International donors play a significant role in the mitigation and prevention of transboundary water disputes and the promotion of cooperation. In doing so, donors can exercise water diplomacy through a wide range of instruments from facilitating or mediating the negotiations to financing capacity building and specific activities in official and non-official transboundary settings. However, the scholarly literature has been less explicit about whether and how diplomatic instruments, utilized by international donors, can impact on existing disputes and local ownership in the basin. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by answering the question: How do the diplomatic tools, used by the donor community at the interstate, intrastate, and local levels, influence existing disputes in transboundary river basin? How do the diplomatic instruments influence local ownership of the results of water diplomacy?

The research explores donor diplomacy in the Aral Sea Basin during 1991-1999, 2000-2009, 2010-2019 through the ‘track III diplomacy’ framework with a focus on the use of facilitation of formal interstate negotiations (track I), joint studies and trainings (track II), and financing specific activities (track III). The analysis identifies their impact on water disputes and influence on local ownership looking at the emerging context for, and the events following, the use of diplomatic instruments by donors.

The findings show that diplomatic instruments used by external donors have resulted in mitigating of existing conflicts in the first period when water disputes are not deep-rooted, while the facilitation of formal negotiations and informal trainings have been unable to change the status quo of existing disputes later during the second and third periods. Track III diplomatic instruments, particularly financing the Basin Programme, IWRM in disputed areas of the Fergana Valley, and
risk assessment of Rogun Dam in Tajikistan, have contributed to the de-escalation of interstate conflicts and decreased the number of local conflicts.

Moreover, facilitation of negotiations for track I diplomacy when combined with a joint study of the disputed issue (track II) has led to mutually beneficial outcomes and increased local ownership of such outcomes of water diplomacy.

The use of the same diplomatic instrument in different time periods shows varying outcomes, and based on the analysis and basin specific contextual information, the research draws the following conclusions:

- the donor community has continued track II and III diplomacy at all levels throughout the formal interstate dialogues, and there are times when they integrate the technical and financial assistance with the overall objective of water diplomacy:

- interstate political affairs that are not limited to water issues in the Basin may reduce the workability of track I and track II donor diplomacy, while donor financing at intrastate and local levels (track III) may still assist in maintaining dialogue over the water dispute;

- diplomatic tools are more effective in achieving the goal of water diplomacy (conflict prevention) at the earlier stages of disagreement, while are less effective in addressing deeply rooted conflicts;

- coordinated donor efforts that combine more than one instrument of multiple tracks has shown an increased rate of conflict prevention and local ownership.

**Key words:** Water diplomacy, International donors, Dispute resolution, Basin ownership, the Aral Sea Basin.
The Role of International Donors in Water Diplomacy. Case Study of the Aral Sea Basin

by

Botir Ismoilov

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Botir Ismoilov, Author
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<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>CAWI</td>
<td>Central Asian Water Initiative</td>
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<td>GIZ</td>
<td>The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit - German Society for International Cooperation</td>
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<td>ICAS</td>
<td>Interstate Council of the Aral Sea</td>
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<td>ICWC</td>
<td>Interstate Commission for Water Coordination</td>
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<td>IFAS</td>
<td>International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea</td>
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<td>OECD DAC</td>
<td>The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>RBO</td>
<td>River Basin Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNECE</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNRCCA</td>
<td>United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>WUA</td>
<td>Water Users Association</td>
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<td>ZOPA</td>
<td>Zone of Possible Agreement</td>
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Chapter I. Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Research Objective

To date, 310 transboundary river basins exist in the world which is home to more than one third of the world’s population (McCracken & Wolf, 2018). As transboundary water creates socio-economic, environmental and political inter-dependency, it makes cooperation over water crucial for international peace and security and for sustainable development, particularly the realization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6 (United Nations, 2019). Thus, increasing cooperation over shared waters in the developing world and countries in transition through technical, institutional, and political means is one of the priorities not only for riparian actors which share the same sources of water, but also for the international donor community.

International donors play a significant role in the management of transboundary river basins and conflict transformation (Alaerts, 1999; Mostert, 2005; Micklin, 1998; Schulze &), and have been the subject of extensive studies focused mostly on the effectiveness of their financial support to international basins (see elaborations in Chapter 2). However, although there are some articles on the success stories of the World Bank interventions in the Indus River basin, scholarly literature has elaborated less on the influence of diplomatic instruments, utilized by international donors at both formal and informal settings of transboundary river basins, on existing disputes and local ownership in the basin.

Considering that international donors may be willing to provide the wide range of resources and facilities through diplomatic instruments to prevent conflicts at the interstate, intrastate, and local levels and promote cooperation in the management of shared waters, this research has two main objectives. The first is to understand the nature of ‘donor diplomacy’ in shared river basins,
and the second is to identify the impact of that diplomacy on dispute resolution and local ownership of the results of donor diplomacy.

This research explores the water diplomacy of international donors in transboundary river basins through the ‘track IV diplomacy’ framework, introduced by Erik Mostert, with a focus on the use of water diplomacy instruments of donors (see Chapter 2 for an explanation of the tracks I-IV diplomacy). The use of three diplomatic tools - facilitation of formal interstate negotiations (track I), joint studies and training (track II), and financing specific activities (track III) – are examined in terms of their influence on existing water disputes and local ownership of donor diplomacy in the basin. In doing so the research looks at the emerging context for, and the events following, the use of diplomatic instruments by donors in the Aral Sea Basin during three time frames (1991-1999; 2000-2009; 2010-2019).

1.2 Research Question

This research addresses the following questions: How do the diplomatic tools, used by the donor community at the interstate, intrastate, and local levels, influence existing disputes in transboundary river basin? How do the diplomatic instruments influence local ownership of the results of water diplomacy?

By answering these questions, the research contributes to the scholarly knowledge of identifying the effectiveness of donor diplomacy in transboundary river basins in terms of its ability to resolve existing disputes and developing local ownership of changes in shared basins.

1.3 Limitations

The scope of this research includes the analysis of bilateral and multilateral donor activities in transboundary river basins. While transboundary river basin includes surface and groundwater, aquifers are not addressed herein as an area of donor activities. The fourth track of the donor
diplomacy framework (continuing support) is also not included in this research (see section 2.3). Moreover, while the study encompassed donor motivations and incentives, it did not incorporate the risks for riparian countries and donors from their involvement in shared river basins. Nor does the research include field work and primary data collection.

1.4 Structure of the Research

The study is built on the following sections: chapter 2 includes the review of extensive literature on the characteristics of international donors, and their ability to exercise water diplomacy through diplomatic tools; chapter 3 introduces the theoretical framework and sets the methods of the study; chapter 4 conducts data analysis, and results and discussion follow in chapter 5. Finally, the thesis draws conclusions and makes recommendations for further research on the topic.
Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter examines the driving forces behind international donor involvement in developing countries (see section 2.1), the evolution of global principles of development cooperation (see section 2.2), and the role of donors in water diplomacy (see section 2.3). Sections 2.3 and 2.4 address how international donors contribute to the mitigation and prevention of conflicts in shared river basins through diplomatic strategies and instruments. The literature review evaluates the lessons learnt and identifies the knowledge gap that need to be addressed further in the next chapters (see section 2.5).

2.1 International Donors in Developing Countries

Globally, most donor help comes from the 30 members and 6 observers of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC)\(^1\), as well as 7 non-DAC country participants through bilateral and multilateral channels. There are also many other donors in the international system, but they are not systematically monitored or reported on.

2.1.1 Donor Motivations for Aid Provision

Donors decide which region to be involved in, and who gets donor assistantship, when and at what amounts as well as the channel of delivery – bilateral or multilateral. International donors can be driven by several purposes: this may reflect altruistic, humanitarian goals, and/or the strategic and economic foreign policy objectives or self-interests of donor countries such as “promoting geopolitical interests, building and sustaining foreign bases, strengthening alliances” (Apodaca, 2017, p. 5). While charity and national political interests are the two extreme ends of the line of donor motivations, in practice decisions on aid delivery may incorporate both of them and/or other goals, given in the Table 2.1 (Gupta & Thompson, 2010; Gulrajani & Calleja, 2019).

\(^1\)“OECD DAC has grouped the world’s main donors, defining and monitoring global standards in key areas of development” (OECD, n.d.-a)
Along with poverty alleviation as a common reason why donors deliver aid, the different standpoints contend that donors do so in order to sustain relations with the former colonies as France tends to do, to hold a sway among the UN member states (e.g. Japan), some can choose less corrupt systems (e.g. Scandinavian states) or ethnically close regions to direct aid (Alesina and Weder, 2002; Gupta & Thompson, 2010).

Lately, global development aid has significantly shifted from altruistic purposes to national interests. This reflects internal political (party) changes in donor countries, the reconsideration of the foreign aid budget, and accountability for aid efficiency. It also reflects a global trend to rely on trade and investments rather than aid with ‘altruistic’ goals (Gulrajani, 2017). For example, the USA is planning to cut foreign aid spending by USD four billion – resources that were mostly used for human rights and other altruistic programs (Gramer, 2019). China’s sponsorship for infrastructure and development projects characterizes less conditionality and easy access (Lancaster, 2007; Van Dijk, 2009), and is gaining economic and strategic leverage. However, DAC donors are concerned about China’s Belt & Road Initiative as it aims at building an extensive network of infrastructure abroad that has already influenced the patterns of conventional global development cooperation in this sector (Gu, 2015).

Furthermore, driving forces of international donor involvement in developing regions can also vary with the organizational type of donors. While multilateral aid is more likely to attribute humanitarian and moral values (Lumsdaine, 1993), bilateral channels of donor assistance are often more politicized, and thus political and economic gain is adhered to in this type of aid (Verdier, 2008). Along with donor motives development aid may also reflect global trends. As climate change is intimately linked with development, it has become a trend for international donors to incorporate climate change in aid delivery as well (Gupta & van der Grijp, 2010, p. 24).
Table 2.1 Motivations of Donor Community. Source: Gupta & Thompson, 2010

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<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Motives</th>
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<tr>
<td>Altruistic</td>
<td>Solidarity; based on ability to pay; humanitarian reasons; charity</td>
<td>Promotion of poverty alleviation programmes; disaster relief for genocide, famine or other disasters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To promote stability and peace and thereby a flourishing global economy; peace, stability, democracy</td>
<td>Promotion of peace keeping; political stability; transition to democracy; helping countries retain Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightened self-interest</td>
<td>To promote stability and peace and thereby a flourishing global economy; peace, stability, democracy</td>
<td>Promotion of peace keeping; political stability; transition to democracy; helping countries retain Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political and strategic interest</td>
<td>To maintain political relations and protect geopolitical interests</td>
<td>Promotion of good relations with former colonies; creation of satellite countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security interests</td>
<td>Containment of communism; to suppress the rise of terrorism</td>
<td>Promotion of relations with countries neighboring communist states and with countries that involuntarily or voluntarily provide space for terrorists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>To create markets for goods and services, sometimes through tied aid</td>
<td>Promotion of open economies, foreign investment, transfer of technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>To address global environmental challenges</td>
<td>Creation of the conditions for effective environmental problem solving</td>
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The scope of donor involvement often includes regional geographical units (e.g. MENA region, Central Asia) rather than focusing on one state in order to maintain equal representation of aid. Major bilateral and multilateral donors identified their regional strategies and objectives for the involvement in regions with existing social-economic, environmental conflicts that may pose threats to global security. The European Union (2007 and 2019) and USAID (2015) have adopted their Strategy for Central Asia, which also aims to deal with, among other areas of conflict, environmental issues in collaboration with partner countries. Assisting riparian states to resolve water conflicts may also reduce the flow of environmental migrants from developing countries to the west.²

² According to the OECD’s international migration database, the overall number of migrants moving out of five Central Asian has significantly increased since 2000.
2.1.2 Evolution of Global Objectives for Development Cooperation

Although the motivations of international donors vary due to the factors discussed in the previous section, global objectives and principles can also influence their involvement in developing countries, providing base norms of behavior. There are several platforms with their guidelines and principles for the international donor community to follow, such as the Good Humanitarian Donorship agenda (GHD, n.d.) and the Fragile States Principles (OECD, n.d.-b), in their development activity. However, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, n.d.-c) that introduces five global indicators for the assessment of donor performance in developing countries is central to this research.

