, and four of the other, Ravi, Beas, Jhelum and Chenab, originating in India. Historically, many different societies have used the Indus River to consolidate its power (Ali 2008: 168). Thus, water disputes have been an issue for a long time, and were stalled in the name of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT); a resolution initiated partly by the World Bank, designed to minimize potential armed conflict over shared water between the two countries. This treaty, signed in 1960, after 8 years of negotiations, set a precedent of cooperation and it has managed to survive three wars and continuous hostilities and disputes between India and Pakistan (Akther 2010; Sahni 2006). The IWT allocates the three ‘western rivers’ – main Indus, Jhelum and Chenab – to Pakistan, barring limited uses for India in J&K. The three ‘eastern rivers’ – Ravi, Beas and Sutlej – were entirely allotted to India (Adeel – Wirsing 2017: 6; Ranjan 2016: 196). However, on the ‘western rivers’, India holds the right to construct hydroelectric infrastructure and irrigation projects, “to meet [...] domestic needs” (Zawahri – Michel 2018: 698). Though, they do need to provide Pakistan with all the sufficient and relevant hydrological data on their works (Ibid: 698).

Due to emerging environmental, climatic, demographic and developmental

challenges in the region, IWT is coming under functional and normative stress (Iqbal 2014). Though, contrary to allegations, research has found that there is no reason to suggest that IWT fails in assuring Pakistan's security. Rather, the inherent problematique of the IWT is purely technical in nature. They are merely engineering problems and should therefore require engineering solutions. The technical postulates are hardly understood by the political elite, let alone the vast majority of the population, thus a breeding ground for a politicization of the IWT (Sattar – Bhargava 2019; see also Tadjbakhsh 2011: 11).

## 2.3 Different stakeholders in the Indus River management

There are many different local, regional, national and international actors who in different ways are players in the ongoing conflict between India and Pakistan. Although, as will get evident henceforth in the study, in the heightened, securitized state of hydrogeopolitics, a lot of these actors do not have a voice. Governments in India have quite aggressively, building on a destructive legacy inherited from colonial times as well as modernist ideology, sought to meet its domestic water demands through massive extraction and engineering technologies rather than focusing on strengthening indigenous water traditions and localized conservation attempts (D'Souza 2008: 120–121). Within the Indus River basin, a vast array of stakeholders is affected, which further magnifies the complexities. Though, centralized water bureaucracies, businesses, contractors, global financial institutions and powerful political lobbies, actors which are common when securitizing takes place, control water management (Mirumachi 2015: 11; Buzan et al. 1998: 40). Questions arise when relating this to distribution and utilization. What are the implications for the basin as a whole when decisions are taken by powerful elite actors in such a way?

Indeed, studying transboundary water politics often reveal issues of inequality. Elite decision-makers, far removed from the realities of the people affected, are discussing costs and benefits. When planning and calculating assessments of the projects, local communities are reduced to a general, homogenized socio-economic mass and lumped together with the environmental context (Mirumachi 2015: 14). Manipulating water may include crafting social relationships and inscribing water management, infrastructure and access in political processes (D'Souza 2011), which is oftentimes influenced by different power-seeking elite clusters indulging in contestations over state building (Curley – Herrington 2011: 146). Further, Finnemore and Sikkink name actors who establish norm diffusion as norm agents (1998: 895–896). In this study, politicians, bureaucrats and journalists are the main actors of foci; India's and Pakistan's foreign policy

community as norm agents which amplify and reproduce the construction of the threatening ‘other’.

## 2.4 Hydro-hegemony and riparian positions

The way these countries are located influences the way in which the countries view water resources. Zeitoun and Warner explain power asymmetry in the relation between basin states and how the hydro-hegemonies, India in this case, use the relative advantage of three different features: its riparian position, hard and soft power<sup>1</sup> and capability to physically capture water, in order to maintain asymmetry and thereby its power (2006). Further, combining material capacity with discursive power is crucial when investigating how elite decision-makers maintain the state of power asymmetry. Not acknowledging this power may in many aspects hinder the understanding of water politics and management as messy, wicked and fluid processes that use any means necessary to maintain power (Mirumachi 2015).

India’s dominance in South Asia is a crucial factor for the persistence of its conflict with Pakistan. The dominance encompasses significantly larger population, armed forces and economic muscles than that of Pakistan, which are the material capacities that constitute a basis for India’s position as hegemonic power. In Pakistan, this has led to direct resistance, in obvious combination with what has been presented in previous sections of this study. The fear is further driven by India’s own claim of holding the role of hegemonic power in the region, wielding assertive warnings toward external powers to stay out of regional politics and toward its neighbours that India at any time, if required, might intervene to bolster the domestic security (Wojczewski 2014: 331–332). In addition, the most economically developed state tends to monopolize water access, in order to secure its own supply. This will reinforce the hegemonic power, resulting in further rise in lower-riparian insecurity perceptions (Turton 2003: 73). Furthermore, competition for limited water resources may intensify already fragile and hostile political relations between states (Haftendorn 2000), highlighted by the US Senate in a report that stated that, between India and Pakistan, “dams are a source of significant bilateral tensions” (The Economist 2011).

