

This article was downloaded by: [Dr Christiane Fröhlich]

On: 10 October 2012, At: 05:28

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Conflict, Security & Development

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ccsd20>

### Security and discourse: the Israeli-Palestinian water conflict

Christiane J. Fröhlich

Version of record first published: 14 Jun 2012.

To cite this article: Christiane J. Fröhlich (2012): Security and discourse: the Israeli-Palestinian water conflict, *Conflict, Security & Development*, 12:2, 123-148

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14678802.2012.688290>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

# Analysis

## Security and discourse: the Israeli–Palestinian water conflict

Christiane J. Fröhlich

*When conflictive viewpoints are discursively strengthened, they develop into a ‘conflict discourse’ with a specific discursive structure which perpetuates conflict, like the discursive securitisation of an issue for varying audiences. When they are weakened, however, societal discourse can potentially change so that agreement becomes possible again, thus achieving discursive conflict transformation. This article analyses the Israeli and the Palestinian water discourse. On both sides, the dominant discourse structures underscore the conflictive issues regarding the distribution of water between Israelis and Palestinians, thus making communication, let alone negotiation, downright impossible. While Palestinians regard the natural water resources as sufficient in principle and the existing scarcity as entirely politically induced, Israelis perceive the natural water resources as absolutely scarce while receiving major de-securitisation impulses from the possibility of desalination. In the respective (minor) counter-discourses, however, possible starting points for dialogue and conflict resolution are visible.*

### Introduction

The Israeli–Palestinian water conflict is based on the region’s geographical, climatic, hydro(geo)logical and demographic realities. These are factual circumstances; however,

---

Dr **Christiane J. Fröhlich** holds a PhD in Sociology from Marburg University. She is a fellow at the Centre for Democracy and Peace Studies at Osnabrueck University, and specialises in discursive conflict transformation and resource conflicts, currently with a regional focus on the Middle East.

the term ‘water’ not only stands for the chemical element H<sub>2</sub>O and seemingly ‘objective’ data but also for countless social, material and symbolic mediation processes, for the resource’s different functions and the stakeholder interests connected to them.

The Israeli–Palestinian water conflict is no exception. According to the central hypothesis of this article, it is characterised through and unsolved because of fundamentally different perceptions of water scarcity, which manifest in the respective water discourses. While in Palestinian discourse, the natural water resources are perceived as sufficient in principle and the existing scarcity as entirely politically induced, the natural water resources are regarded as absolutely scarce while receiving major de-securitisation impulses from the option of desalination in Israeli discourse. This study aims at uncovering the modes of representation and imagery which are routinely implicated and drawn upon in times of conflict to generate exclusionist modes of discourse, namely the construction of (collective) identities through discursive in- and exclusion,<sup>1</sup> the realms of the ‘sayable’ or ‘unsayable’ which develop from this and (de-)securitisations.<sup>2</sup> A securitising move means constructing a particular reference object into an existential threat for a certain audience. Given a sufficient acceptance by that audience, a securitising move legitimates emergency measures which exceed the common rules of social interaction, like violence. A successful securitising move is called securitisation.<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this article, securitisation is understood as ‘a specific modern speech act, an utterance by which we construct an issue as a matter of security.’<sup>4</sup>

Buzan et al. as well as Bonacker and Gromes offer a list of key terms that indicate securitising moves.<sup>5</sup> Among them are ‘survival’ and the question ‘to be or not to be’, as well as idioms such as ‘point of no return’, ‘everything else will be irrelevant’ and ‘alter the premises for all other questions’. These terms indicate points in the discursive structure where the water and the security/conflict discourses, which have developed during the extremely durable conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, interlace. (De-)securitising moves can be understood as discursive effects of these ‘interconnections’. The following is a hierarchy of threats that can be securitised in different ways: (1) existential threat; (2) threatened self-determination; (3) threatened territory; and (4) threatened values and ideas.

Social processes are usually based on the assumption that ‘the continuation of communication is ensured by the acceptance of prior communication (accord). [...] Being based on the communication of disaccord, conflicts not only point to the constant possibility of a “no” inherent in all communication, but through their specific discursive framework they facilitate the actual, repeated communication of the “no”.’<sup>6</sup> This ensuing

‘conflict discourse’, however, can potentially be changed so that agreement becomes possible again. Ignoring this potential for discursive conflict transformation means both silently accepting hegemonic discourse structures and deliberately ignoring a hitherto untapped source for peaceful coexistence.

### *State of the art*

Countless studies have been written about the different aspects of water scarcity in the Middle East and worldwide. Numerous proposals have been made as to the political and technical solution of the water conflict between Israelis and Palestinians (as well as Israel and the other neighbouring states). Until only recently, research consisted predominantly of hydrological, geological and hydrogeological studies which offer data on the available natural water resources, reasons for salinisation and similarly technical issues. These analyses usually followed a scientific-positivistic approach.<sup>7</sup> The necessity to take into account the different users’ perceptions as well as their attitudes and beliefs in order to understand water scarcity has since found its way into research on the subject.<sup>8</sup> This ‘constructivist turn’ in studies about the Israeli–Palestinian water conflict has opened up new ways of looking at the question of why water remains an issue of conflict between Israelis and Palestinians even though there is no shortage of proposals to solve it: the final solution of the ‘water question’ has been postponed to the permanent status talks, and there is no sustainable solution of the water conflict in sight, regardless of the benefits it may bring for all parties involved.

By pinpointing and delineating the ways in which seemingly objective data are socially constructed, the current generation of environmental conflict research—which this paper is a part of—has found new approaches to the Israeli–Palestinian water conflict. Considering the failure of previous generations—like Cornucopians and neo-Malthusians—to answer central questions, more recent studies from political science, which mostly refer to regime theory,<sup>9</sup> as well as occasionally to security studies,<sup>10</sup> have begun to systematically include questions of ontology and epistemology instead of focusing exclusively on water as an environmental issue and an economic good. They reflect on the historicity and discursive construction of how water is perceived—illustrated, for instance, by the question of who allocates what value to water at a certain point in time—and the social construction of ‘wealth’ and ‘scarcity’, which had long been disregarded in favour of more naturalist interpretations. Water, for instance, can be objectively scarce (in the sense of a mathematical equation which correlates population

numbers and existing water resources), but at the same time can be perceived as sufficient and running short for political reasons only.