The international community has supported and adopted the Paris Declaration on Aid Efficiency at the Second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (2005). The document serves as a roadmap for development aid with its five global indicators: country ownership, donor alignment, harmonization of donor efforts, managing for results, and mutual accountability. The 2008 Third Forum (Accra Agenda for Action) has also declared its commitment to the Paris Declaration.

<table>
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<th>Box 1. Principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, n.d.-c; Gulrajani, 2014)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ownership</strong> – partner countries own the management of their development policies by exercising leadership and coordinating activities, working through and strengthening existing systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment</strong> – donors base their support on national development strategies and priorities and use existing system and institutions rather than creating a completely new system causing administrative challenges to partner countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harmonization</strong> – donors coordinate their action among themselves in order to reduce duplication. Increasing transparency of donor activities can be one of the targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Managing for results</strong> – both donors and partner countries manage their resources and improve decision making for development results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mutual accountability</strong> – donors and partner countries are responsible for development results.</td>
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Although these principles have been criticized on the grounds that they are not legitimate as they have not reflected the views of United Nations member states, including recipients (UN ECOSOC, 2008), most OECD DAC bilateral and multilateral donors and partner countries have supported the principles and this gives them credibility (Bissio, 2013).

Developing countries are expected to set their own operational development strategies in order to create ownership, and donor countries and institutions are obliged to align behind the objectives of recipient countries and use local systems. Moreover, donor countries and organizations should coordinate their action among themselves, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication. For example, in the Mekong River Basin nine programs financed by the US government were implemented in the water sector without knowing about each other (Pohl et al., 2014).

These indicators can be used to assess the overall performance of international donors in developing countries, and the self-assessment reports of development agencies may not accurately oversee the donor contributions in transboundary river basins.

2.2 International Donor Involvement in Transboundary River Basins

The Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) are the most recent global objectives the world community has put forward, and Goal 6 targets, inter alia, aim to ensure transboundary water cooperation. More than one third of the world’s population live in transboundary river basins (McCracken & Wolf, 2018) and that makes them important areas not only for riparian countries but also international donors.

However, transboundary river basins are considered as conflict prone areas due to their multifaceted nature and complexities, and thus effective involvement in these settings requires
from donors courage and vision (Jägerskog, 2003), critical assessment of their motivations and capabilities (Mostert, 2005), and long-term commitment (Pohl & Swain, 2017).

In the meantime, financial and technical assistance from international donors can support the management of transboundary river basins among various basin actors. Donors can also intervene to assist in the prevention of water or related conflict and its transformation into cooperation.

2.2.1 International Donors and Water Diplomacy

Water diplomacy is “the dynamic practice of negotiating ways to manage shared water resources” (Grech-Madin et al., 2018, p. 3) with a special focus on dispute resolution and conflict prevention in order to achieve regional cooperation, peace, and stability (Schmeier, 2018).

Not all actors involved in regional water affairs can exercise hydro-diplomacy, it is mainly the job of “the elite” such as certain agencies (Ministries of Foreign Affairs), individual politicians (presidents, ministers), and other foreign and development policy makers - donors. Indeed, water diplomacy is a foreign policy tool and intrinsically political. The objective of water diplomacy goes beyond understanding disputes and conflicts over water, it aims to seek ways to mitigate or resolve the tension that can foster regional stability and contribute to peace globally. At the same time, donors that engage in water diplomacy may have specific motives. For example, Dukhovny & Schutter (2011) argue that taking into account the existence of the large water infrastructure system in the Aral Sea Basin that becomes obsolete, the World Bank took the leadership in the early 1990s and supported negotiations on international treaties and the establishment of independent basin organizations in order to work with the Basin based on loan agreements (for other donors see 3.3.2).
Researchers discuss if the potential for conflict in transboundary river basins exists. While some scholars argue that there is a high probability of water disputes in shared basins (Gleick, 1993; Zeitoun & Warner, 2006), others, based on the quantitative analysis and historical patterns of the riparian relationship over water, support the idea that most of the time sharing a water source induces cooperation (Wolf, 1998).

Water negotiations are fundamental to hydro-diplomacy as the way to resolve disputes and conclude formal agreements between riparian states (Zawahri & Gerlack, 2009). Through water diplomacy donors can contribute to institution building through encouraging key actors of shared basins towards the zone of possible agreement (ZOPA) where they can satisfy from different benefits from cooperation (Table 2.2), and thus maintain peace and stability.

The world community created a framework agreement – the UN 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, 1997) – that can be applied to transboundary river basins. Although it encourages riparian states to cooperate “on the basis of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, mutual benefit and good faith in order to attain optimal utilization and adequate protection of an international watercourse” (Art. 8.1 of the UN Watercourses Convention), this global framework is outdated and unable to address the modern challenges affecting shared water resources (Gupta, 2016), and thus its real impact on basin-specific arrangements is questionable. The 1992 UN Economic Commission of Europe Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, 1992) is now universally available for all UN member states and as of 27 November 2019 has 43 parties (UNTC, n.d.).
The mere existence of an agreement sometimes does not lead disputing parties to cooperative mechanisms or prevent emerging disagreements for many reasons: the language of a treaty, asymmetric power relations (hydro-hegemony), ‘unfair treaty’, and others. Lautze & Giordano (2005) show that 30 percent of 153 water treaties in the African continent either were not complied with at all or were not practically in force.

Since there are no globally binding laws on shared water resources, negotiations on international treaties are going to be fierce and long lasting. The mitigation and prevention of conflict require, inter alia, a strong institutional capacity that can absorb rapid changes in a basin and address them (Wolf et al., 2003).

To date, international donors, involved in transboundary river basins, financially and technically support institutional capacity – treaties and basin organization - on shared basins in order to facilitate conflict transformation and promote regional water cooperation. While signing a treaty on transboundary waters is a long process that requires many years, its operative mechanisms evolve dynamically and may develop in a shorter period (Jägerskog, 2003; UN-Water, 2017). Thus, international donors have an interest in river basin organizations (RBOs) in transboundary river basins (Alaerts, 1999; Mukhtarov & Gerlak, 2013; UN-Water, 2017, p. 3;). Donors contribute to the financing of 32 out of 77 international river basin organizations (Schmeier, 2015), with the Mekong River Commission and Nile Basin Initiative are well-known specific examples.

2.2.2 When and Where to Intervene?

There is growing concern that donor support can bring “external agendas tied to the interests of donor states and multilateral organizations and impede local ownership” (Alaerts,
1999; Sadoff et al., 2008; Schulze & Schmeier, 2012, p. 232). Thus, developing countries try to resist external party involvement in their water issues. For example, India on the Ganges river, Ethiopia on the Nile, or Turkey on the Euphrates-Tigris basin try to avoid US involvement (Pohl & Swain, 2017).

On the other hand, international donors can ‘speak the language of diplomacy’ that would make them important and influential stakeholders in transboundary river basins in the developing world. Donors can intervene at all stages of transboundary water management (Figure 2.1) and act not only in times of peace, but also during complex regional situations and interstate relations. Often external donors play the role of neutral parties among disputing actors and help exit the deadlock in negotiations (Box 2).

Moreover, donors can exercise hydro – diplomacy at transboundary (interstate), national (intrastate), and local (communal) levels (Grech-Madin et al., 2018), and thus are able to interact with both state and non-state actors. In fact, donors deal with one or multiple basin countries as donor interaction with local actors may require national permission.

Erik Mostert introduced four strategies – track IV diplomacy – of international donor intervention in transboundary water management (Mostert, 2005):

‘Track I diplomacy” or interstate cooperation: This strategy includes formal processes of cooperation such as negotiations and conclusion of a formal agreement between strictly appointed state actors. Broader concepts and external drivers may influence interstate cooperation such as geopolitics, the concept of hydraulic mission, cultural ties, international environment agendas, and the global concern with water conflicts (Lautze, Giordano, & Borghese, 2005, p. 26-1).

**Box 2. Indus Waters Treaty**
Pakistan and India share the Indus River. After nine years of talks with the World Bank mediation, in 1960 the parties signed the Indus Waters Treaty, where the Bank is also a signatory (Uprety & Salman, 2017; Zawahri, 2009). The negotiations succeeded because of:

- the long-term commitment of the World Bank as a mediator to the conclusion of the treaty that lasted 9 years;
- high level contacts between the former World Bank President Eugene Black and the Prime-Ministers of India and Pakistan (Biswas, 1992; Salman, 2003), and the willingness of leaders of riparian states to cooperate;
- the Bank’s capacity and tactics to use financial aid to generate concessions; and
- the World Bank involvement in the implementation stage and its financial support.

According to Article 9 of the Treaty, the World Bank has less influence on the Treaty, playing the role of facilitating dispute settlement. The Indus Waters Treaty prevented short-term disagreements. However, its provisions are outdated and inadequate to deal with changing water politics in the region (Bhatnagar, 2009)

It is argued that financial and technical assistance from donors can facilitate negotiations on the formation of transboundary water treaties or basin organizations in the developing world. International donors often can be a mediator and/or facilitator of track-one diplomacy activities. The World Bank initiated the negotiations between India and Pakistan, which almost reached a dead end, and his personal talks with Prime Ministers of both riparian states greatly contributed to the conclusion of the treaty that has been able to prevent interstate water conflict for several decades (see Box 2).

International donors support operative mechanisms such as RBOs in shared basins, and they justify these investments by stating the ability of such arrangements in preventing conflicts and promoting cooperation in their agenda (Pohl et al., 2014, p. 11). International donors contribute to the budget of many RBOs (Schmeier, 2015, p. 9).

The World Bank’s sponsorship and facilitation of the Indus Waters Treaty, initiation and strengthening of the Nile Basin Initiative and the Mekong River Commission are well known
examples of the institutional approach to hydro-diplomacy. However, international donor intervention may result in the opposite outcomes for the track I diplomacy. For example, the Nile basin may be the potential failure of the international donor community. Although donors have reached the goal of strengthening weaker parties, especially upstream states (Ethiopia), this donor intervention has limited the collective behavior of riparian countries themselves in seeking compromise between downstream and upstream countries (Pohl & Swain, 2017, p. 22).

‘Track II diplomacy’ or collaboration:

While many water diplomacy tools, especially in transboundary river basins, are state-centered, in theory water diplomacy should be relevant to the negotiations occurring at all – interstate, intrastate, and local – levels (Mostert, 2005; Grech-Madin et al., 2018). Track II and III diplomacy can occur at three levels in parallel. Collaboration strategy focuses on substantive issues on the ground through triggering informal dialogues, research rather than dealing with negotiating a formal agreement that reflects only the positions of basin states, because sometimes it is difficult to see the full compliance of international treaties or they do not give expected results. The collaboration looks at the underlying interests of the parties, including non-state actors, and uses instruments such as informal international dialogues, research and studies as well as capacity building measures (Mostert, 2005).