Pakistan is completely dependent on the Indus River basin for agricultural use, because of its geographical position. Unlike India, which can rely on other river

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<sup>1</sup> This includes coercion pressure, securitization and sanctioned discourse (Zeitoun – Warner 2006: 5).

systems, including Ganges–Jumna and Kaveri River, Pakistan only has Indus as a source of water (Alam 2002: 342): 95% of its irrigation is located within this basin (AQUASTAT 2011: 7). Further, as the upper riparian state, India tends to choke or divert water during summer season and release more water than required during non-water-requiring seasons, which subsequently creates drought in summer and floods in monsoon seasons. It is important, however, to acknowledge that disputes are not necessarily always over water per se, but rather over memories and imaginations of the ‘other’ which further fuels hostility and animosity towards each other (Ranjan 2016: 197–198). Though, under an ongoing, wider, conflict, the pressure and threat of the fact that the ‘enemy’ controls the water supply for the other country is an untenable situation (Alam 2002: 341). As will be shown, India has repeatedly threatened to teach Pakistan a lesson by cutting of the water flows in the Indus River basin. Usually, this happens whenever hostilities escalate between the two countries (Bhushan 2018).

## 3 Theory

In the following chapter, the theories, as well as the basis on which the theories lay, will be presented. Further, it will be discussed in its context and on basis of some received critique.

### 3.1 Ontological postulates

“There is nothing so practical as a good theory” (Neufeld 1994: 12) the saying goes. Before diving into theory dwelling, the ontological postulates<sup>2</sup> will be examined briefly. Traditionally, the dominant perspectives of IR are (neo)liberalism and (neo)realism, so also within the field of national and environmental security. Constructivists, on the other side of the spectrum, hold that objects are not universally true, but rather intersubjectively understood and infused with certain meaning through interaction. Securitization theory embraces this assumption, by viewing issues surrounding security as discursively constructed (Buzan et al. 1998: 25–26; Furlong 2006; Mirumachi 2015).

Indeed, speech can be seen as performative in the sense that it brings about an “ongoing construction of (social) reality” (Guzzini 2011: 335). Hydropolitics has increasingly been positioned within the scope and language of security, which ultimately may have disastrous societal effects (Turton 2003; Wæver 1995: 213). On basis of this notion, it can be argued that Securitization theory is an appropriate analytical framework for examining the political dynamics in the Indus River basin.

### 3.2 Securitization theory and the Copenhagen School

Securitization theory (ST, established by the Copenhagen School, or CS) defines a socially constructed and intersubjective process by which a threat towards a specific referent object is acknowledged and the object is deemed worth protecting. The specific act of framing certain issues as ‘existentially

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<sup>2</sup> The conceptions of reality upon which the theory rests (Teorell – Svensson 2007: 41).

threatening<sup>3</sup> is distinguished and intersubjectively established, in order to infuse a certain degree of urgency and priority in the matter in question and thus legitimizing the implementation of extraordinary measures (Buzan et al. 1998: 24).

When water becomes securitized, it can be elevated to a position of national security concern, if the nation-state is the referent object under threat. CS describes this interaction as a rhetorical one: a discursive exchange between an actor which is securitizing and an audience in relation to a referent object and whatever it is threatening the object. Uttering security becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy; it is in the practice of naming something a security matter that it becomes a security issue, not necessarily because it is a ‘real’ threat. This way of framing a matter thus securitizes it (Buzan et al. 1998: 1, 24–26, 32–33; Wæver 1995: 51). Simply put, Securitization theory states that security is not an objective condition, but rather a specific social process. Hence, security is socially constructed, and therein, the above-mentioned existential threats are allowed to be recognized. An action taken within the realm of securitization, a ‘securitizing move’, aims to “lift an issue into an untouchable space of urgency” (Warner – Boas 2019), thus ‘above’ politics. Furthermore, framings like these tend to amplify pre-existing geo-strategic tensions and security dynamics and thereby the risk of conflict (Singh 2008: 8).

The existential threat must be understood in relation to the character of the particular referent object, which may vary based on type and level of analysis. Although one will find different values and characteristics depending on the different referent objects, the state may still appear as the heart of the matter in some of them. Sometimes the securitizing actor and referent object are separated, but when both are the state, its representatives speak on behalf itself. Speaking of the security of the nation works to silence opposition and gives opportunity to those in power to exploit the existential threats for domestic purposes. These threats are not an innocent reflection of reality; it is always a choice to securitize or to accept it as such, and that choice is political (Buzan et al. 1998: 21–22, 27–29, 36, 42).

Securitization tends to be dominated by actors in power, the state and its elites, that may benefit from the process. The securitizing actor must succeed in persuading the audience, public opinion, but also politicians, military officers and other elites, that the referent object is existentially threatened. (Emmers 2007: 112).

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<sup>3</sup> To present an issue as an ‘existential threat’ can be to say that: “if we do not tackle this problem, everything else will be irrelevant (because we will not be here or will not be free to deal with it in our own way)” (Buzan et al. 1998: 24).

The possibility that securitization may take place through mediums other than speech, such as “words, images and actions”, is highlighted in a non-Western context, thus broadening it further (Wilkinson 2007: 12). In addition, Wilkinson suggests that, “[c]ontrary to the linear dynamic described by securitization, starting with a securitizing actor who then constructs a referent object and threat narrative to be accepted or rejected, the process may in practice start at any point, with the component parts developing simultaneously and contributing to each other’s construction” (ibid: 20). This is confirmed when securitization is being described as a “constitutive, non-causal theory” (Buzan – Hansen 2009: 215).

### 3.2.1 A critique of Securitization theory

A common critique towards ST is its lack of a coherent methodology, partly due to focusing too narrowly on the ontological debate. The theory includes, and presupposes, a speech act event from the sender, and an intersubjectivity process in the receiving end where the threat gets socially constructed. What, then, is to be methodologised, the speech act or the intersubjective construction of a threat? Though, Wæver has argued, avoidance of a single methodology to always stick with is desirable (Färber 2018), since securitization stretches into so many different sectors and what it comes down to is what one wish to examine (Wæver 2003: 35). It can also be argued that the notion of speech act refers to a process, and not “a [...] single bombshell event” (Guzzini 2011: 335), and thus, should be understood as such.