The current generation finds fault with the fact that constructivist approaches and man as a social actor have yet to play a major role in environmental conflict research.<sup>11</sup> In addition, it underscores that environmental conflict research has been led by differing normative positions, which have usually been merely implied but have nevertheless played a central role for the different approaches.<sup>12</sup> To illustrate, in the environmental sector, the assumption still prevails that scientific methods can be applied to social phenomena like conflicts<sup>13</sup>: by classifying a problem as environmental, it can supposedly be solved sustainably through technical political programmes. This is based on the assumption that contended political problems can be transformed into mere administrative issues in order to then be solved by highly qualified experts without major conflict.<sup>14</sup>

This rationalisation of how environmental conflicts are dealt with, however, does not necessarily lead to a rationalisation of the conflicts—on the contrary. While such a more rational approach to resource conflicts creates more (expert) knowledge on the resource in question, thus seemingly objectifying a situation, expanding cognitive knowledge always entails an expanding compendium of narrative constructions too. In short, instead of a more rational approach to nature due to steadily growing ‘objective’ data, a process of emotionalising, politicising and securitising ensues which entails new, competing constructions of nature. The result is a contest between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ knowledge, between different constructions of reality, between that which is ‘sayable’ and that which is ‘unsayable’. The question of why and how natural processes influence human action depends, thus, on a speaker’s position in discourse. This study aims at identifying the constructedness of seemingly objective data by analysing discursive continuities in order to finally tap into the potential for conflict transformation that is inherent in changing discursive structures. There is a lack of theoretical understanding of why man acts as he does in an environmental conflict; this study tries to fill in at least some of the missing pieces by uncovering the conflictive communication patterns that underlie the Israeli–Palestinian water conflict.

## *Research set-up*

This study is the essence of five years of research on how water in Israel and the Palestinian Territories is perceived. Based on a theoretical understanding of discourse according to Jäger,<sup>15</sup> which owes much to Foucault’s *oeuvre*, its reception and broadening by Link and

Link-Heer,<sup>16</sup> and Leont'ev's psychological action theory,<sup>17</sup> I outlined the genesis of the Israeli and Palestinian water discourses from 1882 until 2005 in order to then synchronically analyse 20 (10 Palestinian, 10 Israeli) half-open, semi-structured interviews with Israeli and Palestinian water experts to show how both societies perceive and value water on a political, strategic and societal level and in what way water is being (de-)securitised for and by whom. This study follows a constructivist understanding of reality: there is no objective, given reality; that which is 'real' is *always* discursively constructed. Accordingly, conflict is defined as a discursive, actively constructed occurrence, as the moment when 'the language of politics becomes a discourse of exclusionist protection against a constructed diabolical, hated enemy who is deserving of any violence perpetrated against it'.<sup>18</sup> Discourse here is defined as the 'flow of social knowledge through time'.<sup>19</sup>

The interviewees represented all levels of water politics and management in Israel and the Palestinian Territories as well as both the pre- and post-1967 generation, so that cross-generational changes were detectable. I exclusively interviewed experts from the moderate political spectrum on the assumption that conflictive discourse structures in moderate discourse can be extrapolated to more extremist discourse strands which are not represented in the data. 'Moderates' in this context were defined as those who are in favour of a peaceful two-state solution. The interviews have been made anonymous.

The corpus consisted of approximately 500 pages of transcribed interviews. On the basis of the corpus, I developed a dossier by inductive coding that encompassed the qualitative scope of the respective discourses. This process uncovered thematic clusters that pointed to trends, discursive events and key aspects. The dossier included all topics (codes) and noted all thematic accumulations, double mentions etc., thereby avoiding overemphasis. Subsequently, the context for each interview was characterised (interviewee, place and time of interview etc.). All interviews were recorded in the fall and winter of 2005, shortly after the unilateral Gaza disengagement.

This structural analysis already indicated the data's formal, ideological and content-related focal points. These helped identify typical fragments. The following criteria were used to choose typical fragments for the fine analysis: discourse position, thematic concentration, quantitative distribution of topics and sub-topics, kind and density of discourse strand interconnections, style, formal distinctiveness, scope and association with the hegemonic or counter-discourse.

The critical discourse analysis showed a large spectrum of main topics, topics and sub-topics. There were various interconnections between them as well as between the respective national

water and security/conflict discourses. The latter are the parts of the societal inter-discourse which focus on the ongoing Israeli–Arab conflict and the security interests of the respective societies. In the following, I outline the structure of both the Israeli and the Palestinian water discourses. Due to space restrictions, I concentrate my analysis on those topics which are most relevant for the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and which are central to its solution.

### *The Israeli and the Palestinian water discourses: perceptions of a resource*

The two fundamentally different interpretations of water and water scarcity can be explained and understood when considering the specific development and structure of the respective national discourses on water. Both discourses contain elements of a hegemonic and a counter-discourse. The specific discursive structures precluded which was ‘sayable’ or ‘unsayable’ in both discourses, depending on the level to which an utterance referred and on the speaker’s position in the discourse. When international issues were touched upon, like justice, international law or the allocation of natural water resources amongst all neighbours in the Jordan Basin, it was impossible (unsayable) in both hegemonic discourses to criticise the respective in-group’s water management. On this level, water was perceived as a zero-sum game: giving up control over water was perceived as real water loss; at the same time, a lack of control equalled an existential threat. While co-operative water management was mentioned as a wish or overall goal in both discourses, in the hegemonic discourse structures it was considered feasible exclusively when political aspects of water management—like re-allocation—remained out of bounds (i.e. unsayable).

On the national level, the limits of what was sayable tended to be more generous. Without the threat of a hostile out-group it became possible to criticise one’s in-group’s water (management) practices, and even to demand massive changes in this sector. This is where starting points for dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians inside both hegemonic discourses were discernible: as long as the highly political issue of re-allocation remained untouched, water experts from both sides agreed on the rough outlines of an ideal regional water management.

It is only in the respective counter-discourses, however, that hegemonic limits to that which was sayable were broadened considerably. Here, both the perception of water as a zero-sum game as well as the depiction of the respective ‘other’ as dangerous and threatening were substituted by more co-operative discourse structures. In the Israeli

discourse, this was achieved by transcending what had hitherto been primarily national interests onto the global level; in Palestinian discourse, acknowledging the respective direct responsibility for the current status quo in water allocations revealed far more co-operative discourse structures. While both hegemonic discourses were entirely focused on the (national) in-group's security and the out-group's mistakes and failings, the respective counter-discourses opened up new room for critique of the in-group and gained a certain openness towards the 'other's' narrative and outlook.