Scholars argue that stakeholders in transboundary river basins are specific groups and individuals that have either formal authority and resources to develop and implement international agreements or less influence but are affected by water management (Ibid.). While track I formal actors are mostly involved in many stages to negotiate an agreement, adopt/ratify it, and implement
it, some groups of actors may not influence these processes, even if they are affected by the decisions (Mostert, 2005; Trottier, 2003). Track II diplomacy of international donors engages other non-state actors as well, focuses not only on the formal legal norms, but also the possibilities of cultural norms to prevent conflicts.

‘Track III diplomacy’ or transformation

This strategy addresses specific water issues at the grassroots (national and local) levels, which triggers regional scale water problems. Track III diplomacy focuses on changing the existing economic, social and political structures in dealing with water problems. Instruments for international donors in the transformation strategy can be financing for technology or development strategies. Moreover, donors can finance cooperative institutions such as the activity of river basin organizations, and data sharing and information management.

According to Mostert (2005), ‘Track IV diplomacy’ is continuing support of donors after the basin countries resolve existing conflicts and reach official agreement. It can be in the form of financing basin institutions and regional water projects that may be significant contributions from international donors to sustain cooperation in shared basins. However, when stakeholders have already ended the disagreements between each other and engaged in cooperation over shared waters, then external actors are no longer exercising water diplomacy. By financing RBOs international donors are involved in water management rather than hydro-diplomacy. Often after water diplomacy reaches its objective, preventing conflict and establishing cooperative mechanisms in transboundary river basins, most donors such as the World Bank tend to work with the basin based through market-based mechanisms (Dukhovny & Schutter, 2011).
The four tracks of donor diplomacy are not mutually exclusive and may occur at the same
time rather than representing different phases of a process. Especially, informal strategies - track
II and III diplomacy – can lead to formal cooperation, and also when states are not willing to
engage in institution building, donors can shift into track II and III on the ground (see section 3.2).

2.2.3 Diplomatic Instruments of International Donors

Foreign and development policy makers should have an arsenal of tools that can alleviate
political consequences of transboundary water problems and promote cooperation (Pohl & Swain,
2017). Although the significance of shared waters in maintaining regional cooperation and peace
is acknowledged, the arsenal of diplomatic tools that can transform transboundary water conflicts
into cooperation is weak (Earle et al., 2010).

Depending on the context and financial, technical and other capacity of international
donors as well as their motivations (section 2.2), donors can use different diplomatic tools to
mitigate or prevent disagreements and promote transboundary water cooperation in developing
countries. The need for diplomatic tools, especially emerges when the technical mechanisms are
no longer effective with existing conflicts in shared basins.

1. Negotiation is a major diplomatic tool of achieving peace and stability in the context of
water conflicts. International donors can initiate governance meetings to bring parties to formal
negotiations and finance this process without directly intervening in the process itself (Schmeier,
2018).

2. Under the international donor facilitation and funding riparian states may conduct joint
studies of the disputed issues for the content of the negotiations. It is similar to joint fact finding
which is used when the parties agree on a collaborative study of factual disputes (Karl et al., 2007).
3. International donors can also directly engage in negotiations by mediating the dialogue between parties that usually hold opposing positions, leading them to ‘win-win’ solutions by introducing different tools and mechanisms, for example, through issue-linkages (Mostert et al., 1999; Savenije & van der Zaag, 2000). Donors can propose issue linkages, as another tool in negotiations on transboundary waters, especially when parties do not see mutual benefits solely from resolving water problems (van Genderen & Rood, 2011).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3. Facilitation and mediation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation is a “means of helping the conflict parties reach a mutually satisfying agreement. It may be communication between the parties which the third party facilitates, and/or an analysis of the conflict situation and possible outcomes.” (International Alert, 1996, as cited in Engel &amp; Korf, 2005, p. 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation is “an extension or elaboration of the negotiation process that involves a third party. This third party works with the disputing parties to help them improve their communication and their analysis of the conflict situation, so that they can themselves identify and choose an option for resolving the conflict that meets the interests or needs of all of the disputants” (Engel &amp; Korf, 2005, p. 15).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Financing dispute resolution-oriented activities by international donors can be used for track III water diplomacy (Grech-Madin et al., 2018). Conflicting developing countries often tend to cooperate over shared waters with the external financial incentive, and the economic weakness may foster cooperation among riparian states preventing them to unilaterally take action on the transboundary rivers. For example, one of the drivers that engaged Kyrgyzstan in cooperative negotiations with Kazakhstan on the Chu-Talas river was external financing for the operation and maintenance of Kyrgyz water infrastructures (Zinzani & Menga, 2017).
6. International donors also make investments in developing countries to support the training of water professionals (Sadoff et al., 2017). It pays off in the long term, and avoids that “the consultants came in, did their job and left, leaving little other than reports behind” (Lamoree & Nilsson, 2000; Mostert, 2005). The German Development Agency (GIZ) puts much effort in water education and training in developing countries. It is believed that training programs for water professionals open different perspectives of shared water governance and management. Trained experts are expected to help facilitate negotiations and become “home grown” examples for other actors on seeking cooperation over shared waters (Pohl et al., 2014). This instrument is not limited to training only individuals, but also applies to organizational development through the exchange of expertise and twinning basin institutions (Mostert, 2005).

7. Pohl & Swain (2017) emphasize the tools of foreign and development policy makers such as “their political mandate, connections and leverage, their ability to frame issues such that this context becomes enabling rather than disabling” (Pohl & Swain, 2017, p. 32). As seen in the case of the Indus river, political mandate and personal talks between the World Bank President and politicians of India and Pakistan were key factors in launching the negotiation process.

2.3 Lessons Learned

International donors can have altruistic, economic, environmental foreign policy goals that motivate their involvement in order to alleviate poverty, suppress international crimes, build alliances, support trade partners. Although different strategic and economic motivating factors drive donors, they are expected to follow global principles such as alignment with partner strategies, let partner states develop ownership, and result-oriented intervention.

International donors can exercise water diplomacy at formal (interstate) and informal (with non-state actors) settings of transboundary river basins to prevent water conflicts. They do so by
utilizing diplomatic instruments, such as facilitation of formal negotiations, alternative dispute-resolution mechanisms, financing the consultation platforms, joint studies and training local negotiators in order to encourage cooperative processes in shared basins.

However, there is a gap in the existing literature that it is not precise about the use of diplomatic tools by external donors in transboundary river basins that may have different implications to the existing disputes and their resolution. Moreover, the question of how actors in shared basins perceive the results of the water diplomacy, exercised by external actors such as international donors, needs to be answered as well.

In order to fill the gap the thesis uses three donor intervention strategies (track I-III diplomacy) and three diplomatic tools - facilitation of negotiations, joint studies and trainings, and financing specific activities to understand their influence on the base concepts of ownership and dispute resolution in transboundary river basins.
Chapter 3. Methodology and Operationalization

The theoretical framework for this research is water diplomacy in a broader context that can describe the ability of international donors to exercise hydro-diplomacy at interstate, intrastate, and local levels in order to mitigate or prevent conflicts and promote cooperation in transboundary river basins. This section examines how the literature review of this research is done (see section 3.1.), describes the conceptual framework for donor participation in water diplomacy in transboundary river basins, methods to generate the framework, the relationship between key concepts (see section 3.2.), and illustrates the qualitative case study method for this research (see section 3.3.).

3.1 Literature Review

The research reviews secondary sources and includes development cooperation and water policy literature. In doing so, the study uses the OECD DAC database to search a full list of bilateral and multilateral donors, and global aid effectiveness principles, as well as following journals: Environment and Policy, Journal of Water Resources Planning and Management, Water Policy, Environmental Earth Sciences, Irrigation and Drainage, International Negotiations, Eurasian Geography and Economics, and The New York University Environmental Law Journal. Search words in the articles on water policy include water diplomacy, international donors, dispute resolution and conflict prevention in transboundary river basins.

The literature review reveals that donor intervention in developing countries has often been a subject of studies focused on donor support of development projects by allocating development aid. Moreover, assessment criteria for the performance of development agencies in developing countries mostly examine material support of donors to partner states or sectors. Section 2.2
highlights the five global indicators, entrenched in the Paris Declaration on aid efficiency, which are based on quantifiable measurements.

Section 2.3. identifies the four intervention strategies and seven instruments (Track I-IV Diplomacy) of international donors to exercise diplomacy in shared river basins. Water diplomacy is “the use of diplomatic instruments to existing or emerging disagreements and conflicts over shared water resources with the aim to solve or mitigate those for the sake of cooperation, regional stability, and peace” (Schmeier, 2018, n.p.). With this water diplomacy differs from transboundary water management and cooperation (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Comparison of Water Diplomacy and Water Management. Source: The author made the table based on Schmeier, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Water Diplomacy</th>
<th>Water management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>To ensure regional cooperation, stability, and peace</td>
<td>To improve water-specific outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area of application (focus)</strong></td>
<td>Disagreements and conflicts over water</td>
<td>Specific water-related questions and challenges (often technical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors</strong></td>
<td>Internal: States</td>
<td>All stakeholders involved in the transboundary river basins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External: Donors</td>
<td>Technical (basin management plans, monitoring and others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instruments</strong></td>
<td>Diplomatic (see section 2.3.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many conflicts in shared river basins can pose both technical and diplomatic challenges, and thus strategic approaches within foreign policies of states and international donors can enhance and operationalize water diplomacy (Pohl & Swain, 2017). International donors, that exercise water diplomacy in shared river basins, are primarily driven by their own motivations (see 2.1), and basin-specific attributes such as the presence and complexity of conflicts and risks. These factors encourage donors which diplomatic tool to use at interstate, intrastate, or local levels.
Table 3.2 Diplomatic Instrument of International Donors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TRACK I DIPLOMACY (formal)</th>
<th>TRACK II DIPLOMACY (Informal)</th>
<th>TRACK III DIPLOMACY (Informal)</th>
<th>TRACK IV DIPLOMACY (continuing support)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitation of formal</td>
<td>Mediation and other ADR</td>
<td>Financing specific activities</td>
<td>Financing RBOs and water projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>negotiations</td>
<td>mechanisms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interstate Level</strong></td>
<td>Conclusion of interstate agreements; Establishment of basin organizations Develop dispute resolution mechanisms</td>
<td>Scientific and technical support in order to overcome the stalemate in negotiations</td>
<td>System is sustainable and continues after donor left;</td>
<td>Financially support certain activities of basin organizations;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrastate Level</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Scientifically contributes to dispute resolution; Educate local negotiators</td>
<td>Addresses the root causes of water issues; Keeps communication between disputing parties;</td>
<td>Project financing</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Local level</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Educate local end-users of water resources</td>
<td>Addresses the root causes of water issues; Keeps communication between disputing parties;</td>
<td>Project financing</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Conceptual Framework

The study generates a conceptual framework for donor participation in water diplomacy in transboundary river basins (Figure 3.1). The framework comprises key concepts of water and development policy through which external donors can exercise water diplomacy, particularly three donor intervention strategies (track III diplomacy), three diplomatic tools (facilitation of negotiations, joint studies & training, financing dispute resolution oriented activities), and two indicators of donor efficiency in hydro-diplomacy (managing for results and ownership). The framework uses the concepts of donor intervention from Mostert (2005) and two core objectives from indicators of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

The conceptual framework for donor participation in water diplomacy in transboundary river basins reflects both the hydro-diplomatic ability of donors and the core values (principles and indicators) donors are expected to follow in their involvement in shared basins.

By practicing hydro-diplomacy, international donors are involved in disputed areas where riparian countries have disagreements on water allocation, quantity, and quality. The framework does not use continuing donor support (track IV), introduced by Mostert (2005), on the grounds that it is more relevant to water management rather than water diplomacy the objective of which is conflict prevention and maintaining peace. Moreover, this research has modified the quantitative performance metrics for two indicators of the Paris Declaration (managing for result and ownership) in the way to see how donor-led water diplomacy influences existing conflicts in shared basins and non-material, non-quantifiable global values.