Further, Buzan and Wæver did put forward that it is virtually impossible to distinguish audiences, especially at the systemic level, and thereby the success of securitization on basis of audience acceptance (2009). Though, as previously stated, a convinced audience may just entail the very elite surrounding the securitizing actors, which reproduces securitization themselves. However, audience acceptance is not subject of focus in this thesis.

Adding to this, critique of eurocentrism in ST has arisen (Wilkinson 2007), but discussions of that sort were conducted in the previous subsection. Further, applying it in a non-Western context suggests that the securitization process may proceed in a messier and more non-linear way than predicted (Curley – Herington 2011: 145).

Lastly, as long as the theory used bestows us with understanding, context, some explaining and an ounce of prediction, and it remains relatively coherent and consistent, perhaps that is good enough. After all, “we should not ask too much of theory” (Burchill 1996: 23–24).



### 3.3 Frame analysis

Frame analysis is a theory as well as a methodological framework. In the 1970s, Goffman described frames as a “scheme of interpretation that allow individuals to trace, identify, perceive and label” (1974: 21). In the vast fauna on the matter, Entman’s description of frames is arguably the widest accepted: “selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and make[ing] them more salient” in order to promote a problem definition and prescribe it with a solution (1993: 52). The construction of frames, if they are being successful, subsequently resonate with broader public understandings and establish as ways of talking about and understanding issues (Rein – Schön 1996: 86).

## 4 Methodology

In this chapter, a specification of the choices of methodology for the forthcoming analysis will be presented. The investigation of the material will be conducted as follows: by studying speeches, statements and comments, different framings of security will be illustrated and, based on the background and theory chapters, contextualized.

The choice of methodology is drawing on the notion that language helps create reality, which was more thoroughly presented in 3.1. It ought to be further emphasized that whether statements are ‘true’, if they depict reality correctly, is of no interest for the qualitative analyst. Rather, they are interesting *in their own right*, as producers of meaning (Esaiasson et al. 2017: 212 [emphasis added]). Hereafter, the method of choice with auxiliary motivation will follow.

### 4.1 Identifying frames

Securitization is about taking politics beyond the established rules as it “*frames* the issue [...] as above politics” (Buzan et al. 1998: 23 [emphasis added]). There is no exclusive method when studying securitization, “[b]ut [...] a study of the actual phrasing of the securitizing moves seems appropriate” (ibid: 177). As within the scope of securitization theory, the methodology used to examine the speech act ought to call attention to the way in which language help ‘create’ an issue by naming, interpreting and dramatizing them accordingly. This process of presentation, but also reinterpretation, of a matter is referred to as framing (Finnemore – Sikkink 1998: 897; Esaiasson et al. 2017: 218), as in the realm of ST, thus a fitting choice of methodological tool.

How, then, is it possible to find these acts of securitization? How will I be able to tell? To turn the question around, how could I not? Fortunately, as pointed out by Buzan et al., it would be against the nature of a securitizing move to be hidden, since it in itself is a powerful instrument to put an issue in the security realm for political purposes (1998: 177). As such, the analyst should assume the elite actors to express securitizing moves when “ [...] a debate is sufficiently important [...] thus, one does not need to read everything, especially not obscure text” (ibid: 177).

Qualitative text analysis is about reading texts actively, and to ask questions to the texts (Esaiasson et al. 2017: 212). Indeed, the analyst's role is one of observation and interpretation. On basis of the inherent logic of ST, the analyst will acknowledge whether the observed actions fulfil the 'security criteria' (Buzan et al. 1998: 34–35). These criteria will unfold with the use of a couple of precise questions, with accompanying sub-questions. This constitutes the methodological framework used:

1. How is the 'problem' framed? (What kind of problem is it framed as? A problem for whom?)
2. How is the cause of the problem framed? (Who or what is presented as the cause of the problem?)
3. How is the solution to the problem framed? (What action is prescribed, given the framing?) (Esaiasson et al. 2017: 218–219).

Frame analysis in a methodological sense then helps the analyst to reveal dominant frames unwilling to let through alternative frames, which expresses taken-for-granted assumptions within the specific policy discourse (Rein – Schön 1996: 96–98), and to capture strategic framings done by actors with vested interests (Esaiasson et al. 2017: 218).

## 4.2 Material

Textual analyses of the qualitative sort usually consist of deep investigation and advanced interpretation of small samples of texts or statements (David et al. 2011: 331). Further, when singling out statements to analyse, I draw on the notions of the securitizing actors at hand, the government and security establishment in India and Pakistan respectively (see table 1 in section 5.5). It is important to note and be aware that every choice of material to analyse that I make is done for the sake of the thesis, and creates a frame in itself.

The way to carry through the analysis is to visualize the securitization moves, manifested in the statements of elite actors in India and Pakistan. Only observing and contextualizing statements and comments from these is a conscious choice, and an inevitable one, since they are the securitizing actors. ST can be said to be self-fulfilling in that sense; it replicates exclusionary security framings (Charrett 2009), which is important to keep in mind throughout the thesis.

## 4.3 Case selection

Attempting to cover all of the Indo-Pakistani water securitization since partition would be extensive and, frankly, naïve. Therefore, keeping the investigation to a single dam dispute and delimiting the time frame seems like a wise choice. A brief presentation of the dam, in addition with motivations for that specific case as well as the limited time frame, will be conducted.