For this analysis, it is not important which of these viewpoints is 'true'. It is not central here to confirm and appraise what *is* 'right' or 'wrong', but what *is considered* 'right' or 'wrong' in the national discourses, making it thus sayable or unsayable. As mentioned above, even such seemingly objective data as the available water quantities are being actively constructed and interpreted; therefore, it is necessary to identify discourse structures which reflect such active construction in order to transform them.

### **Hegemonic discourse structures: Israel**

In the Israeli hegemonic discourse, which is—like the whole water discourse—dominated by experts, the natural water resources in the Jordan Basin were considered too scarce to keep the current standard of living of the region's population, let alone improve it. Natural water scarcity was perceived to be absolute. Together with the historical relationship between land, water and the creation of a Jewish state, deeply rooted in Zionist ideology, this resulted in a perception of natural water scarcity as an existential threat, manifested in numerous securitising moves.

### **Discourse genesis**

The roots of water's ideological meaning for Israel lie in political Zionism, which is shaping the political decisions of the State of Israel until this very day. Water had a central role in Zionism, since the movement's goal—the creation of a Jewish state—could not be achieved without sufficient water resources.

The link between the goal of a state territory on biblically promised land and its settlement by Jews was agriculture. On the one hand, agriculture made it possible to 'take into possession' the land in the literal sense. On the other hand, Jewish immigrants could, by working with the land and owning it, shed their European, Western, urban image and substitute it through a new identity: that of the *chalutz*, the pioneer, who helps to build a



Jewish state and thus contributes to the redemption of the 'chosen people'. However, both for the immediate survival of the numerous immigrants and for agriculture, a secure supply of fresh water was indispensable. Thus, both settlement and agriculture aided the fact that water as a resource melted together with the 'Zionist[ . . . ] ethos of land, pioneer heroics, and national salvation.'<sup>20</sup> This is where today's institutionalised securitisation of water in Israeli discourse is rooted: water became an aspect of national security, of the security of the Jewish entity. The Holocaust and the repeated threats by Arab neighbours to 'drive Israel into the sea' contributed to the development of a 'security discourse', which from very early on put the *yishuv's*, the new Jewish community's, security at the centre of all political initiatives. The discursive securitisation of diverse threats developed into one of the most powerful discursive structures in the Israeli societal discourse; security became a cultural master symbol. Generally speaking, a mentality emerged which cultivates a perpetual state of siege.<sup>21</sup>

The water discourse has been taken over by this securitisation trend. Growing immigration, developing water scarcity, the myth of the *chalutz* and discursive incidents such as the British White Paper of 1939 contributed to this. Zionism rooted the idea of 'settling the land' and 'making the desert bloom' as one of the Jewish state's central concerns in Jewish collective memory. A sufficient water supply thus became a value in and of itself, a symbolic practice and a vital condition for Jewish-Israeli identity.

It was not until 1967, when water remained scarce even though Israel had acquired control over most of the natural resources, that more pragmatic voices became more prominent in the Israeli water discourse. After the Six Day War, a certain de-securitisation of the resource began (with regard to the in-group), which was enhanced by technical progress, especially the development of affordable desalination technologies in the 1990s. Ever since the Oslo Accords, the water issue has tended to be seen as practically solved: in Israeli hegemonic discourse, the peace agreements between Israel and Jordan as well as between the Palestinian Authority are generally perceived as a successful solution to the water conflict. Water, according to this argument, has lost large parts of its emotional and ideological charge and has thus been de-securitised considerably. Whether this is true will be shown in the following discourse analysis.

## Discourse analysis

The critical discourse analysis of the Israeli fragments revealed five main topics, 28 topics and 29 sub-topics. The initial systemisation of the analysed discourse fragments in main topics already indicated accumulations and interlacing with other discourse strands as well

as (de-)securitising moves. One of the most relevant main topics can be subsumed under the term **water management**.<sup>22</sup> This thematic field consisted of 660 mentions.<sup>23</sup> The most often mentioned topic was *water's political, socio-economical and emotional meaning* (340 mentions). Here, first indications of securitising moves were visible, since water was being discursively connected to topics which are traditionally considered vital for Israel's security. Among them were *Israel's struggle for existence* (existential threat), all aspects relating to the topic *land* (threatened territory), as well as issues of *national identity* (threatened values and self-determination). Much less attention was given to conflicts between exclusively Israeli stakeholders, like farmers, communities, minorities or the industrial sector, or between politicians and experts, even though the question focused specifically on *Israeli water management*. These inner-Israeli issues were not commonly securitised. The inner-Israeli water discourse was, on the contrary, being depicted as relatively homogenous: 'i don't think that there is a MAJOR (1) argument in the country (1) about (1) the propOrtion of water (1) that is (1) being given to various sectors (1) [...] I think that there is relative national consensus'.<sup>24</sup>

In the sub-topic *ideological vs. rational* contradictions between special and inter-discourse were mentioned. The position of the soberly rational academic was contrasted with the politician who was generally understood as ideologically extremely susceptible and easily influenced. Since the interviewees perceived themselves first and foremost as part of the academic special discourse, they accused the Israeli political class of illegitimately securitising water in the inter-discourse, seeing themselves as de-securitising actors. Key terms like 'propaganda', 'water crisis hysteria' and 'in reality' illustrate this. In addition, the topics *data*, *public opinion* and *scarcity* interlaced. The request for rational, fact-oriented (water availability, amount of water, population growth etc.) water allocation politics, meaning such which focus on the 'right' knowledge, denouncing ideological issues like the strengthening of the agricultural sector for identity-political reasons, formed the tenor of these fragments.

Nevertheless, more securitising moves with regard to water occurred in the sub-topics *land* and *national identity*. Water was discursively connected to territorial domination, borders, Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories and the Zionist myth of a flowering desert, thereby stating an implicit threat to Israeli territory and/or Israeli values. The following discourse fragments illustrate this:

*it's here (1) in the back of the mind of (1) everyone of my parents' (1)  
generation and every of MY generation (1) to a much lesser degree but yet (1)*

*[incomp.] country was to (1) transfer the jewish people to (2) people who sits on his land and (1) ahah works it (1) AND water (1) is the basic element of it (1) specially in the middle east [ . . . ] it REALLY has (1) very deep roots.<sup>25</sup> you need the LAND and the PLAcEs and we are VERY CLOSE (1) very SMALL country (1) to build a reservoir (1) it's not so easy.<sup>26</sup>*

In the first quote, one interesting characteristic is the mentioning of the historical development of the perception of water, which reflects the discourse genesis. By stating ‘to a much lesser degree but yet’ the speaker underlines that the perception of water as vital for implementing the Zionist ideology may have been more important for past generations, but is still present today—with tangible effects. Also, the term ‘transfer’ describes the development away from anti-Semitic politics which had kept Jews worldwide from owning and working land, towards Jewish land ownership and agriculture in Palestine in the twentieth century and, later, Israel. The speaker thereby refers to the Zionist nexus, land-agriculture-water, which he does not question, thereby silently agreeing with it. The term ‘specially’ alludes to the particular climatic and hydrogeological characteristics of the region. This utterance also stresses the importance of ‘right’ knowledge, which is considered absolutely central for discourse sovereignty. The second quote again underlines the aforementioned nexus by securitising a sufficient control of land for the construction of water infrastructure. The speaker uses no temporal dissociations, but formulates a subliminal threat (‘it’s not so easy’).