While many articles discuss only best practices of donor led water diplomacy in transboundary river basins (see section 2.3.2), the research assumes that donor intervention may also escalate existing tension, mitigate the water conflict and/or resolve some parts of disputes that
lead to deadlocks in the negotiations. Furthermore, through diplomatic instruments donors can achieve the above-mentioned results, but how basin actors own this process and changes is something that also affects the effectiveness of water diplomacy. The conceptual framework explains how donor intervention influences existing disputes at different levels and the behavior of local actors towards the results of such water diplomacy (see section 2.4).

Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework for Donor Involvement in Water Diplomacy in Transboundary River Basins.

Track I diplomacy is a very long process and requires a long-term commitment from international donors, which is why this frame and its tools are placed farther from the conflict in fig. 1. It took the World Bank nine years to bring India and Pakistan to the negotiation table and get the treaty signed.

In the long run informal collaboration may bring formal cooperation as track II diplomacy could change the behavior of groups of people involved in the water sector through informal
diplomatic instruments. Some scholars argue that political cooperation can more easily be established when technical and scientific cooperation is already in place (Raadgever et al., 2008). When the basin countries are willing to talk and discuss water issues in an informal setting, the track II strategy may be an option for international donors in order to offer a platform for informal talks, which include multiple non-state stakeholders and help deal with root causes of regional problems on the ground. Other instruments for this level are education and training for water specialists (Mostert, 2005, p. 21) and joint studies of disputed issues the findings of which can pave the way for formal negotiations.

When interstate negotiations are extended or do not actually work out, donors get involved in one or more riparian state can facilitate transformation (track III diplomacy). Most often track II and III strategies can happen at the same time without excluding each other. These informal strategies can lead to formal cooperation, and also when states are not willing to engage in institution building, donors can shift into track II and III on the ground.

International donors have an important role in assisting riparian nations or conflicting parties to overcome the stalemate in negotiations and identify the benefits from cooperation over shared waters and internalize them.

3.3 Qualitative Case Study Approach

This research is conducted using a qualitative case study methodology. Qualitative methods can better “explore a phenomenon within its contextual conditions using a variety of data sources” (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The use of the Aral Sea Basin as the case study both exemplifies donor participation in water diplomacy and expands this concept by revealing how the end results of donor-led hydro-diplomacy influences existing disputes and the behavior of basin actors. Because of the changing nature of disputes and donor intervention in the Basin over the last 28
years, the Aral Sea Basin provides new insights into understanding of water diplomacy and its outcomes.

The Aral Sea Basin is the case study of the research on the following grounds:

- the Aral Sea Basin is home for more than 70 million people. The Basin is formed by Amu Darya and Syr Darya - two large rivers which have become transboundary rivers in 1991 after the desiccation of the Soviet Union. Six independent countries – Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, share the Basin. Since its existence as a shared basin, the riparian countries and local people have disputed over the use and allocation of water resources from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya – two transboundary rivers that eventually feed the Aral Sea (see section 3.3.1);

- international donors have been actively participating in and practicing hydro-diplomacy to prevent existing conflicts and introduce cooperative mechanisms in the Basin for nearly three decades (see section 3.3.2). Therefore, the Aral Sea Basin has become an important case for understanding the influence of donor-led water diplomacy in transboundary river basins on existing water conflicts and local ownership. Although there are several studies on donor coordination in the Aral Sea Basin, no research has been done to explore actual outcomes of water diplomacy, exercised by external donors, in this shared basin.

Figure 3.2 Water Resources of the Aral Sea Basin. Source: CAWater-info, 2010
3.3.1 Analysis of Existing Conflict Over Water in the Aral Sea Basin

The key problem is the water distribution among riparian states for differing preference of use, namely irrigation and hydropower, as well as timing of water – the irrigation and power regimes of reservoirs. Riparian states have inherited unsustainable water management practices from the former Soviet Union: agriculture oriented downstream Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan continued the old practices of cultivation of water intensive crops (Burghart & Sabonis-Helf, 2004), while economic development objectives necessitated mountainous upstream Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to improve hydropower generation as a potential source of income. However, other factors, such as asymmetric power relations and different perceptions of water rights, have also contributed to the evolution of this conflict that has led to unilateral actions by both upstream and downstream states.

Although power relations have been asymmetric among Central Asian states, in practice each state can exercise its political voice equally. After the full establishment of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) in 1997, downstream states have refused the proposal of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan regarding the integration of energy interests of upstream countries within regional water management (Murthy & Mendikulova, 2017). Upstream countries have felt that they are not better off from treaties on water and institutions that regulate only the water flow and implement hydro-projects without considering their energy interests. However, the refusal from downstream countries is explained from the political economy perspective as hydro-hegemonic act and less bargaining power of the upstream states (Shalpykova, 2002; Allouche, 2007; Menga, 2015) but not the normal exercise of legal rights of member states to IFAS. According to the IFAS rules, decisions within the IFAS platform are made by consensus of all parties. So, it is failure in negotiations rather than simple power exertion by downstream states.
The upstream states have launched unilateral development projects since 2000 that have potential transboundary impacts on the seasonal water needs of other riparian nations. In practice, both states were not able to economically and technologically accomplish such big projects, and extensively looked for the sources of finance. The Kyrgyz leader signed an agreement with Russia for the construction of the Kambarata-1 hydropower project in 2012, but Russia denounced this agreement in 2016. Although side work has continued since 2008, Tajikistan officially launched the Rogun Dam construction in 2016, and to date the first turbine of hydropower plant has started operating, and this national idea has all the attention by the government and the people (Putz, 2018).

Basin institutions are unable to absorb such changes in the Basin due to the lack of political mandate. Despite its unproductive outcomes, competition over water has continued at the political level by exchanging verbal and written concerns and objections rather than negotiating ways to mutually benefit from regional cooperation. While Turkmenistan keeps its political neutrality in the global and regional arena, downstream Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have opposed the large projects on the transboundary rivers. The former President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov noted in his statement, in Nur-Sultan (former Astana) in 2012, that: “We want to know very simple things: how the water flow will change, how much water we get today, and how much we will receive tomorrow, when these obstacles get in the way of these rivers, we just want to soberly evaluate all this” (Karimov, 2016). In response to downstream requests upstream Kyrgyzstan claimed absolute territorial sovereignty for its natural resources, while Tajikistan’s leader during official commencement of Rogun Dam promised that “…we, continuing this good tradition of our ancestors, will never and in no way leave our neighbors without water” (Rahmon, 2016).
Another factor that fuels the conflict over water is controversial national legislations. Since 1991 riparian countries of the Basin have developed differing perceptions on water rights. Downstream states hold the idea of historical entitlement to water resources inherited from the Soviet Union and claim absolute territorial integrity in the transboundary river basin. The upstream countries have identified their priorities for future economic growth in legislation and strategies for water and related sectors that have been fed by the absolute territorial sovereignty approach to water allocation\(^3\). Article 5 of the 2001 Kyrgyz Law on the interstate use of water bodies, water resources and water facilities of the Kyrgyz Republic imposes payment for water uses in interstate water relations (Janusz-Pawletta & Gubaidullina, 2015, p. 201). Tajikistan has set the priority to achieve energy security and become region’s major exporter about which says the first goal of the 2030 National Development Strategy. These documents do not include transboundary implications of such development strategies that have further escalated the conflict over water.

### 3.3.2 International Donor Intervention for Dispute Resolution in the Basin

Multiple international bilateral and multilateral donors are active in the Aral Sea Basin (Table 3.3). The UN agencies, the World Bank, the European Union, the USAID have been working with Central Asian countries since their independence, while others (France, Norway) are joined at some point of the regional development.

International donors have strategic plans and guidelines for their involvement in Central Asia that comprise sectors of interest to respective donor, including transboundary water management. The European Union has developed two strategies for Central Asia in 2007 and 2019. Based on the result assessment of 2007 Strategy, the EU has adopted the 2019 strategy without colossal changes of previous policy that aims at promoting transboundary river basin

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\(^3\) The Harmon Doctrine of “absolute territorial sovereignty favors upstream States and insists upon the complete freedom of action of the upstream State” (UN Watercourses Convention – User’s Guide, 2012, p.103).
cooperation. Furthermore, with three-decade of experience in the region, USAID introduces its 2015-2020 Regional Development Cooperation Strategy for Central Asia. According to the document, maintaining the security in Central Asia after 9/11 and events in Afghanistan, balancing the allies and friends with the emerging Russian and Chinese influence in the region, and preparing stable trade partners are the main motivations of the US (represented by USAID) from being involved in Central Asia. Water and energy sectors are selected as an important sector to intervene with the goal of enhancing regional cooperation on the shared energy and water resources (USAID, 2014).

Table 3.3 Bilateral and Multilateral Donors Involved in the Aral Sea Basin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BILATERAL DONORS</th>
<th>MULTILATERAL DONORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada (CIDA)</td>
<td>European Union (EU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (SIDA)</td>
<td>Global Environment Facility (GEF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France (AFD)</td>
<td>UN Development Programme (UNDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands (NL)</td>
<td>World Bank (WB)⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland (SDC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (GIZ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA (USAID)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴ In this research the World Bank (an international financial institution) is included because it exercises water diplomacy activities in the Aral Sea Basin and in many cases it does so by allocating grants. The author.
In the Aral Sea Basin donors have been involved in interstate and local level conflict prevention measures and have utilized three different intervention strategies - track I-III diplomacy (Figure 3.1). In doing so, these external actors have used three diplomatic tools, namely they initiated negotiations on regional treaties and the establishment and reformation of basin organizations (Table 3.4), organized joint studies and trainings (Table 3.5), and financed dispute resolution-oriented activities in the Basin such as the Aral Sea Basin Programmes (Table 3.6).

Table 3.4 Major Transboundary Agreements in the Aral Sea Basin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treaties</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Donors Involved</th>
<th>Diplomatic instrument used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Agreement on cooperation in the field of joint management on utilization and protection of water resources from interstate sources. Establishment of Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC)</td>
<td>1992 Almaty (Kazakhstan)</td>
<td>KZ, KG, TJ, TM, UZ</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Agreement that established Interstate Council of the Aral Sea (ICAS)</td>
<td>1993 Kzyl-Orda (Kazakhstan)</td>
<td>KZ, KG, TJ, TM, UZ</td>
<td>World Bank (former IBRR), UNEP, UNDP, World Bank (former IBRR), GEF, USAID</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Nukus Declaration</td>
<td>1995 Nukus Uzbekistan</td>
<td>KZ, KG, TJ, TM, UZ</td>
<td>UNDP facilitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agreement on reorganization of the structure of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea (IFAS). ICAS merged into IFAS</td>
<td>1997 Almaty</td>
<td>KZ, KG, TJ, TM, UZ</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Agreement on the use of water and energy resources of the Syr Darya river basin&quot;</td>
<td>1998 Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan)</td>
<td>KZ, KG, TJ, UZ</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>Joint study, convening and financing the negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The draft of a Convention on the use of water resources of the Amu Darya river basin. The draft of a Convention on the use of water resources of the Syr Darya river basin</td>
<td>not signed (2017)</td>
<td>KZ, KG, TJ, TM, UZ</td>
<td>UNRCCA</td>
<td>Initiation of the negotiation process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3.5 Joint Studies and Trainings in the Aral Sea Basin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International donor</th>
<th>Capacity building and training activities</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CIDA (Canada)</td>
<td>“IWRM- Ferghana” project component International water law, negotiations &amp; dispute resolution</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Training Center was established at SIC ICWC. Focus is training the water officials at decision making levels</td>
<td>Dukhovny &amp; Schutter, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDC (Switzerland)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2002-2007</td>
<td>Consistent training of end water users on IWRM principles</td>
<td>ICWC, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>Smart Waters</td>
<td>2015-2020</td>
<td>IWRM Masters program in German Kazakh University, Trainings on basin planning in Tashkent Irrigation Institute</td>
<td>CAREC, 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.6 The Aral Sea Basin Programmes (ASBP). Source: Modified from Sehring et al., 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program period</th>
<th>Program goals</th>
<th>Donors involved in the preparation &amp; implementation stages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASBP-I (1995-2001)</td>
<td>- Stabilizing environment in the Aral Sea Basin; - Restoring the disaster zone around the Sea; - Improving management of transboundary waters in the Basin; - Developing the capacity of the regional organizations to plan and implement the program.</td>
<td>World Bank, UNDP, UNEP, ADB, UNESCO, the EU, USAID, SDC, governments of the UK, Canada, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and the Netherlands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.3 Method of Case Study