The Kishanganga Hydro-Electric Plant (KHEP) is a run-of-the-river project in Jhelum River basin, designed to divert water from the Kishanganga River (named Neelum River in Pakistan) into the Jhelum. It has formally been planned since 1988, but the dispute as such started in 2009 (PCA 2013: 46–49), with protests from Pakistan since it affects the flow of water into the Pakistani side of the river, reducing the potential capacity for a planned hydroelectric project on the Neelum. In 2016, Pakistan requested a court of arbitration to examine the project to its extent (Zawahri – Michel 2018: 699), but the dispute remains unsettled.

The dispute surrounding Baglihar dam was formally concluded in 2008 (Akther 2010), a point in time which more or less forms the beginning of the KHEP dispute. These large dams provoke significant tension and arouse passion whenever mentioned or acted upon and stand out as the most controversial projects. KHEP is also said to have elevated water discourse to strategic and security importance (Bisht 2011: 3–4, 7). Furthermore, I will go outside of the scope of KHEP with some statements, since they satisfyingly depict the current water securitization.

## 5 Core security frames

In this subsection, different security frames will be presented. This is done to lay the groundwork for the analysis part, where I will highlight how Indian and Pakistani actors are framing water management issues respectively, as either a threat to the nation, individual or environment. The frames presented were chosen on basis of an initial examination of the material at hand, when beginning to write this thesis. These three security frames were, simply, the most prominent ones. As an introduction to the chapter, an initial word on security and securitizing water in the specific context will be presented.

### 5.1 Security in the Indo-Pakistani context

A debate over what should and should not be defined in terms of security has raged within the field of security studies (Wilkinson 2007: 6), beside the traditional focus on the state as the central object to be secured, various other have been included, such as society and the environment (Buzan et al. 1998: 7–8; Mutimer 2007: 60). Moving towards the Indo-Pakistani context, security must be studied in its relational dynamics. This is shown as of how human collectivities relate to each other in terms of threats, which travel more easily over short distances. Thus, insecurity increases with proximity. Furthermore, if a threat is recurrent or persistent, the sense of urgency and the response may become institutionalized (Buzan et al. 1998: 10–13, 27). It is also important to address the conditions in which post-colonial states are made, characteristics which include the process of state formation and the inherent degree of internal conflicts which inevitably affect securitizations (Wojczewski 2014: 321).

Usually, political struggles manifest in water resource management, for example through hegemonial status; water disputes would not be solved by merely making more water available (Link et al. 2016: 510). With the security establishment debating the Indus water regime on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC), the Indus River basin have certainly become securitized (Sattar – Bhargava 2019). Through securitization, water issues are being linked with national survival, which sets of a spiral of animosity (Alam et al. 2011: 5), and

ultimately results in the overlooking, and suppression, of certain socio-cultural contexts and values (Du Plessis 2000: 14).

Between India and Pakistan, in terms of security, political rhetoric is in itself seen as a destabilizing factor (Alam 2002: 349). This is highlighted as: “[c]ommunication is extremely delicate. Public pronouncements, especially those aimed at one’s constituency and other third parties, tend to obscure rather than clarify intentions” (Princen 1992). Further, in the securitization process, conceptual factors, such as historical narratives, culture, identity, and perceptions of the ‘other’ can play a pivotal role, as well as historical relations of enmity (Buzan – Wæver 2003: 4, 44; Buzan et al. 1998: 12).

## 5.2 National security

Having access to, and controlling, water is essential for human development, and thus, in extension, national security. Therein, water is a highly political concern (Alam 2002: 341). Since the Indo-Pakistani context is investigated, subaltern realism is of relevance, which highlights state and nation building in the non-West, in the context of decolonization and the security difficulties that follow. These regimes have strong incentives, disputed borders, a lack of legitimacy and weak political institutions, to utilize external diversions for gaining domestic support (Ayoob 2011: 178; Ayoob 2002: 41). Thereby, speaking ‘security’ works mediating as it (re-)produces constructive and integrative power, in its integration with social relations and construction of existential threats (Huysmans 2002: 44–45), and political capital can be gained in presenting them in terms of national security (Warner – Boas 2019: 4).

It has been argued that water scarcity may play a role in strengthening the political power of the state when making it a significant issue. Hence, water can work as a tool for militarized action, or rather, a vehicle through which goals of political and military nature can be achieved (Gleick 1993). Furthermore, conceptualizing matters into being of national interest is often done to justify particular actions taken by giving them a façade of sanctity in order to elevate it and to neutralize potential critique. Framing national interest thus acts as a legitimizing instrument for policy-makers and can, in its most chauvinistic manifestations, form a tool for deflecting domestic discontent. Indeed, these concerns are seen in the post-colonial states of India and Pakistan vis-à-vis each other (Ayoob 2011: 177–178). The state-building ideologies in India and Pakistan in combination with disparate national identities can be seen as a nucleus of the proneness to construct ‘the other’, and consequently, act when piqued (Wojczewski 2014: 326).

It is argued that KHEP is presented as of an absolute, and of other frames dominating, national concern in regards of security. This is shown in the way the water discourse is being framed by elite actors. Even in the Baglihar issue, the army was being very careful with statements, but with KHEP, reticence was absent (Bisht 2011: 7).

### 5.2.1 National security in the Indian context

Already in the late 1950s, large dams, used for hydroelectricity, irrigation and flood control, were viewed as symbols for modern engineering in the era of nation building. Being able to tame rivers raised a technological mission in the new, decolonized states (D'Souza 2008: 113). India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, labelled these dams the 'new temples' of modern India. Thus, dammed rivers emerged alongside, and synonymously, with the formation and destiny of the state of India (Taylor 2015: 147).