In the topic *absolute control*, the need to control every available drop of water everywhere in Israel at any time (which was used as synonymous with the best possible utilisation) formed the main focus. Thereby, the silent agreement was formed that Israeli interests could only be guaranteed through Israeli control, meaning a water management which is as independent as possible from neighbours who are perceived as enemies. Here, the water and the security discourse strands interlace, since control is synonymous with survival. Without very tight control and monitoring of the natural water resources, nothing would prevent pollution, overuse and ensuing life-threatening scarcity—at least this was the consensus between the speakers in the Israeli hegemonic water discourse. At least implicitly, this indicates that control should best be Israeli, especially when keywords like ‘trust’, ‘fear’, ‘using water to the utmost’, ‘national water’, ‘every drop is used’ and ‘existential threat’ are taken into account.

*the first and probably most important point is that the only resource in israel which is nationalised and completely controlled by the state israel water ahah is*

*ah ah a completely state owned resource it is administrated by the ah what we call the water commission and every single drop (3) of fresh water saline water sewage is controlled by this ah ah by the water commission it has a professional arm which is the hydrological service and hydrological institute which supplies the water commission with the professional data and then the decisions of the water commissions are ahahahahah taken considering the hydrological data from the field (1) ah it's not only ah measurements of ah rainfall riverflow groundwater levels and stuff but are also and probably mainly ah ah ahah the understanding of movement of water bodies and ah ah considerations of ahah water balance ah and ah such there are absolutely hydrological considerations (1) ah the main issue is the main issue of the control water control everybody gets an allocation ahah and this allocation is changed from year to year considering natural recharge if there was ah ahahahah rainfrainfall or if it wasn't was the rainfall according to the average the long-term average or it was a bad year and then the allocations are are decided upon separately or how shall i say it ah ahah they are decided upon ah not taking into consideration what was last year they are considered by the ahah hydrological situation of immediately of the passing winter (1) aaah this is the base absolute control of water ahahah distribution water rights.<sup>27</sup>*

*under natural conditions existing here in this area there doesn't seem to exist ad-another different way you have you have to tototo ah to have complete control of the water cause otherwise its completely [...] grosso modo it goes according to the same lines.<sup>28</sup>*

*the exploitation of water should be very tightly and very dictatorially ahahahaaaaah exploited in order to sustain [cough] in order to keep up these ahahah resou (1) ah resources [cough] ma dictatorial is a very dangerous ah word what i mean is that there should be [cough] centralised even regionally centralised ah authorities [...] in order to manage these waters otherwise there is no way out.<sup>29</sup>*

The terms 'allocation', 'absolute control' and 'water rights' underscore Israeli dominance in the water sector. The controlling actor is always the Israeli Government. The term 'rights' hints at another securitising move: if my rights are threatened, my self-determination is in danger. So, in order to secure its water rights, Israel needs to have

exclusive control over the scarce water resources. In reverse, this means that any request to give up however small a part of this control equals an existential threat. However, the referential object remains obscure: it could be either, on the international level, the Israeli population, or, on the national level, the different stakeholders, like farmers. In each case, the aggressor would be different: on the international level the Arab neighbours, on the national level a user group. The terms ‘professional’ and ‘hydrological’ again point to the overall perception of experts as rational and politicians as ideological and also indicate a sort of justification or entitlement. The second quote illustrates that the necessity of absolute control is considered the one valid principle in Middle Eastern water management—one which has been adopted even by the Palestinians. The statement stays impersonal (‘there doesn’t seem’, ‘you have to’, ‘its’, ‘it goes’), assuming the form of a universal rule. In the last fragment, the threat which emanates from the lack of control is finally enunciated: ‘otherwise there is no way out’. Control over water is being securitised.

The following fragments explicate what remained implicit above, namely the thought that absolute control can, under the historically grown political circumstances, really only be executed by Israel:

*IF the palestinian (1) will (1) drill without any (1) control (1) along the (1) green line in their side (1) they will influence immEdiately on our (1) boreholes [hm] (1) and ah (1) l (1) the salinity will ah (1) enter into the aquifer very (1) quickly (1) and we are afraid that (1) MANy of the our boreholes will ah (1) become saline n we have to close it (1) therefore we have to find a (1) solution and i i (1) beLIEVe that (1) no one will allow them (1) to drill (1) ah without (1) agreement (1) of the a (1) but ah (1) you have to (1) be (1) rEADy to Any (1) even to the Worst (1) scenario (1) but ah (1) I don’t believe it (1) THEY understAnd ah (1).<sup>30</sup>*

*we can destroy aquifers (1) like this [clicks fingers] (2).<sup>31</sup>*

The keywords ‘control’, ‘influence’, ‘afraid’ and ‘allow’ as well as the usage of the personal pronouns ‘they’, ‘their’, ‘them’ as well as ‘you’, ‘our’ and ‘we’ illustrate Israeli dominance, the interdependence between both conflicting parties, a lack of trust and the subsequent existential need to stay in control. Again, water scarcity is being securitised by depicting it as an existential threat; the water and the security discourses interlace to the effect that the discursive division in an in- and an out-group is reinforced and conflict lines are perpetuated. Terms like ‘very quickly’ and ‘immEdiately’ underline the problem’s

urgency and form an important part of the securitising move. Nevertheless, the threat remains diffuse—while the speaker does explain that salinisation as a result of unregulated Palestinian water usage could lead to shutting down Israeli wells and springs, the final consequences of such a development, like water scarcity, cutbacks in living standards, maybe even deaths of thirst, remain obscure. In such a context of threat, fear and dependency, even hypothetical changes in control over the natural, Israeli-controlled water resources remain unsayable. The final usage of the personal pronoun ‘they’ is interesting, however. The pronoun does not, unlike above, refer to all Palestinians, but to the political decision-makers in Israel who, the speaker hopes, have understood that Israel must have control over the natural water resources. By using the personal pronoun, the abovementioned internal conflict line between Israeli experts and politicians is again illustrated.