In order to understand how donors’ involvement in water diplomacy through the use of diplomatic tools influences the existing conflicts and local ownership of the results of such hydro-diplomacy the study follows three steps (Table 3.7):

1) it identifies three periods of conflict evolution and donor involvement in the Aral Sea Basin: 1991-1999 as a period when major institutional capacity (treaties and basin organizations) is built to deal with, inter alia, emerging water disputes among newly independent countries with different interests on water resources; 2000-2009 as a period when unwillingness of riparian states to cooperate and their major unilateral actions have escalated the tension in the Basin; and 2010-2019 is when regional dispute resolution concerns and reformation of basin institutional arrangements have reemerged;

2) it identifies sample events, when donors have used the above-mentioned three diplomatic tools, in each period for further analysis. For example:
the Aral Sea Basin countries have split decisions on joining two global Water Conventions (section 2.2). Out of five Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are parties to the 1992 UNECE Water Convention, and only Uzbekistan has accessed 1997 UN Watercourses Convention. Thus, developing effective international treaty and basin organization has been critical since the independence of Central Asian countries. In the first period donors supported the institution building in the Basin;

- German Development Agency (GIZ) and the UNECE facilitate interstate negotiations on reformation of IFAS. In the Berlin Water Conference in 2008 the German Foreign Ministry launched the Central Asian Water Initiative (CAWI) or ‘Berlin Process’ as part of the 2007 EU Strategy for Central Asia (German FFO, 2009). This special programme on the Aral Sea Basin offered European technical and administrative experience to facilitate an agreement in the Basin, that is based on scientific knowledge and a fair balance of interests, and strengthen the IFAS and ICWC (Table 3.4);

- The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) finances the application of IWRM principles and bottom-up water management in the Fergana Valley. After the independence of Central Asian states, poor management of water resources adding to the absence of a working treaty among states paved the way for local conflicts in the Fergana valley where irrigation canals cross the state borders multiple times. Villagers, mostly farmers, in the Fergana Valley regularly fight against WUAs, local districts, irrigation canal services, and with farmers of bordering areas of other states to receive irrigation water coming from transboundary tributaries of the Syr Darya and artificial canals;

3) analyses the use of the chosen diplomatic instruments in terms of their influence the existing disputes and local ownership of cooperation based on the evaluation criteria (Figure 3.3).
In doing so, the research looks at the emerging context for the use of diplomatic instruments by donors as well as the events following that hydro-diplomacy. Evaluation criteria comprises four scales: (-1) is ineffective use of a diplomatic tool which escalates existing disputes and undermines the local ownership; (0) means the use of a diplomatic instrument does not change the behavior of basin actors, but not causes the escalation of conflict; (1) the use of a diplomatic tool by donors serves to mitigate the conflict or address some factors causing bottleneck effect in negotiations, local actors exercise leadership in the process and own results; (2) hydro-diplomacy prevents the conflict through the use of diplomatic tools, and basin actors possess working cooperative mechanisms to deal with water and related issues in the basin by encouraging cooperative behavior.

For the case study of the Aral Sea basin, the research acquires qualitative data on the use of diplomatic instruments by external donors and events following the donor intervention. The main sources of data acquisition are policy documents and gray literature – reports of international donors and basin organizations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| -1    | • Use of diplomatic tool by donor results in the escalation of existing disputes and complicates the relations of basin actors  
• The transboundary basin becomes overdependent on donor involvement/assistance |
| 0     | • Donor involvement in water diplomacy does not change the status quo with the disputes  
• Attributes of existing sense of ownership of changes remain as usual after the use of diplomatic tool |
| 1     | • Diplomatic instrument resolves part of the disagreements, and creates a path for further prevention and cooperation  
• The basin actors exercise leadership and control over the processes and benefits created |
| 2     | • Use of hydro-diplomacy tool leads to prevent water conflict and establish cooperative arrangements  
• Basin actors possess effective cooperative mechanisms to independently deal with conflicts and water issues |

**Figure 3.3 Evaluation Criteria**
Table 3.7 Sample Events for Each Donor Intervention Strategy in the Aral Sea Basin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track III Diplomacy or transformation strategy (addressing root causes of problems at the intrastate and local levels)</th>
<th>Instruments used by donors</th>
<th>Sample Events under investigation</th>
<th>Sources of data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- the World Bank reports;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Ferghana IWRM project documents and reports;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- researches of Dukhovny, Abdullaev, and Kazbekov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- UNESCO, SIC ICWC reports;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- project documents and reports;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- bulletins of ICWC and reports of IFAS from 1993-2019;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4. Analysis and Results

This chapter answers the question of how the use of diplomatic tools by donors influence existing disputes and basin ownership of the results of water diplomacy in the Aral Sea Basin. In doing so, section 4.2 makes the analysis of data presented in section 3.3.3 based on the conceptual framework (Figure 3.1) and presents the findings of the analysis (see section 4.1). Section 4.1.1 shows the influence of the diplomatic tools, used by international donors in the Aral Sea Basin, on existing water disputes and identifies what else may impact on effective water diplomacy exercised by donors; section 4.1.2 presents the influence of the diplomatic tools on local ownership of the results of water diplomacy, and what factors impede and promote ownership. Section 4.3 elaborates lessons learnt from findings and draws conclusions of this chapter.

4.1 Analysis

The research analyzes the data from the UN, World Bank, USAID, and SDC documents, IFAS periodic bulletins from 1992-2019, and newspaper articles as well as the reports of projects conducted in the Aral Sea Basin (Table 3.7).

4.1.1 Track I Diplomacy in 1991 - 1999

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, in 1992, Central Asian countries managed to reach a transboundary agreement on cooperation in the field of joint management of utilization and protection of water resources and establish the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) to regulate water allocation. There is no empirical evidence about the involvement of external parties in the conclusion of 1992 Almaty Agreement.

However, after its first mission in the Aral Sea Basin in 1993 the World Bank realized that water allocation and ICWC activity are regionally sensitive area for building cooperative behavior
at the start, and thus recommended riparian states to stabilize the environmental situation around the Aral Sea, rehabilitate and develop the Sea disaster zone, plan strategically and manage the Basin’s water resources, and most importantly build institutions to directly deal with first three objectives. Basin institutions have been recognized as a prerequisite for collaborative work between donors and the Basin and this collaboration promised donor allocation of grants for long-term environmental projects (World Bank, 1993). The World Bank, UNEP, and UNDP took the lead in the facilitation of environment and water related talks in the Basin and assisted to establish the Interstate Council on the Problems of the Aral Sea Basin (ICAS) in 1993, which merged into the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in 1997, with the objective of managing the donor financing and implementing basin programs (ASBP). Until 1997 international donors the World Bank mostly supported the Aral Sea Basin countries in the establishment of ICAS and IFAS and preparation of their legal mandates. The 1997 Review of the ASBP-1 processes states that the World Bank further supports the dialogue on water management among riparian states through those basin organizations, and the Bank has shifted its role of coordinator of donors in the Basin to a source of finance (Dukhovny & Schutter, 2011).

During this period international donors have acted delicately in order not to escalate sensitive water allocation problem and tried to develop effective regional treaties and institutions for the track I diplomacy. The donor community has facilitated interstate negotiations for the establishment of IFAS, which has led to the consolidation of joint efforts in institutionally addressing environmental and water problems around the drying Aral Sea. However, 1992 Almaty Agreement (established ICWC) and 1993 Kzyl-Orda Agreement (established IFAS) focus solely on water and do not integrate water related sectors which is why Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with hydropower interests feel that they are not better off from treaties and basin organization. Despite
their different vision, all basin countries remain as members of IFAS that keeps regional communication among riparian states postponing emerging disputes over water use for irrigation and hydropower as well as timing of water.

While during 1991-1999 the basin countries seem to own the results of the track I diplomacy of donors in the basin, in practice Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have committed to comply with the provisions of regional treaties and IFAS which has been the only platform for regional discussion of water. Upstream states seek mutually beneficial agreements and ways to reform the legal basis of basin platform. Eventually, Syr Darya basin countries have reached 1998 Agreement on water and energy exchange outside the existing IFAS platform (see section 4.2.2).

Although the basin organization and international treaties concluded right after the independence of five Central Asian countries have postponed the occurrence of water disputes, they have hardly managed to equally address the growing interest of upstream in energy and downstream in irrigation in the long run, undermining the diplomatic activities of donors in preventing emerging disagreements in the Basin (see section 4.2.3).

**4.1.2 Track II and III Diplomacy in 1991 - 1999**

Despite the signed the 1992 Agreement and the establishment of IFAS the conflict potential did not disperse (see section 4.2.3). The Syr Darya basin countries have signed another essential 1998 Framework agreement on Syr Darya. The USAID facilitated and funded the joint study of Toktogul reservoir\(^5\) in Kyrgyzstan to develop regional principles of financing operation and maintenance of international water facilities (Hutchens, 1999).

---

\(^5\) Toktogul reservoir is created on the Naryn River (a northern tributary of the Syr Darya in upstream Kyrgyzstan) in 1976 by Soviet Union and served to control the inter-annual variability of water resources and to ensure sufficient water for irrigation.
Box 2. Toktogul Reservoir (World Bank, 2004)

The Toktogul reservoir was built by the Soviet government in 1975 on the Naryn river - a major tributary of the Syr Darya. The capacity of hydroelectric station is 1200 MW. The objective of the multi-year storage has been water supply for downstream irrigated lands of South Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan during the vegetation period. According to the 1984 Protocol of Soviet government, the Reservoir released 70% of water in summer and less than 25% during winter when energy is much needed. The fossil fuels of downstream states covered the winter energy needs of Kyrgyzstan.

After 1991 the market price for fossil fuels increased and upstream Kyrgyzstan started using cheap hydropower, generated mostly during winter. Nearly emptied the reservoir could not release water for summer irrigation rather stored it for winter. The shortage of water for summer irrigation and floods in winter have emerged serious disagreements in downstream countries.

Moreover, USAID played an important role in initiation of the negotiation process for 1998 Agreement and convening the parties to discuss the co-management of water and energy for a long-term perspective, while participating in substantial parts of the negotiations as an observer (UNESCO, 2000; World Bank, 2004, p. 9). As a result, parties to the agreement acknowledged the cost of changing the regime of Toktogul reservoir into storing water for irrigation that needs to be covered through electricity, coal, gas or in cash. Nevertheless, in Annual Intergovernmental Agreements agreed under the framework only has dealt with downstream import of surplus electricity from Toktogul and compensate the same amount to Kyrgyzstan in winter.
The 1998 framework agreement is recognized as successful one in the international arena because it has legally set the principles for annual agreements. In Central Asian water energy nexus report the World Bank states from its experience in the Nile basin that participation of all concerned parties and international donors including financial institutions make international water treaties more successful. The Guarantee Fund can be an effective mechanism for donor involvement that serves as an impartial actor and promote compliance with the document (World Bank, 2004, p. 7). This shows the lack of information exchange among international donors as neither the USAID nor the World Bank suggested such interactive mechanisms during the negotiations in 1998. External funding by donors could have adhered economically weak riparian countries to the treaty provisions until they resolve problematic issues and own the process by themselves.