India's dam buildings can be viewed as the technical means to realize certain political ends (D'Souza 2008: 118). While these dams undoubtedly contribute to state welfare in forms of energy and food production, hydraulic dam constructions and other infrastructural development alike have become a purpose in its own right, as a tool for legitimizing and symbolizing state power (Molle et al. 2009: 336). This is highlighted in the KHEP context as it is being described as a geo-strategic manoeuvre vis-à-vis Pakistan rather than being of benefit for the people and development of J&K (Singh 2008: 16).

India's partially incomplete nation-building and mismanaging of domestic cleavages has been conducive to the conflict with Pakistan and its unwillingness to compromise around the Kashmir dispute. Furthermore, from India's perspective, Pakistan does not accept India's state building, and consequently, its claims to Kashmir, since they would jeopardize the legitimacy of Pakistan and its political foundation. Again, from India's point of view, this sparks attempts to disrupt India by supporting separatist movements and Islamic terrorist groups (Wojczewski 2014: 326). Further, Arif Rafiq, a political analyst at the Middle East Institute in Washington, suggests India's threats are driven and intensified by emerging national elections: "Mr. Modi's government needs to look tough" and signal "that it can leverage its upper riparian location to coerce Pakistan" (Gettleman 2019).

### 5.2.2 National security in the Pakistani context

Pakistan's government oscillates between authoritarianism and democracy with elements of patrimonialism, and is being described as a "military autocracy and aspiring democracy", where "the military uses populism [...] to legitimate its rule [...]" (Wojczewski 2014: 328). Pakistan and its national identity is shaped by the notion that Muslims and Hindus cannot live together peacefully within a state dominated by Hindus (ibid: 328).

In Pakistan, attempts at peace-making with India have persistently been obstructed by the security establishment<sup>4</sup>, which uses the narrative of a, by external forces, threatened, 'endangered' state, in order to maintain national unity and identity (Tadjbakhsh 2011: 21–23). Indeed, Pakistan's need to exaggerate the threats from India because of its own chaotic domestic political landscape is a recurring phenomenon (Buzan – Wæver 2003: 116; Ahmed 1998: 361).

### 5.3 Environmental security

Environmental security deals with maintenance of the local as well as planetary biosphere as the essential system upon which all human endeavours rely (Buzan 1991: 19–20). The study of environmental security developed, and has gained momentum, since the end of the Cold War. It examines threats to the environment itself as well as the threats the environment poses to the nation-state. Nonetheless, the threats, and the new school, called for a revision of the role of national security within the scope of security studies (Mirumachi 2015: 26).

Due to global warming, deforestation and shrinking of mountain glaciers feeding the Indus River basin, season flows of water have been depleting year after year (Iqbal 2014). At present, there is no institutional framework on how to manage the effects of climate change in connection to water management and availability in the Indus River basin, as the IWT does not provide such legal instruments. Consequently, there is an ongoing politicization of the environment in the region (Nabeel 2019; Singh 2008: 7). Hydroelectric power plants are being framed as the optimal paths to development. When environmental issues that stem from climate change gets merged into the sanctioned discourse of powerful actors that have vested interests in maintaining status quo, however, actual climate mitigation and adaptation may be difficult to obtain (Williams 2018: 16).

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<sup>4</sup> Top military commanders, elite bureaucrats and intelligence leaders, "flanked by feudal lords, industrial magnates and media barons" (Tadjbakhsh 2011: 21).



Moreover, the water discourse is being connected with the security concept. Environmental security addresses environmental factors behind conflict and cooperation, as well as the impact of environmental degradation to societies and human development. This security paradigm is new in that it includes stakeholders on all different levels of society (Du Plessis 2000: 13–14). Environmental security and management of water resources has been, on this basis and almost inextricably, linked with national security (Turton 2003).

### 5.3.1 Environmental security in the Indian context

A WB-sponsored publication recently stated: “Social as well as political-economic structures will influence the impact of climate shocks and trends. People that contend with multiple inequalities will be most vulnerable to climate change” (World Bank 2010: v). The poor state of India’s infrastructure in combination with population growth has greatly obstructed environmental matters such as water quality and quantity. Though, these issues are ignored at all political levels since adequate measures would not resonate politically (Miklian – Kolås 2014: 3). Rather, water scarcity narratives are being used in India to legitimize controversial water projects, which “obscure the true culprits of water scarcity and compounds inequalities in access and control over resources” (Williams 2018: 5).

### 5.3.2 Environmental security in the Pakistani context

Pakistan is a country with “extreme vulnerability to the adverse of impacts of climate change” (Taylor 2015: 122), especially in the position of being the lower riparian, dependent on a single basin (Iqbal 2014: 115). This was highlighted as the Maplecroft Index of the Columbia University placed Pakistan as the foremost country of climate change impact risk in 2010, and between the years of 1998–2017, Pakistan ranked as number 8 on a list of the countries in the world mostly affected by climate change (Eckstein et al. 2018: 8). The ranking is based on a weighted index called Global Climate Risk Index (CRI), which analyses quantified impacts of extreme weather events<sup>5</sup>. The index does not provide an all-embracing analysis of climate change induced risks, but should rather be seen as a reliable contribution of quantified data to the field of anthropocentric climate change (ibid: 5).

Furthermore, belligerence and linking water scarcity to India increases in the

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<sup>5</sup> Hydrological events such as river floods, flash floods, mass movement (landslide); climatological events such as droughts, wildfires (Eckstein et al. 2018: 5).