In a nutshell, the discursive securitisation of a re-allocation of the natural water resources was, despite several de-securitising moves since 1967, still being routinely activated when it was deemed necessary. On the basis of such securitising moves, emergency measures including violence continue to be legitimised. The emphasis put on desalination as a means to solve the conflict cannot belie that the hegemonic discourse structures, which depict water as an attribute of disputed territory and as part of the Jewish-Israeli identity, remain widely unchanged. The fact that the talks about the political dimension of regional water management failed during the Oslo process and had to be postponed to the end status negotiations can be read as a manifestation of these hegemonic discursive structures. Thus, true de-securitisation remains a hope rather than a reality, since these discourse structures dominate the Israeli water discourse and predetermine political decision-making.

### **Hegemonic discourse structures: Palestine**

In the Palestinian hegemonic discourse, the same natural water resources that were perceived to be absolutely scarce in Israeli discourse were believed to be sufficient at least for a major improvement of the Palestinian standard of living. In the Palestinian perception, the experienced water scarcity is entirely politically induced; this manifested in countless securitisations of Israeli control over water. Where ‘objective’ water scarcity was the focus in Israeli discourse, in the Palestinian, Israeli dominance caused most securitising moves.

## Discourse genesis

While water had been considered essential for the security and survival of the *yishuv* and the state of Israel in Israeli discourse all along, an analogue development in Palestinian discourse was considerably delayed. For a long time, there was no common Palestinian voice that could have supported the vision of a specifically Palestinian society independent from Osman and/or pan-Arab voices. In addition, Palestinian discourse developed in response to and dependent on Israeli discourse.

Due to this specific historical development, water is perceived as important primarily as an attribute of a territory that is considered rightfully Palestinian, but has been under Israeli control for decades. The Palestinian water discourse has been formed by Israeli (Jewish) control, not by natural conditions. This discourse pattern has been imprinted on Palestinian discourse ever since the proclamation of the State of Israel (if not earlier) and thus is not by any means an exclusive characteristic of the water discourse. In fact, the demand for sufficient water allocations in Palestinian hegemonic discourse was discursively inseparable from rejecting Israeli control over large parts of the natural water resources and demanding a re-allocation of these very resources. Water, here, functioned as one medium among others which was being utilised to communicate Palestinian overall rejection of Israeli dominance.

These hegemonic discourse structures reflect a dominant mentality of siege which mirrors the Israeli such mentality. One manifestation thereof is the myth of the *fellah*, who works and sustains his land even in the worst of circumstances (and needs water to do that). Specifically Palestinian versions of water management, which at least partly transcend this overall resistance and rejection of Israel, have developed only recently.

The hegemonic discourse structures result in massive securitisations of water in Palestinian water discourse. Due to its territorial connotations and the identity issues connected to it, as well as considering the Palestinian dependence on Israeli allocations which was perceived as absolute and which has existed since 1967, Israeli control over large parts of the regional water resources was considered to be an existential threat to Palestinian society in Palestinian hegemonic discourse. The insufficient access to the natural water resources of the West Bank and the Gaza strip (prior to the disengagement) is, according to this argument, a threat to the viability of a Palestinian state.

These hegemonic discourse structures influence practically all discursive patterns in Palestinian water discourse. This is illustrated by a perception which was communicated

throughout, namely that the Palestinian claims to groundwater resources beneath the West Bank and parts of the River Jordan were imperative for the overall goal of establishing a Palestinian state. The reduction of the water issue to technical issues as practised by Israel (for instance in the Israeli–Palestinian Joint Water Committee) thus equals surrendering the central national goal. This also explains why desalination was mostly rejected in the Palestinian discourse fragments analysed here: access to water was discursively constructed into a vehicle to achieve a cohesive, viable Palestinian state. While there certainly are more pragmatic voices inside Palestinian hegemonic discourse, who criticise Palestinian water management and thus expand the spheres of the sayable considerably regarding the in-group, the dominant discursive pattern with regard to the out-group was securitising Israeli control over the majority of the natural water resources by depicting Palestinian control over them as a vital and indispensable element of a sovereign Palestinian state. Thus, it seems there has been no de-securitisation in Palestinian hegemonic discourse as yet, since Palestinians remain politically, economically and socially dependent on Israel, their Arab neighbours and the international community.

### Discourse analysis

The critical discourse analysis of the Palestinian fragments uncovered the same five main topics as in the Israeli fragments; the 29 topics and 17 sub-topics differed in part. The main topic **water management** was mentioned most frequently (829), with 359 mentions relating to the topic *dependency on Israel*. While the main topic **water management** was concerned with inner-Palestinian deficits, the speakers mostly referred to Israel's influence (without having been given an impulse to do so). As one speaker put it: 'the palestinians (1) they manage (2) the SUPPLY actually not the resources (2) since (1) 1967 till now water managed and controlled by military orders (1)'.<sup>32</sup>

The Palestinian hegemonic water discourse was dominated by the perception of Israeli control over the majority of the regionally accessible, natural water resources as illegitimate, unjust and negative in all aspects. While there are some fragments which focus on the genuinely Palestinian water management and criticise the Palestinian water practices, the majority of utterances refer to Israeli dominance in water allocation, utilisation and management. The perceptions oscillated between the following poles:

*actually (1) our problem is that (1) we do not have (1) good water management (1) [...] we don't have (1) a clear vision for water strategy (1)*



and [...] this has a number of reasons [...] some of the reasons are (1) are related to palestinian (1) self (3) status and other outside status (1) for the palestinians (1) i believe that there isn't a good (1) management (1) there isn't (1) within the palestinian authority (1) the (1) administration there (1) i don't think its efficient i don't think (1) it is doing (1) a good job and so basically i think it is (1) this is part of our responsibility and (1) the people yani (1) a number of the (1) people in charge (1) are there for political reasons rather than technical reasons that's one problem (1) on the other side we have the problem with israelis which is [incomp.] israeli occupation and israeli control (1) of water resources (1) so (1) [...] these are two areas (1) the third (1) is that (1) we don't have (1) good public awareness o on the signIficance of water (1) so we have a lot of (1) water wastage (1) and so (1) and the fourth(1) is that we do not have (2) good technical ex (1) pertise (1) how to collect water and how to (1) utilise water (1) [...] so basically (1) we LOSE (1) so much water because (1) of our lack of technical abilities (1) and technical knowhow (1) of how to use it (1) and then (1) lastly (1) we cannot recycle water (1) [...] to see how we can for instance (1) differentiate between drinking water and other water we can use (1) for other (2) purposes (1) and so basically (1) we cannot (3) we are not good keepers of water and good users of water (2).<sup>33</sup>