The Agreement has not been legally terminated yet, although after 2006 parties have dodged its provisions upon disagreements on the specific price-mechanisms of exchange in annual agreements.

The first Aral Sea Basin Programme, adopted by Basin states in order to deal with environmental and water challenges in the Basin, was presented to the international donor community in 1994. Supporting newly independent and economically weak Central Asian states in dealing with environmental problems of the Aral Sea zone (track III diplomacy), the World Bank and the UN in collaboration with the international donor community affirmed their financial and technical support to ASBP-1 in the donors meeting held in Paris 1994 (Micklin, 2007; Dukhovny & Schutter, 2011).

During the first period track II and III diplomacy continued at the same time with the track I formal negotiations. The joint study of the Toktogul reservoir has let riparian states cooperate for
6-7 years in a mutually beneficial manner. Although USAID has supported the technical resolution of the dispute, this cooperation has not been donor-driven. Upstream Kyrgyzstan is continuously expressing its willingness to resume cooperation based on the 1998 Agreement (Jeenbekov, 2019).

Donor financed ASBPs helped Central Asian independent states to smoothly develop a sense of ownership of the basin and switch to joint management of transboundary water that was national resources before and that would have been the cause of serious conflicts otherwise. The riparian states developed ownership of the ASBP the evidence for which can be seen from its initiation and development by the Basin actors on a regular phases thus far (Table 3.6). Currently, the preparation stage of ASBP-4 is in progress, engaging the expertise of GIZ and financial support of the EU. It has become a coordinating framework between the Basin states and international donors (Sehring et al., 2020, p. 157).

4.1.3 Track I Diplomacy in 2000 - 2009

While 1998 Framework Agreement is still legally in force, practical compliance with it has ended in 2007 when the parties could not reach the next annual contract on the water - energy exchange. Lack of compliance with the existing basin agreements from 1992 and 1998 among riparian states is due to the lack of trust, dissatisfaction with the shares of water allocation, and refusal of upstream energy interests (Murthy & Mendikulova, 2017).

This period has also marked several turning points in not only interstate water relations, but also the political scene of Central Asia. Upstream Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have unilaterally relaunched Rogun and Kambar Ata-1 hydropower projects on transboundary tributaries of Amu Darya and Syr Darya. These projects are developed and started in the 1970s by the former Soviet Union, and upstream countries continued the construction to achieve energy security and hydropower export potential. The political tension has increased among riparian counties of the
Aral Sea Basin that resulted in the exchange of verbal and diplomatic resistance (see section 3.3). Later Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan have launched the Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000) that makes cross-border electricity trading possible (CASA-1000, 2017). The excess energy of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan will be exported to Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. Although the actions of upstream countries undermine the standpoints about Uzbekistan’s hydro-hegemony proving the ‘powers of the weak’ on the ground (see Petersen-Perlman & Fischhendler, 2018), a dispute over water reaches its peak and influences interstate trade and political relations.

The need for strong institutional capacity in the Basin has emerged and become more obvious. In order to strengthen the existing institutions and their mandates GIZ and UNECE started the implementation of the project ‘Regional Dialogue and Cooperation on Water Resources Management in Central Asia’ project under the Berlin Process (CAWI). The CAWI tries to incorporate actions for interstate cooperation (track I diplomacy) and informal settings (Figure 4.1).

The intention of GIZ and UNECE to work on strengthening institutional and legal capacity of the Basin has combined with the basin plans for the development of the ASBP – 3 as the Heads of IFAS member states have assigned the Executive Committee of IFAS to start the preparation process. Aligned with the objectives of the Basin states, external donors agreed to reconcile the preparation of ASBP-3 with the purposes of the project.
Despite the fact that all states expressed their readiness to reform the IFAS its founding documents, in practice parties were skeptical of institutional changes and the project team has published a discussion paper on its main objective – strengthening the institutional capacity of the Basin, that has removed from the agenda later.

This slight ignorance of the parties to develop the results of the project on reforming existing regional formal legal and institutional capacity has led donors to proceed with track III diplomacy on the ground (supporting ASBP-3), and phase I of GIZ project managed to maintain a consistent dialogue between all parties. More substantial regional issue - strengthening the institutional and legal capacity of the Basin - discussed very vaguely compared to ASBP-3 development which actively negotiated at national and interstate levels.

When the ASBP-3 was developed and ready for implementation the Basin states called a Donor Coordination Conference (December 2010, Almaty) to find support and official commitment to the Third Programme. In the Declaration of Commitment donors are welcomed to include ASBP-3 related issues (EC IFAS, 2010) but the Declaration does not reflect the reconsideration of legal basis and institutions for transboundary water management.
4.1.4 Track II and III Diplomacy in 2000-2009

The Basin was in need for interdisciplinary expertise and home-grown negotiators, that know all the peculiarities of water resources and the relationship among stakeholders as well as local culture, to deal with growing different interests and disagreements. The main provisions of the regional water strategy for the Aral Sea Basin, developed under the ASBP-1, have reflected this need for joint management and development of transboundary water resources.

After its establishment in 1993 the Scientific Information Centre of ICWC became a knowledge hub where capacity building and training of specialists of the water sector in Central Asia take place. The initiators of consistent training activities (track II diplomacy) have been the UN agencies (UNESCO, UNDP, and FAO), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), USAID, the Netherlands, and Swiss agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). These donors supported projects that included components of professional training courses and study tours. This idea was reflected in the decision of ICWC meeting, held on October 24, 1998, on the establishment of the Training Center with financial support from CIDA. In 2000, in collaboration with McGill University and Mount Royal College (Canada), the project "The educational component of water management in Central Asia" was launched (Dukhovny & Schutter, 2011). The ICWC Training Center offered advanced training courses for senior water managers from decision making level and key representatives of other stakeholders involved in projects at various levels of water sector with the purpose of training the trainers on international water law and international practices on water management.

Donors pay high attention to education and training through both organizing series of seminars and workshops as a component of water projects, and also consistent training of specialists to achieve long-term results (Table 3.5).
International donors have financed dispute resolution-oriented activities or approaches at the local level aiming at mitigating water disputes and addressing their root causes (track III diplomacy). Fergana valley of the Aral Sea Basin has been home for many water conflicts among citizens of three bordering countries since the desiccation of Soviet Union (Table 4.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3. Fergana Valley. Source: Dukhovny, 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924 land reforms of USSR divided the Fergana Valley among Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan regardless of the ethnicity of the population living in the Valley. The Fergana Valley comprise large fertile lands and complicated irrigation system on the tributaries (Naryn and Karadarya) of the Syr Darya River. The Soviet Union constructed a network of canals in the 1940s - the Savay, the Big Fergana, the South Fergana, the North Fergana, the Akhunbabayev, the Big Andijan, and the Big Namangan, most of which cross newly emerged national borders after 1991. This interdependence sometimes causes disputes between farmers of three bordering states over drinking and irrigation water. World Bank (2000) and UN SPECA (2001) recommended to introduce IWRM in the Valley to improve water use and prevent skirmishes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, in 2003 when Kyrgyz Province cut the water coming from Naryn into Uzbekistan’s Andijan Province, Uzbek district water authorities responded by cutting the water of another irrigation canal that comes from the borderlands of Uzbekistan into Kyrgyzstan. The situation in Fergana Valley highlights that the non-state actors can also influence and are central to the track III diplomacy. Although such local disputes have occurred many times, cooperation at the local and meso levels happens in Fergana Valley as well, especially, when district water authorities of bordering states collaborate on the operation and maintenance of the pump-stations.
and village water managers organize cleaning the irrigation canals along the borders (Wegerick et al., 2017, p. 534).

SDC financed the application of IWRM principles and bottom-up water management in the Fergana Valley, suggested by the International Water Management Institute and SIC ICWC, in order to prevent communal disputes by improving local water management practices. The project has focused on Fergana Valley, including four provinces Osh (Kyrgyzstan), Sogd (Tajikistan), Andijan and Fergana (Uzbekistan) and continued in five phases from 2001-2012. The three pilot canals of the project are South Fergana MC (SFMC), Aravan-Akbura Canal (AAC), Khodji-Bakirgan Canal (KBC).

After the establishment of demand-oriented water distribution and time & volume-based water fees, and regular awareness raising and capacity building activities for local water users a number of local conflicts significantly reduced in two pilot areas of the project - South Fergana and Aravan-Akbara canals, while disputes remain on the Khodja-Bakirgan canal due to the rising fees for the WUA services for this canal (Figure 4.2).

![Figure 4.2 Number of Local Conflicts Over Water in Fergana Valley since 2008. Source: Dukhovny et al., 2013](image-url)
The training program of local water specialists and end water users of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (track II diplomacy) is conducted in tandem with other components of the “IWRM - Ferghana” project. The training courses, hosted by SIC of ICWC, invited international water scholars from McGill (Canada), UNESCO-IHE (the Netherlands), Stuttgart (Germany) universities to give interdisciplinary lectures on water, along with teaching the results of projects. The number of participants of this training has raised from 390 in 2002 to 9386 in 2007 (Dukhovny & Schutter, 2011), partially because another project, supported by USAID in South Tajikistan, requested IWRM Fergana project to train the trainers on water use efficiency at SIC ICWC. The training program is reported as successful in that it has distributed compiled knowledge on IWRM and demand management among end water users (SDC, 2006). While it is hard to assess how these education and training courses impact on existing disputes, it is argued that the combination of trainings with other aspects of the project has allowed to maintain dialogue between local actors (Dukhovny & Schutter, 2011). Since the basin institute (ICWC) along with the International Water Management Institute has initiated and took leadership of the implementation of this project, and the population of Fergana Valley has closely collaborated with the project team and developed sense of ownership of the changes due to the IWRM implementation. Moreover, after its completion the results of the IWRM Fergana project are presented to riparian governments as best practice for further implementation in their other regions (IWRM-Fergana, n.d.).

The project implementation could not prevent all local battles over water at the state borders. The Pacific Institute (2019) identifies 6 specifically water related conflicts that have occurred near the state borders in Fergana Valley (Table 4.1) after the IWRM Fergana project ended in 2012. The combination of ethnic and political opposition as well as poor demarcation of
state borders have also fueled clashes (Murthy & Mendikulova, 2017). Moreover, when local actors have decided to take action by themselves blaming the neighboring country for little irrigation water in many cases this has contributed to socio-economic changes in the society and the violent territorial, ethnic disputes, and conflicts over water resources, e.g. Kyrgyz-Uzbek conflict in Osh enclave in 2010, fights between Tajik and Kyrgyz farmers along the borders in 2011 and 2015 (Murthy & Mendikulova, 2017).

### 4.1.5 Track I Diplomacy in 2010 - 2019

There have been attempts to stimulate preventive track I diplomacy and formal dialogues on two transboundary rivers after two visits of UN Secretary-Generals to the Aral Sea Basin in three years⁶. Since its foundation in 2007 the United Nations Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy (UNRCCA) in Ashgabat⁷ and its MoU signed with EC IFAS in 2010, UNRCCA initiated a process of consultations and negotiations on improving the legal mechanisms of water resources use in Central Asia based on the two global Conventions⁸ (United Nations, 2013; ICWC, 2009). This initiative temporarily stopped due to the difficulties in convening all regional parties to the formal negotiation, while non-official trainings on international water law for the Basin specialists continued. Eventually, in 2017 UNRCCA with the involvement of international experts prepared the drafts of Conventions on the use of water resources of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya.