Pakistani discourse during winter when water availability is lower and reduces in the summer months, emphasizing scapegoating India in its securitization of water (Alam et al. 2011: 67–68). Another telling example is formulated by professor Ayesha Siddiqa: “Instead of putting him in charge of agriculture, they put him in charge of foreign policy” referring to the former Farmer’s Association leader, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who in 2008 went on to become Pakistan’s foreign minister, and noting “[t]he whole thing is political” (Lepeska 2008).

## 5.4 Human security

Attempts to move away from the state as the continual and central referent object when studying security have been made, which is crucial in order to approach security in a multisectoral way (Wæver et al. 1993: 24–27; Buzan et al. 1998).

The management of transboundary rivers has enormous implications for food and energy security, and thus, human security. It is valuable for human development through agriculture, sanitation and drinking water. Different actors and stakeholders will have different perspectives and ideas on the challenges a river basin is facing; flooding may, for example, be seen as a technical or economical issue for governmental actors, while it becomes a livelihood issue for stakeholders in local communities. It is therefore helpful, and important, to look beyond the scope of IR when problematizing governance and management of transboundary rivers (Mirumachi 2015). Oftentimes, the distinction between ‘human’ activities and environmental issues becomes blurred, making environmental security a matter of palpable ‘enemies’ in compliance with security logic (Buzan et al. 1998: 81).

### 5.4.1 Human security in the Indian context

India is stricken by extreme social vulnerabilities and inequalities and therein stalled human development for vast parts of its population. These problems exist alongside immense power ambitions. Thus, historically, India has compounded many different political crises and emergencies with the protection of ‘national security’, heavily securitizing selected issues while completely disregarding others (Miklian – Kolås 2014: 1).

### 5.4.2 Human security in the Pakistani context

Viewing water as a basic human right, imperilling adequate water supply in Pakistan by constructing hydroelectric dams on the western rivers can be, and is being, seen as a move towards deprivation of that human right. Apart from drinking and sanitation, water is crucial for irrigation to agriculture, which forms 45 per cent of Pakistan’s labour force. Further, almost all of the crucial water for irrigation comes from the ‘western rivers’ of which the Indus River comprises the maximum of water supply (Qureshi 2017: 379–381). On a final note before the analysis, to highlight how these different security frames ‘bleed’ into one another; the notions of resource scarcity and other environmental issues have also in Pakistan been ‘hijacked’ and “socially constructed through power relations that unevenly structure the control and usage of irrigation water within rural society” (Taylor 2015: 126).

## 5.5 Identifying security frames

Further, in addition to the questions presented in 4.1 that are being asked to the material, a table of threats and referent objects is being set up, to distinguish the three different frames. National and human security perspectives are taken from Burgess et al. (2016: 391), and environmental security from Gaan (2004: 29).

**Table 1.** Security frames in comparison

	National security	Human security	Environmental security
Securitizing actor	State actors	State actors	State actors
Referent object	The nation-state	The individual	The environment
Threats	Other states, terrorists, economic climate change	Pollution, scarcity, displacement	Global warming, biodiversity loss, pollution

As already stated, the securitizing actors being analysed are state representatives. The vulnerabilities of human life and the environment cover a broad spectrum and are determined socially, geographically, culturally, biologically and economically in an intricate web. Thus, a thorough analysis of human and environmental security does not easily lend itself to the caricatured forms of speech act, which is imperative for an effectual securitization (Burgess et al. 2016: 391).

## 6 Analysis

In this chapter, I will conduct the analysis of the thesis. The disposition will be as follows: applying the analytical framework on the material at hand will pursue the identification of the frames, on the Indian and Pakistani statements, comments and actions respectively. Hence, a division between the different questions presented in section 4.1 is being done between the different frames in 6.1 and 6.2. In 6.3, the dominant frame will be analysed.

To pursue the analysis, I will present the material, statements and actions related to the Kishanganga dam, by using the three main questions derived from the method chapter of this thesis. These are being used as to help organize the findings, and thereby finding the dominant frame.

### 6.1 Indian frames

First, I will present the water management frames carried out by the Indian side. There are different situations being framed as problems, which I will divide into different paragraphs. The first question is:

#### **(1) How is the problem being framed?**

In September 2016, heavy attacks are carried out by Pakistani groups in Uri, India-administered J&K, near LoC, where 18 Indian soldiers get killed. PM Modi condemns the attacks by declaring “blood and water cannot flow together” (Gupta 2016) at an IWT meeting. According to officials, not a word on the effects of climate change was uttered at this meeting (ibid).

After discussing shortage of irrigation water in India, and threatening with bringing water flowing to Pakistan “back to India”, PM Modi said: “The people of India suffered for long owing to misadventures of Pakistan [...] Now, Pakistan has tasted India’s ‘dum’ (courage)” (Singh 2016) referring to India’s ‘surgical strikes’ toward Pakistan a couple of months earlier.

To summarize, by declaring “blood and water cannot flow together” as a response to the Uri attack, India is explicitly linking the Pakistani attacks to questions of transboundary water management.

Further, the problem is being framed as that “the people of India” are suffering due to Pakistani “misadventures”; once again linking military or other types of securitized action, the surgical strikes in this case, to water management. The problem is understood implicitly, by focusing on the cause of the problem and the prescribed solution.

## **(2) How is the cause of the problem framed?**

India accuses Pakistan of conducting the attacks carried out in Uri (Gupta 2016), but apart from that, Pakistan is often being implicitly blamed as the cause of the problem. This can be seen in question (3) of the Indian frames, as Indian actors frames the problems and prescribes the solution in terms of dam constructions and water management in response to attacks carried out by Pakistani groups.