in MACRO level and micro level we have mismanagement.<sup>34</sup>

this is all related to what israel can (1) give (1) up (1) from its (1) current control on the (1) on ALL the water resources (1).<sup>35</sup>

but because of this israeli control of these resources and the utilisation of israel both dIrectly and indirectly (1) aah (1) what i mean by that directly is the water utilised by the settlements in the west bank and they have their own wells (1) ah (1) for different purposes (1) and indirectly because the (1) aaah structural geology of the west bank allows the ground water (1) to move (1) out of the west bank and across the green line and inside israel (1) and the that's why israel does not allow the palestinians (1) to control these resources so they can have (1) free (1) ah control (1) on these resources (2) but ah (1) as long as this conflict is not resolved I think (1) aah there is (1) a risk that these resources will not be sustainable and if that happens (1) really it will be a catastrophe for the (1) palestinians in the WEST bank (1) because (1) groundwater is the

*oldest source (1) and ah other options are not available for the west bank (1) even if some then the palestinians will depend on water from other countries (1) which will become very costly (1) and ah so thethe future is very dark (1) if the situation continues (1) and DEFINITELY yani and as a water ah (1) engineer and been involved in this sector (1) even having lots of discussion debates with israelis (1) i think the israelis over the years have overused ah (1) the water as a political tool (1) and (1) over-exaggerated the issue for themselves (1) aaah the (1) israeli governments and the israeli media have (1) aah shown that ah (1) yani (1) to the israeli public (1) ah that IF the palestinians (1) control the water resources there won't be water for the israelis (1) and this is totally (1) ah not true.<sup>36</sup>*

On the one hand, there is open self-criticism, accusing the Palestinian Authority of bad water governance and of not having a vision for future water management. This is interesting, since it includes starting points for a change of discourse structures and thus the conflict. The speaker in the first fragment refers almost exclusively to the Palestinian water management, which is illustrated by the personal pronouns 'we' and 'our'. These keywords indicate that the Palestinians actually are responsible for their water management: 'our responsibility'.

On the other hand, Israeli control over the natural water resources is emphasised. Israel is perceived to be the sole actor; responsibility for everything that happens in the (Israeli AND Palestinian) water sector is thereby passed on to Israel. This always involves a securitisation of water for the reference object 'Palestinian society', illustrated by statements like 'it will be a catastrophe' and 'the future is very dark'. These securitising moves were being justified with similar reasoning as in the Israeli discourse fragments; for instance, the speaker in the last quote rhetorically confirms his power of judgment by stressing his involvement in talks with Israelis. Another key aspect is the factor of time: as soon as—and only if—Palestinian dependency on Israel (in the water and all other sectors) is terminated, peace, stability and co-operation would finally be within reach, the Palestinian speakers agree.

This causal chain between dependency on Israel, lack of autonomy and resulting catastrophic water distribution is dominated by conflictive discourse structures like demonisations and emphasis on the differences between in- and out-group. Descriptions

of Israelis as heed- and ruthless underscore the mistrust between the conflicting parties and perpetuate the existing conflict lines:

*the first (1) threat (1) is UNSERIOUS (1) peace process (1) especially from israeli side (1) the israelis they're looking to the (1) palestine as market (1) and cheap labour (1) and (1) empty land (1) they don't consider there is anybody in [ ... ] and the major (1) indicator for that is the wall (1) the wall is an indicator (1) showing the israelis they don't need peace.*<sup>37</sup>

*the israelis you know oslo two recognised our water rights (1) that is on paper (1) but in practice you know they just (1) play their game (1) they don't give us our water rights back.*<sup>38</sup>

Similar to the Israeli discourse strand, the Palestinian contains, on the one hand, the very distinct wish for co-operation, for peace and stability. On the other hand, though, there also are conflictive structures contradicting this. They appear where the water and security discourse strands intersect, where water is being securitised.

Under the main topic **water management**, the topic *dependency on Israel* was, with 359 mentions, central to my research interest. It consisted of two sub-topics: *Israeli Control* (150) and *hydropolitics/politicisations of the resource* (140). The sub-topic control mirrors the topic **absolute control** in the Israeli discourse strand. Key terms like 'curfew', 'control', 'permit', 'limit', 'obstacles', 'deprive' and related themes like 'dependency on Israel', 'hydropolitics' and 'Israeli interior politics' indicate the influence of Israeli dominance on the Palestinian access to water, which is perceived as extremely far reaching and exclusively negative. These key terms also refer to other societal fields in which Israeli control is perceived to hinder Palestinian society in its development. This illustrates how the conflict discourse penetrates all societal fields and how Israeli control over the water resources is being securitised for Palestinian society.

In the sub-topic *hydropolitics/politicisation of resource*, the discourse fragments oscillated between the (dominant) emphasis on Israel politicising water on the one hand, mostly in the form of blaming, and a critique of Palestinian decision-makers (counter-discourse) on the other. In this sub-topic, the Palestinian speakers mostly assessed Israeli economic interests, unilateralism, Zionism, Israeli settlement policy, mentality, culture and Israeli seriousness with regard to peace, thus giving a direct view of their understanding of the out-group. Merely a fraction of the analysed fragments dealt with the Palestinian side of

the conflict. This topic can thus be understood as the pendant to the topic *view of the Palestinians* in the Israeli discourse strand.

Israel is being characterised by words like ‘Zionist people’, ‘agricultural lobby’, ‘political mentality’, ‘way of thinking’, ‘old hawks’, ‘collective punishment’, ‘excuses’ and ‘blame’. The question of security, the speakers agree, is being used as an excuse to justify all sorts of extraordinary measures by Israel vis-à-vis the Palestinians. Thus, the Palestinian water discourse strand ultimately accuses the Israeli Government of securitising all conflictive issues (Jerusalem, settlements, borders, right of return and water) in order to legitimise measures like blockings, checkpoints, military action and the construction of the wall. In the counter-discourse, on the contrary, this exact accusation is being interpreted as illegitimate and as, in its own way, politicising water—in any case as damaging for the peace process.