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6 In 2015 former Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon and in 2017 Secretary-General Antonio Guterres paid visits to the Aral Sea Basin [https://news.un.org/en](https://news.un.org/en)

7 UNRCCA was established following the joint request of Central Asian countries to the Security Council in 2007. Its mandate comprises fighting, in collaboration with the local governments, against the regional threats, one of them being environmental challenges, and building peace.

river basins and submitted them for the consideration of Basin countries. However, these living documents have not yet attracted a full commitment by the riparian countries (Sehring et al., 2020).

The donor driven diplomatic instrument of track I diplomacy could not attract parties and address water disputes at the interstate level. Although this attempt of the UNRCCA intended to create a draft document and launch the negotiation process between disputing upstream and downstream countries, it did not create regional ownership of the process and the draft documents because regional experts have not participated in their preparation as most of the countries noted.

In 2016 Kyrgyzstan officially opted out of the IFAS, which was the only platform to discuss regional water issues, on the grounds that the organization does not take into account the hydropower aspects of water use and the needs of individual states in the region (Murthy & Mendikulova, 2017). IFAS reforms repeatedly proposed by the Kyrgyz side have not been implemented which is why Kyrgyzstan sees no prospects in resuming its participation in the activities of the IFAS.

However, political events in Central Asia following the presidential elections in Uzbekistan in 2016 have significantly de-escalated the tension over upstream energy and downstream water needs dilemma. The conclusion of MoU between energy companies of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan on cooperation on the construction of Kambar Ata-1 hydropower station (President of Kyrgyzstan, 2017). The Working group of interdisciplinary representatives of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan is formed to negotiate the ways of joint construction of Kambar Ata 1. Moreover, the articles 13 and 15 of Joint Statements of the Presidents of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, signed during their official visits in 2018, state their cooperative behavior on the joint construction of the long disputed Rogun Dam and two smaller dams on the Zarafshan river (MFA of Uzbekistan, 2018). Even if these

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9 The drafts of the Conventions are open for suggestions and subject to changes with the consensus of the parties.
documents are not international legal acts, considering the top-down system of centralized governance in these states it can be assumed that the published decisions of powerful and influential actors are prerequisite for further cooperation on the ground.

The long-halted process of reforming the IFAS seems to have resumed in 2018 as well, and two meetings of a regional interdisciplinary group of experts of all five countries with the participation of consultants from the EU held in the Executive Committee of IFAS in Turkmenistan. In the 2018 Summit of the heads of states Kyrgyzstan expressed its readiness to resume full-fledged participation after the reformation of the IFAS, which incorporate energy interests of the upstream states into regional water agenda (Jeenbekov, 2018).

To date, international donors, the attempts of which failed before, see the window of opportunities in the region in order to create cooperative settings. In 2000 the efforts of the OSCE, with the chairwoman of Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, to facilitate the negotiations between all states so as to seek solution to upstream-downstream conflict over water were ineffective. Mostly the leaders of downstream Central Asian countries rejected the direct intervention from OSCE (OSCE, 2000). The OSCE has resumed its hydro-diplomacy mission to Central Asia in 2019 (OSCE, 2019), not long after Uzbekistan – Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – Kyrgyzstan have reached a mutual understanding on the dam construction that paved the way for productive intervention.

Bilateral donors are collaborating with the Aral Sea Basin countries in specific diplomatic and political platforms. The newly launched political format “C5+1” between Central Asian countries and the United States identified and emphasized environmental challenges as one of the key priorities of the dialogue. They formed a special working group that works to achieve practical results in this sector. In 2016 the six foreign ministers launched ‘Supporting national and regional
adaptation planning projects’ funded by the U.S. Congress. On behalf of the United States, USAID in partnership with national and regional organizations oversees this sector of “C5+1” (US Department of State, 2019). Moreover, the impact assessment of 2007 the EU strategy for Central Asia concluded that efforts to promote transboundary water management since 2007 gave mixed results because “competition for scarce water resources remains intense, although tensions between Uzbekistan and its upstream neighbors have eased since 2016” (Russell, 2019, p. 10). For this reason, the EU adopted the 2019 Central Asian strategy without colossal changes of previous policy that aims at promoting transboundary river basin cooperation.

4.1.6 Track II and III Diplomacy in 2010-2019

In the face of regional disagreements on major dam construction on transboundary rivers the World Bank with the official request from Tajik government financed the Techno-Economic Assessment Study (TEAS) and Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) of Rogun Dam that are conducted by international consultant firms. By financing feasibility projects (track III diplomacy), the World Bank obliged Tajikistan to meet the global standards and restrict unilateral action (construction and relocation of local people) until the assessment was fully completed (World Bank, 2014). The results of the TEAS and ESIA have proven that Rogun Dam meets all criteria as long as the construction phase incorporate all requirements of building such infrastructure. While the positive result of two assessments justifies the further construction of the Dam for Tajikistan, downstream countries have not necessarily yielded to the temptation to recognize it. The feasibility study has ceased the claims about the potential environmental effects of the dam.
Different standpoints on the World Bank intervention include that it further escalates existing conflict, while others link the root causes of this dispute exceptionally to the policy of the leaders of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The latter is assumed to be true with the current close political bilateral relations after the election of the new President of Uzbekistan in 2016 (Sehring et al., 2020, p. 163). The use of diplomatic tool for track III diplomacy, the World Bank has not necessarily prevented the conflict, but eased the tension present in the region through the resolving part of the complex dispute.

USAID has also initiated a platform for water managers and policy makers across Central Asia and Afghanistan and supported “Smart waters” project on transboundary water management for 2015-2020. This project aims at funding masters programs and series of trainings for young water specialists of the Aral Sea Basin. Currently, there is no evidence on the influence of these activities on dispute resolution efforts in the Basin.

4.2 Results

This section presents the results of the analysis section, and in doing so, generates two figures (Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4). The influence of three diplomatic tools on disputes present in the Aral Sea Basin (Figure 4.3) and on the local ownership of the results from the use of diplomatic instruments (Figure 4.4) in the Aral Sea Basin is assessed for three time periods based on the evaluation criteria (Figure 3.3). The rankings (-1; 0; 1; 2) for the use of a diplomatic tool reflect the level of resolution (escalation, status quo, mitigation or prevention) of water disputes and the level of local ownership due to the water diplomacy, exercised by international donors.

4.2.1. The Influence of Diplomatic Instruments on Existing Water Disputes

The analysis shows that during the three time periods diplomatic instruments - facilitation of negotiations (track I diplomacy), joint studies and training (track II), financing specific activities
(track III diplomacy) - utilized by international donors, have not escalated the existing water disputes in the Aral Sea Basin. However, three diplomatic tools (see below) have had a better effect on mitigation of conflicts at the first period of 1991-1999, while donor facilitation of track I diplomacy could not manage to change the status quo of disputes at the second and third periods (Figure 4.3). The same is true for less formal track II diplomacy in the second period. The findings show that donor financing of specific activities (track III diplomatic instrument), such as the Aral Sea Basin Program, IWRM in disputed areas of the Fergana Valley, and the risk assessment of Rogun Dam in Tajikistan, has contributed to the de-escalation of interstate disagreements in the first and third periods, and of the local conflicts among villagers and farmers in the Fergana Valley in the second time frame.

**Figure 4.3 The Influence of Diplomatic Instruments on Existing Water Disputes.**

Based on the analysis and contextual information in chapter IV, following factors may impact the results of the same diplomatic instruments used by external donors over different time periods:
- interstate political affairs, that is other than the water issue (i.e. internal and foreign policy of politicians in top-down governance systems), in the Basin may reduce the workability of track I and track II donor diplomacy;

- diplomatic tools are more effective in achieving the goal of water diplomacy (conflict prevention) at the earlier stages of disagreement, while being less effective in addressing deeply rooted conflicts. Because basin states catch up with comfortably positioning themselves to get desired outcomes from disputed issue and strengthen their position by taking national actions such as adoption of water laws, and it hampers the effectiveness of external donor’s tools on the existing situation;

- coordinated donor efforts that combine more than one instrument of multiple tracks have shown increased rates of conflict prevention and local ownership;

- the results of water diplomacy are not static and needs to be revisited to adapt to new realities and ever-changing water relations.

4.2.2. The Influence of Diplomatic Instruments on Local Ownership

The events, that have taken place before and after the donor use of diplomatic instruments in the Basin, shows that donor facilitation of track I diplomacy in the first period increases along with other instruments
During the first period water diplomacy activities of international donors in the Aral Sea Basin have created opportunities for basin actors to exercise leadership and control over the processes and benefits created such as basin organization and implementation of basin programme.

Although dispute resolution in the Basin has been fundamental for diplomatic tools of both track I and III diplomacy, the application of those instruments shows varying results at the regional level and local level. While the former level has been less committed to the donor facilitation of the talks during second and third period, local actors of Fergana valley and local institutes have owned the process and the results of diplomatic tools used for track II and III diplomacy even if the results are not able to fully prevent existing conflicts.

According to the analysis, diplomatic instruments, that bring external financing into the Basin activities and do not address sensitive water problems at the interstate level, have increased local ownership of the results of water diplomacy compared to donor activities that are dependent on political processes.

*Figure 4.4 The Influence of Diplomatic Instruments on Local Ownership.*
4.3 Conclusions of Results and Analysis

From the first days of independence of Central Asian countries to date international donors exercise water diplomacy in the Aral Sea Basin mostly through the facilitation of formal negotiations, organization of joint studies and trainings, and financing dispute resolution-oriented activities.

Donor facilitation of interstate actions (track I diplomacy) on the conclusion of treaties and the establishment of basin organization is effective in building institutional capacity during the first period when the Aral Sea Basin morphs into a transboundary basin and interstate disagreements start to emerge. The long-term commitment and high level of coordination among external donors headed by the World Bank and the United Nations have contributed to the positive outcomes of diplomatic instruments in this period that are not observed throughout the rest of donor involvement in the Basin.

Attempts to foster interstate cooperation by reforming the basin organization - IFAS and amend its legal mandates in line with the new realities in 2000-2019 could not change the status quo of contradictory positions and vision of upstream and downstream countries towards shared water resources. Political confrontations that occur between upstream and downstream have impeded the effectiveness of external diplomatic efforts at the regional level.

The use of these diplomatic instruments has not led to the escalation of the existing conflicts over water resources in the Basin throughout the three time periods – 1991-1999, 2000-2009, 2010-2019. Nor has it made the Basin overdependent on donor intervention. Diplomatic instruments most of the time encouraged basin actors to cooperate at interstate and local levels mitigating water disputes at the respective levels. In doing so, financing dispute resolution-oriented
activities for track III diplomacy has shown increased potential for dispute resolution and developed basin ownership of the results of water diplomacy. One of the reasons for this may be external funding adhered to such donor activities that attract economically weak developing countries e.g. the implementation of ASBPs. However, in some cases, funding may be the lacking ingredient in achieving the decreased conflictual events over water and improve relations among actors, e.g. implementation of IWRM principles in Fergana valley reduced water losses by 10-15% and water conflicts along bordering farmers nearly by half.

The joint study of Toktogul reservoir facilitated by USAID serves as the core of negotiations on the 1998 Framework Agreement. This is the only time when downstream and upstream countries of the Syr Darya basin have agreed on mutually beneficial terms at the interstate level integrating the co-management of water and energy. In this case disagreements have fully prevented even if it has not lasted more than 7-8 years due to the inconsistency in drafting annual agreements.