## **(3) How is the solution to the problem framed?**

Following the 2016 Uri attacks, India suspends annual Indus commissioners meeting. Further, an inter-ministerial meeting was conducted to “look into the details and workings” of the IWT. The members of this specific task force would be “asked with a sense of urgency” (Gupta 2016; Bhushan 2018). When asked how long the meeting thereafter would be suspended, an Indian official said: “Till [sic] Pakistan stops exporting terror to India” (Gupta 2016). Afterwards, Indian officials state that they have been “very generous” towards Pakistan. And since a “tough situation” had arisen, this was an “appropriate time” to “review” the IWT. India plans to “exercise its legal rights under the treaty to the maximum capacity” (ibid). Further, India states reconsidering of another irrigation project, Tulbul navigation project on Jhelum River, following the attacks (Sinha 2016).

Referring to the shortage of irrigation water in India, Modi said: “I will bring the Indus, Ravi and Sutlej waters, flowing [...] through Pakistan, back to India for farmers of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan is not using even a drop of water of the two rivers flowing into its territory [...] I will fill your farmlands with water. I have already set up a task force for the purpose” (Singh 2016). These statements were being made in relation to the Uri attacks, further elaborated under question (1) in this subsection.

In 2017, following the Pakistani army court’s sentencing an alleged Indian spy to death, yet another water meeting was annulled, this time a Water Secretaries meeting. In 2018, just hours before PIC meeting, India’s Minister of Transport

Nitin Gadkari threatens to reduce water flows to Pakistan by means of constructing more dams and further divert water for irrigation (Bhushan 2018).

In 2018, Modi visits Srinagar to inaugurate yet another hydroelectric project, just a couple of hundred meters from the highly militarized LoC. As protests escalated, Modi states: “Every issue, every problem has one solution: development, development and development” (Hussain 2018). The visit was conducted one day after India and Pakistan shelled each other, killing four civilians on each side of LoC and one Indian soldier. Modi “dedicated the power station to the nation” (ibid). Following this, India’s water secretary at the Ministry of External Affairs, Shekhar states that: “A team [at the Ministry] is currently examining the treaty” (The Economic Times 2018).

In 2019, in a Twitter message, Nitin Gadkari wrote: “Our Govt. has decided to stop our share of water which used to flow to Pakistan. We will divert water from Eastern rivers and supply it to our people in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab” (Gettleman 2019). This followed an attack by a Pakistani-based group that killed 40 police officers. An important detail for context is that it referred to the Eastern rivers, already allotted to India, and the statement merely restated statements made in December about a cabinet-cleared dam project (Ghoshal – Mackenzie 2019), once again linking water to security.

Thus, to summarize, Indus commission meetings being stalled, reviewing and examining the IWT, as well as exercising its rights in the IWT to maximum capacity, is being presented as prescribed solutions to the problems linked to Pakistan. Further, PIC meetings will be stalled until “Pakistan stops exporting terror to India”, thus linking national security to water. Indeed, stalling meetings over water resources in response to skirmishes or attacks is recurrent.

Initiating new dams as response to military skirmishes or militant attacks can also be seen, further linking national security to water management. “Development” is being prescribed as a solution, although in reference to the nation as such, as power plant is “dedicated” to the nation, once again in context with skirmishes. Statements to divert more water from Pakistan to India is being linked to a statement directed towards Pakistan and its alleged attacks in Uri, stating that they have felt India’s courage in reference to its subsequent surgical strikes against Pakistan. Hereby, water once again gets explicitly linked to highly militarized statements and actions, thus securitized. It is also worth noting that these solutions are being infused with a sense of urgency, sometimes explicitly, in line with ST.

## 6.2 Pakistani frames

In this subsection, the frames from the Pakistani side will be presented.

### **(1) How is the problem framed?**

In 2008, IBWC Pakistani Chairman Dahir stated, on India's plans of building dams: "[...] if India succeeded in constructing the proposed dams, Pakistan would join the list of the countries facing a severe water crisis" (Ahmad 2009). A month later, he stated: "Between India and Pakistan, there is an extremely dreadful dispute. In an aggressive manner, India has readied a weapon for use against Pakistan that is more dangerous and destructive than an atomic bomb" (ibid).

Referring to the construction of Baglihar and Kishanganga dam, Abdul Basit, Pakistan's former Foreign Office Spokesperson stated: "It's a matter of life and death for Pakistan. If our water is taken away from us, our agriculture will be affected greatly [...]" (The Express Tribune 2014).

Sartaj Aziz, then de-facto foreign minister of Pakistan, stated that India's reviewing of the IWT could be seen as "an act of war or a hostile act against Pakistan" (Dawn 2016).

After Modi inaugurated KHEP (Iqbal 2018), Pakistan expressed "serious concerns" over the inauguration, calling it a "violation of the Indus Water Treaty" (Siddiqui 2018). Foreign Office added, "this intransigence on part of India clearly threatens the sanctity of the Treaty" (ibid). Further, Pakistan holds that India completed the project after the World Bank had "paused" the process while under Court of Arbitration as requested by Pakistan in 2016 (ibid).

To summarize, the problem is being predominantly framed as a water crisis, because the agriculture will be affected. It is being framed as a "matter of life and death" for the nation of Pakistan. India's reviewing of the IWT is seen as an "act of war" and a "hostile act" towards Pakistan. Further, the problem is being described as "more dangerous and destructive than an atom bomb".

### **(2) How is the cause of the problem framed?**

Zardari, also mentioned in (1), states that "[t]he water crisis in Pakistan is directly linked to relations with India" (Zardari 2009).