*israelis try their (1) BEST always (1) to (1) EXCLUDE the palestinians from any plans (1).*<sup>39</sup>

*some of the old hawks (1) you know still believe of the zionist mentality land and water you know you (1) you know ah (1) the way you deal with palestinians (1) a good palestinian is a dead palestinian you know (1) a good arab is a dead arab (1) as long as we have people who think that way there is no peace on the horizon and also from OUR side (1) those at least ah now pretending a-a minority (1) who believe that you know it's either us or them (1) no (1) ah this is not a world of exclusion (1) now it's a world of integration the world that you know(1) there's enough (1) open space there is enough land there is enough water for the two (1) nations to live side by side (1) next to each other.*<sup>40</sup>

*i think that (1) we NEEd to work on that [sustainable development, Anm. d. Verf.] (1) and if we don't yani (1) we are blaming the israelis about (1) but rather i think that we are not (1) dOIng (1) enOugh on our own(1) but we have to see (1) what needs to be done(1).*<sup>41</sup>

These fragments illustrate the described poles in the sub-topic *hydropolitics* and the intersection between them. While Israel is being demonised in the first fragment, the out-group's negative characterisation is being counterbalanced by a certain degree of self-criticism, even though this de-securitising move is weakened by depicting the conflict-enhancing Palestinian group ('those [...] who believe [...] it's either us or

them') as a minority. Overall, the speaker differentiates more, both with regard to Israeli and Palestinian society: in both there are groups which securitise water scarcity (or all conflictive issues) and those which de-securitise the resource. While the speaker considers himself part of the latter ('there's enough'), he still cannot free himself entirely from the mode which dominates the hegemonic discourse: accusing Israel. In contrast to this, the last fragment uncovers—in the sense of a counter-discourse—this kind of blame game towards Israel as a technique of avoidance and of diversion from one's own deficits.

In sum, there is a stand-off between perceptions of the conflict and its asymmetry as a win-lose or a lose-lose situation with the potential to be transformed into a win-win situation. The first option perpetuates conflictive discourse structures, since the perception of injustice—one loses what the other wins—exacerbates existing conflict lines and benefits the development of new ones. In the second case, the current situation is understood as a losing deal for both sides: through the enduring conflict, both parties basically hurt themselves. This is perceived as especially true in the case of water supply, since the regional water resources are transnational and thus require co-operative management. Here, there is a starting point for positive change: should the damage done by the water conflict become unbearable for both conflicting parties, it may become possible, from a constructivist view, to overcome old discursive structures without losing face and thus to reach a solution which is commonly perceived as just. With the quality of the natural water resources continually declining, this process is already underway on both sides of the divide, as the overall—albeit theoretical—agreement about the necessity of co-operative water management illustrates.

In the Palestinian hegemonic discourse, it is unsayable that a re-allocation of water rights would entail considerable effort for the construction of an effective Palestinian water supply system; not to speak of the potentially existentially threatened Israeli users who would be deprived of their current rights. Israel, in the Palestinian fragments, was primarily depicted as an abstract, homogenous, faceless mass, which only insists on control over the regional water resources out of spite, not real needs. This was underlined by the fact that most Palestinian interviewees were in regular contact with their Israeli counterparts, and explicitly excluded them from this 'other' Israel—and vice versa. Thereby, they illustrated the aforementioned second in-group/out-group frontier: water experts ('right' knowledge) vs. a supposedly ignorant mass ('wrong knowledge'). The out-group's fears and worries remained unsayable. Palestinian actions like suicide attacks were not mentioned; when Palestinian destruction of water infrastructure was admitted to,

accusations that this had happened on purpose were immediately and pre-emptively rejected, while at the same time all Israeli measures were considered deliberate.

Palestinian hegemonic discourse considered Israel to be solely responsible for the Palestinians' situation. Accordingly, Israel was presented as pivotal to all Palestinian suggestions to solve the conflict: Israel's public opinion needs to change, Israel needs to compensate the Palestinians etc. At the same time, already existing efforts by Israel to relax the water situation for Palestinians were being ignored or ridiculed; they remained unsayable. The Palestinians, in contrast to this, were perceived as entirely dependent on outside forces and only to a certain extent—if at all—responsible. This is interesting particularly with regard to the fact that Israeli discourse does not question Palestinian capacity to act, but on the contrary actively requests their taking on responsibility for the regional water resources.

In the Palestinian counter-discourse, in contrast to this, understanding and trust towards the out-group and critique of the in-group's actions was possible. Both conflicting parties were perceived as equals and 'equally human'; co-operation between them was identified as a prerequisite for solving the conflict. Palestinian hegemonic discourse depicted Palestinians as predominantly passive, dependent and broadly helpless spectators of the regional water management. In this way, they were relieved of all responsibility to act: all responsibility was being projected onto the out-group. This discursive pattern, which necessarily hinders conflict resolution, was only altered in Palestinian counter-discourse. There, Palestinians achieved the ability and duty to act, illustrated for instance by subject-object constructions. This kind of discursive empowerment results in two things: firstly, the hegemonic discourse structures need to withstand the inherent massive critique. By questioning the dominant communication pattern, the counter-discourse challenges the predominant self-image of Palestinian society as the victim of Israeli assaults. If this counter-discourse gained momentum, Palestinian society would have to reconcile the cognitive dissonance between the myth of the unjustly treated, mainly peace-loving and co-operative Palestinian and the corresponding myth of the lying, greedy and warmongering Israeli with reality. Palestinians would have to face their responsibility towards their own and the Israeli population and admit to past mistakes. On this basis, a de-securitisation of water (and other conflictive issues) would be possible.

Secondly, underscoring the Palestinian society's ability and duty to act results in discursive structures that no longer glorify the in-group, but render the latter both

vulnerable and changeable in the direction of co-operation. At the same time, any demonisation of the out-group decreases. In the counter-discourse, it was sayable that co-operation with Israel could benefit Palestinian society.

### *Discourse and security: conflict transformation through discourse transformation?*

In sum, the hegemonic structures of both the Israeli and the Palestinian water discourses mainly consisted of powerful conflictive communication patterns. These conflictive structures with their securitisations and exclusions hinder the solution of the Israeli–Palestinian water conflict, since they perpetuate the deadlocked conflict structures instead of opening up to more critical, innovative voices. This becomes particularly clear with regard to the perception of the respective out-group: in the Israeli hegemonic discourse fragments analysed here, the water quantity available to Palestinians was perceived as overall sufficient and expandable exclusively under the condition that it remains under Israeli control, thus letting Palestinian demands for more water seem unjustified. At the same time, the Palestinian hegemonic discourse fragments mostly featured the Israelis as a faceless, anonymous and hostile mass which maintains the occupation and the conflict with the Palestinians to satisfy its supposed greed and lust for war, without any interest whatsoever in solving the conflict. These rather stereotypical images of the respective ‘other’ were reinforced by explicitly excepting at least some of the ‘other’s’ water experts, who were considered a part of an ‘international in-group’ of water experts. By exempting them from the overall negative image of their fellow countrymen, they were depicted as the idiomatic exceptions from the rule. It was only in the respective counter-discourses that ‘the other’ was accepted with their needs and anxieties; this, however, is a vital condition for conflict transformation. Here (and only here), starting points for a communicative *rapprochement* of both camps, a prerequisite for renewed negotiations, became visible.