The analysis is not able to detect the direct influence of education and training that take place in the informal settings for track II diplomacy on the dispute resolution in the basin and certainly on the local ownership of water diplomacy results. However, trainings used in combination with track III diplomatic tools have led to more cooperation among local actors in the Fergana valley.

Overall, the result looks like a paradox! Even though donors are participating in hydro-diplomacy and investing too much, the situation has not improved much. This could be because of domestic reasons. Inter-basin events after 2016, such as elections of new politicians, may pave the way for track I diplomacy. The political events that have taken place in the region after 2016 imply the important role of political will in changing the ‘win-lose’ conflictual situation into cooperation
based on integrative bargaining. Such an attitude of the basin actors may create more space for water diplomacy and donor intervention. The economic development (Figure 4.5) and growing population (Figure 4.6) in Central Asia also necessitate the presence of cooperative mechanisms in managing shared water resources.
Chapter 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

International donors are unique external actors that are able to exercise water diplomacy in transboundary river basins. In doing so, they utilize diplomatic tools at the regional, national, and local levels that focus on prevention of conflicts over water. However, the use of diplomatic tools may not always lead to the prevention of conflict. Hydro-diplomacy of donors may escalate the tension or may not influence the existing components of conflicts keeping the status quo. Furthermore, water diplomacy tools can resolve some parts of the dispute that paves the way for further its prevention and cooperation in the basin. This research has sought the answer to the question: How do the diplomatic tools, used by the donor community at the interstate, intrastate, and local levels, influence existing disputes in transboundary river basin? How do the diplomatic instruments influence local ownership of the results of water diplomacy?

Findings show that water diplomacy tools are more effective in addressing emerging disputes at the early stages of basin development rather than preventing conflicts that have already shaped by solid contradictory positions and national water legislation of riparian states. The use of diplomatic tools by donors right after the Aral Sea Basin countries have gained independence mitigates the tension resulted in varying downstream and upstream vision of economic development.

Moreover, facilitation of negotiations for the track I diplomacy when combined with a joint study of the disputed issue (track II) has led to increased local ownership of the results of that water diplomacy. Track III diplomatic instruments, particularly financing the Basin Programme, the implementation of IWRM in disputed areas of the Fergana Valley, and risk assessment of
Rogun Dam in Tajikistan, have contributed to the de-escalation of interstate conflicts and decreased the number of local conflicts.

Consolidated efforts of donors in using diplomatic instruments in transboundary river basins have shown an increased rate of conflict prevention and local ownership. Coordinated donor efforts that combine more than one instrument of multiple tracks has mitigated interstate and local disputes over water and induced cooperative mechanisms. For example, the IFAS that has been established with the World Bank and the UN support is still a unique platform for regional water discussions and riparian countries have implemented three ASBPs thus far and the fourth basin programme is in the development stage. Under the leadership of international donors have supported the conclusion of international treaties and the establishment of basin organizations and financed the implementation of basin programs in the Aral Sea Basin.

The nature of the influence of diplomatic instruments, used by external donors, are most of the time linked to the political events happening in riparian countries. In the case of the Aral Sea Basin political changes at the end of the third period have resulted in the intensification of dialogues with international donors on the promotion of transboundary water cooperation after two decades of unproductive collaboration.

According to the findings of the research, diplomatic instruments, that bring external financing into the Basin activities and do not address sensitive water problems at the interstate level, have increased local ownership of the results of water diplomacy compared to donor activities that are dependent on political processes. In the Aral Sea Basin donor financing at intrastate and local levels (track III) has assisted in maintaining dialogue over the water dispute despite interstate political affairs based on mistrust in the Basin has reduced the workability of track I and track II donor diplomacy.
Furthermore, the results of water diplomacy are not static and needs to be revisited to adapt to new realities and ever-changing water relations. Recent concerns about the effectiveness of the Indus Waters Treaty and the reformation of IFAS in the Aral Sea Basin can serve as obvious examples.

Overall, the result looks like a paradox! Even though donors are participating in hydro-diplomacy and investing too much, the situation has not improved much. This could be because of domestic reasons. Inter-basin events after 2016, such as elections of new politicians, may pave the way for effective track I diplomacy and international donor involvement that can assist in the prevention of water conflicts and the development of regional water strategy for the Aral Sea Basin.

5.2 Recommendations for policy makers and future research

The findings of the study support the argument that intra-basin political situation and willingness of riparian states to deal with existing water disputes influence the effectiveness of water diplomacy tools of external donors. Therefore, it is important for riparian nations, as first and direct beneficiaries of water diplomacy, to consider the management of water related conflicts and the development of sound joint management at the foreign policy level. Conflictual situations may bring negotiations among riparian actors into deadlock in transboundary river basins, and thus the role of diplomats with deep knowledge of water or with technical support team can push slowed processes and actors forward. International donor involvement in these processes most of the time induces the mitigation of existing conflicts or at least the status quo, and thus can serve as a bridge in transforming the conflictual context into cooperation among basin actors.
The completion of this research features the need for further field research on this topic in other transboundary river basins to validate the findings of current research. Although this study sheds light on donor motivations for their involvement in developing countries, particularly in transboundary river basins, the questions of what the risks are for the international donors from being involved in disputed areas of shared river basins, and also what are at stake for partner countries from hosting external donors to resolve internal water issues need more investigation to oversee the broader picture of donor and riparian country relationship in water diplomacy.
Bibliography


UN-Water. (2017). Step-by-Step monitoring methodology for Indicator 6.5.2


Appendices

Appendix A. Figures and tables on transboundary water management and cooperation

![Diagram showing stages of transboundary water management and cooperation](image)

*Figure 2.1 Stages of Transboundary Water Management in Evolving Context. Source: Mostert, 2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperative management</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits to the River</strong></td>
<td>Reducing socio-economic impacts of ecologic disasters to riparian nations by maintaining healthy river ecosystem <em>(Cooperative environmental management)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits from the River</strong></td>
<td>Increasing quality, quantity, and economic productivity or water resources through basin scale management <em>(Cooperative Development)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits because of the River</strong></td>
<td>Cooperation on water can ease other geopolitical tension, leading to policy shift to cooperation and development, away from dispute/conflict <em>(Diminishing the Costs of Non-Cooperation)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits beyond the River</strong></td>
<td>Pave the way for broader cooperation in other sectors <em>(more integration opportunities catalyzed by cooperative management of international rivers)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1 Water Related Conflicts in Central Asia. Source: Pacific Institute, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Headline</th>
<th>Conflict Type</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Violence over water competition kills 300 along Uzbekistan border</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>The Fergana Valley, shared by these three countries, is especially vulnerable to violent eruptions over water and ethnicity. In 1990 an outbreak of violence in the Kyrgyz town of Osh on the border with Uzbekistan claims over 300 lives. The violence is provoked by competition for water, limited arable land, and ethnic tensions.</td>
<td>Khamidov 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Violent raids target water infrastructure between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan</td>
<td>Trigger, Casualty</td>
<td>Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>The Tuyamuyun reservoir in the delta of the Amu Darya is a point of contention between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Violence occurs in 1992 over the re-direction of drainage waters and raids by both sides to cut off pipes and irrigation canals. Today, the Tuyamuyun remains one of several disputed areas in continuing water dispute with Uzbekistan.</td>
<td>Votrin 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Uzbekistani troops guard reservoirs along border</td>
<td>Trigger, Weapon</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>Continued serious water tensions between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan lead to the deployment of 130,000 Uzbekistani troops on the Kyrgyz border to guard reservoirs straddling the two countries. Uzbekistan accuses Kyrgyzstan of releasing too much water from the Toktogul reservoir. Kyrgyzstan, through media leak, hints that in case the reservoir would be blown up, the resulting flood would sweep away Uzbekistan's Fergana and Zeravshan Valleys.</td>
<td>Votrin 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Uzbekistan cuts downstream flow to Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Weapon</td>
<td>Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>Uzbekistan raises regional tensions by cutting off 70 percent of flow downstream, threatening 100,000 hectares and prompting a riot by Kazakh farmers.</td>
<td>Hogan 2000a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Guerillas threaten Tajikistan dam</td>
<td>Casualty</td>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>Tajik guerrilla commander Makhmud Khudoberdyev threatens to blow up a dam on the Kairakum channel if his political demands are not met.</td>
<td>World Rivers Review (WRR) 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td>Affected Countries</td>
<td>Weapon</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Tajikistan releases water from Kairakum reservoir</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Weapon</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>In summer 1999, Tajikistan releases 700 million cubic meters of water from the Kairakum reservoir without warning its downstream neighbors. Among other effects, this cuts water to cotton crops in southern Kazakhstan, causing significant losses to farmers. At the same time, Kyrgyzstan cuts flows to southern Kazakhstan in retaliation for Kazakhstan's failure to supply coal under barter agreements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Central Asian nations cut off water to neighbors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Weapon</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan cuts off water to Kazakhstan until coal is delivered; Uzbekistan cuts off water to Kazakhstan for non-payment of debt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan charges downstream countries for water</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>In June 2001, the Kyrgyz parliament adopts a law classifying water as a commodity and announces that downstream countries would be charged for water. In response, Uzbekistan cuts off all deliveries of natural gas to Kyrgyzstan and accuses Kyrgyzstan of failing to honor an agreement to provide Uzbekistan with water in return for oil and gas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Confrontations occur along border of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan over water resources</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>Disputes over unclear borders and poor communications lead to a series of confrontations over water resources in a border area of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The confrontations with Kyrgyz border guards occur when villagers from Isfara Tajikistan cross into the southern Batken district of Kyrgyzstan to remove a dam blocking an irrigation canal preventing water from reaching the Tajik village of Hoja Alo. The dam is located in an area where the boundary line between the two states has not been agreed. Actions by Kyrgyzstan cut off irrigation water to Tajikistan during the spring growing season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Uzbekistan cuts gas over Tajik dam project</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>Uzbekistan cuts natural gas deliveries to Tajikistan in retaliation over a Tajik hydroelectric dam which Uzbeks say will disrupt water supplies. Gas flows resumed after a new contract is signed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td>Location(s)</td>
<td>Context</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Escalating rhetoric over dams in central Asia</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Central Asia. Tensions escalate over two proposed dams in central Asia: Kambarata-1 in Kyrgyzstan and the Rogun Dam in Tajikistan. These dams could affect water supplies in the downstream nations of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan. Uzbekistan's president, Islam Karimov, says the dams could cause &quot;not just serious confrontation, but even wars.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Kyrgyz villagers block canal at border</td>
<td>Trigger, Weapon</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Central Asia. A water and land dispute between villagers living on the border between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan escalates when Kyrgyz villages block a canal to prevent water flowing to farmers on the Kazakh side of the border.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan security clash over border dispute</td>
<td>Casualty</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan</td>
<td>Central Asia. Security forces in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan clash over a border dispute. Among the targets of the violence, which leave security forces wounded on both sides, are a small dam and electricity substation inside Kyrgyzstan. The local grievances include disputes over access to pasture and water resources.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Violence over access to water between neighbors in Kyrgyzstan leaves one dead</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Central Asia. In Kyrgyzstan an Uzbek farmer is killed by his Kyrgyz neighbor who reportedly attacks him over access to irrigation water.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Clashes expand between Tajik and Kyrgyz farmers over irrigation water</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Central Asia. Clashes between farmers over irrigation water across the Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan border escalate, with at least two instances involving armed guards to defuse the fights. One fight started over the installation of a water pump.</td>
<td></td>
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Figure 4.5 GDP of Central Asian Countries 1990-2018. Source: World Bank, 2018

Figure 4.6 Population Growth in Central Asia. Source: Worldometers, 2019