Palwasha Khan, Member of National Assembly, accused India of carrying out "water terrorism" against Pakistan and said that "experts foresee war over the water issue in the future and any war in this region would be no less of a nuclear war" (IDSA 2010: 37–38). Furthermore, Pakistani media persistently accuses

India of “stealing Pakistan’s water” (Gupta 2016). India has also been accused of withholding data from Pakistan concerning KHEP, even though Article VI of IWT states data must be shared on a monthly basis (Sattar – Bhargava 2019).

Pakistan’s former IWC commissioner, Jamaat Ali Shah, was accused of “betraying” his country as he was “giving” India the opportunity to control water supply (The Express Tribune 2014).

The problem is being explicitly and directly linked to India pursuing construction of dams, and as India is “stealing Pakistan’s water”. India is accused of “water terrorism”, and water issues are being explicitly linked to nuclear war. India is accused of stalling important data on KHEP, further fuelling tensions. Furthermore, former IWC commissioner is accused of “betraying” Pakistan for not successfully pursuing case against KHEP.

### **(3) How is the solution to the problem framed?**

Dahir, same as mentioned in (1), stated: “[i]f we are to save Pakistan, we have to protect our waters and review our policies in Kashmir” (Ahmad 2009).

In 2009, the then-president of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, stated: “[t]he question of Kashmir must be addressed [...] to bring stability to this region [...] but also to address critical [...] environmental concerns” (Zardari 2009). Further, he states “[r]esolution could prevent an environmental catastrophe in South Asia, but failure to do so could fuel the fires of discontent that may lead to extremism and terrorism” (ibid).

A senate committee demanded Jamaat Ali Shah to be “immediately arrested” for not protecting Pakistan’s water rights, since he was removed from his post in 2010 for failing to pursue Pakistan’s case against KHEP (The Express Tribune 2014).

To summarize, the solution is being framed as this: in order to “save Pakistan”, “our waters” needs to be “protected”. If not solved, it could lead to “environmental catastrophe” and thus, ‘fuelling the fires’ for more “extremism and terrorism”.

## **6.3 Dominant frame**

India is predominantly accusing Pakistan for carrying out attacks, while Pakistan is describing the problem as India carrying out “water terrorism” by stalling



water, thus the securitization happen differently depending on whose frames are being investigated. Further, Indian frames are more 'heavy' on the prescribed solutions, while Pakistan focuses on how the problem is framed.

Nevertheless, the methodological systematic review of the statements at hand shows that the national security frame is the dominating frame. Development and agriculture in the human security sense as well as water scarcity and environmental concerns are subjects that keep getting mentioned, but from these actors merely as parentheses in the overriding arch of the nation being existentially threatened. That is, they always lead back to the idea of the nation, whether they express securing it in terms of development, water in environmental terms, or both. As became evident in chapter 5, these different security frames 'bleed into' one another, which can make them difficult to distinguish. However, it can be argued that the nation-state is the recurrent referent object from the material observed. Environmental security, which has the environment as its referent object, is being mentioned, but only in relation to the nation of Pakistan. Strengthening the power of the nation and therein, its representatives, can be said to happen at the expense of the people of India and Pakistan, the domestic issues at hand, and environmental issues.

Drawing on the notions of frame analysis, that in itself helps revealing dominant frames by investigating how alternative frames are not being let through and how some notions are being taken for granted, the material clearly shows how this is happening. By explicitly blaming each other for stalling water on the one hand and violent attacks on the other, and constructing these securitizing acts as of national security concern, the tensions and sense of urgency become institutionalized and thus taken for granted, not letting other frames through. This happens at cost of other frames, and therein, other referent objects, the individual and the environment. Furthermore, since the dominant frame helps reproducing the notion of the 'other', it may have disastrous societal effects, which is an untenable situation in its negative spiralling.

The analysis shows that statements are often connected with hostile acts or to meetings regarding water resource management and thus mutually fuel each other. With each statement, and each rebuttal, the tense atmosphere is allowing hydro-securitization to continue. When looking at the (3) framing of the solution of the problem in 6.2, a part of the narrative is that not solving the problems may cause terrorism, which is part of the (1) problem in 6.1. Therein, the mutually fuelling is distinctively visual.

## 7 Conclusions

Above all else, water issues are existential issues, and they have manifested as water disputes between India and Pakistan. A securitization of water is ongoing, which is also evident in the analysis chapter, where the material is being analysed through the methodological and theoretical framework. On the basis of the empirical research presented in the background chapter as well as the core security frames, the results from the material seems to correspond with the notions of national security being the overriding and dominating frame in this hydro-securitization, thereby successfully answering the research question at hand.

Considering India's position as the hydro-hegemony, fuelling Pakistan's lower-riparian insecurities by using the dams as leverage consolidates the state of hydro-securitization, and thereby its power. The issue gets pressing in its most extreme frame to the extent that it is being compared to an atomic bomb and linked to nuclear war. Strong incentives are at hand, the populist move of fuelling tensions and exploiting divisions by means of the threatening 'other' may be used to turn away attention from domestic inequalities and unrest, as has been theoreticized in previous chapters.

Ultimately, the tragedy lay in what the Indus water regime, charged with power interest as well as power asymmetry, ends up overseeing and marginalizing: burdens of the less powerful; the local communities, the impacts to environmental health and ecosystems, and the devaluing of cultural and social values related to water within the scope of the basin which are not easily interpreted in economic or nationalistic terms.

Looming water scarcity in the region may perpetuate the ongoing tensions, if hydro-securitization is allowed to further spiral between the two countries. The ongoing securitizing process with its dominant national security frame, in combination with issues of socio-political and environmental nature, calls for a framework that incorporates other viewpoints and therein, different threat perceptions, to bring about a neutral mode of tone. If addressed correctly, resource scarcity can also work as a catalyst for cooperation and peace.



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