There was overall agreement in the Israeli and Palestinian discourse fragments, on a theoretical level, that the prevalent mentality of ‘us versus them’ does not make sense with regard to resources like water, since water ignores national borders and thus needs to be managed co-operatively. In fact, the idea of sustainability and environmental protection was widely accepted by both sides, as was the idea of co-operative water management as an overall goal for the region. But this general accordance was superimposed by the

conflictive discourse structures outlined above. These structures point to the obstacles which block the way towards more co-operative water management.

It may be feasible to develop and apply tools of 'discursive conflict transformation', which alter discourse structures in a way that lessens perceived threats and opens up ways to co-operate in spite of conflict lines which have developed over decades. Discourse alterations become possible on the basis of any perceived change of the conflict situation, both on the regional and the international level. Changes of the geopolitical, military or even economic conditions can have a positive effect on hegemonic discourse structures: 'Any representation which blurs the inclusion/exclusion boundary breaks down certainties constructed in the name of war and forms a counter-discourse which deconstructs and delegitimizes war and thereby fragments myths of unity, duty and conformity'.<sup>42</sup> Conflicts can be transformed when the respective viewpoints are changed in a way that makes them compatible again.<sup>43</sup>

Ochs et al. suggest that the ability of discursive performances to produce socially significant cognitive re-framings ('paradigm shifts') emerges from the process of co-narration: 'Audiences [...] co-own the narrative as an interactional product and [...] share control over cognitive and verbal tools fundamental to problem solving itself. Co-ownership [...] involves sharing control as well as a commitment, however temporary, both to the activities of co-narration and collaborative problem solving and to the product, that is, the story'.<sup>44</sup> It is thus the responsibility of each discourse participant to step into this ownership—including both the actual conflicting parties as well as all the other actors taking part in and forming the Israeli–Palestinian (water) discourse. This calls for initiatives at all levels of society, starting with schools and universities, civil society, NGOs and government institutions, to work together to continually and constantly put pressure on the hegemonic discourse structures and expand the spheres of the sayable through the abovementioned discursive empowerment. The political approach adopted by Salam Fayyad, prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, who has largely dismissed the perception of the Palestinians as entirely dependent on Israeli goodwill in favour of a more independent, autonomous approach to Palestinian affairs, illustrates the potential to achieve tangible results by transcending and changing discursive structures.

In a nutshell, the Israeli–Palestinian water conflict needs to be understood as a result of securitisation practices; at the same time, the relation of the conflict to world cultural frames such as 'sustainability' may help to transcend local conflict structures by rendering the resource less prone to securitising moves. Future research should concentrate on the



question of whether linking conflictive environmental issues to frames like ‘sustainability’ or ‘environmental protection’ can reduce securitisation processes in differing conflict settings, and how such a de-securitisation can be actively pursued. In any case, following John Vasquez, an analysis which is based on the discursive construction of reality has to assume, by its very own logic, that war, since it has been created by mankind, can also be ‘de-created’ or even extinguished by us.<sup>45</sup>

## Endnotes

1. Tajfel and Turner, ‘Social Identity Theory’.
2. Buzan et al., *Security*.
3. Ibid., 5 and chapter 2. The securitisation theory was first formulated by Ole Wæver (‘Security, the Speech Act’ and ‘Securitisation and Desecuritisation’) and has become an integral part of security studies. See Mauer and Cavelti, *Routledge Handbook*; Wæver, ‘Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen’; Gad and Petersen, ‘Concepts of Politics’, 316ff.
4. Gad and Petersen, ‘Concepts of Politics’, 317. See also Wæver, ‘Security: A Conceptual History’; and Buzan et al., *Security*.
5. Buzan et al., *Security*; Bonacker and Gromes, ‘Concept of Securitization’, 19.
6. Diez et al., ‘European Union and Border Conflicts’, 6.
7. A good overview can be found in Shuval and Dweik, *Water Resources in the Middle East*.
8. For instance by de Châtel, ‘Perceptions of Water’. See also de Châtel, *Water Sheikhs*. The author does not, however, provide any theoretical or methodological framework. Lowi, *Water and Power*; Sherman, *Politics of Water*; and Warner, *Images of Water Security*, underline the significance of perceptions of water for the Israeli–Palestinian water conflict, but do not offer a deep discourse analytical verification of this hypothesis.
9. Jägerskog, ‘Why States Co-operate over Shared Water’; Selby, ‘Joint Mismanagement’. See also Jägerskog, ‘Functional Water Co-operation’ as well as Selby, *Water, Power and Politics*, ‘Dressing up Domination’, ‘Governance and Resistance’ and ‘Geopolitics of Water’.
10. Zeitoun, ‘Violations, Opportunities and Power’, 222. Zeitoun works with Buzan’s securitisation theory (Buzan et al., *Security*) and points to a research gap which this paper aims to fill.
11. Even though this academic void has been identified early, especially in Political Geography. See, for instance, Emel et al., ‘Ideology, Property and Groundwater Resources’, 38 and 45f; or Ó Tuathail and Agnew, ‘Geopolitics and Discourse’, 191ff.
12. Naff, ‘A Case for Demand-Side Water Management’, 83.
13. Jabri, *Discourses on Violence*, 12.
14. See Hayward, ‘Environmental Science’; and Shellenberger and Nordhaus, *Death of Environmentalism*.
15. Jäger, *Kritische Diskursanalyse*.
16. Link, Jürgen and Ursula Link-Heer, ‘Discourse / Interdiscourse and Literary Analysis’.
17. Leont’ev, ‘Der Allgemeine Tätigkeitsbegriff’.
18. Jabri, *Discourses on Violence*, 134.
19. Jäger, *Kritische Diskursanalyse*, 158.
20. Rouyer, ‘Zionism and Water’, 5.
21. Bar-Tal, ‘Societal Beliefs’, 34.
22. Main topics are printed bold, topics bold and in Italics, sub-topics in Italics.
23. Such quantitative data can only give a rough indication of trends. This text does not claim to fulfil statistical, quantifying methods, especially since the different discourse fragments differ in length, often refer to more than one topic, and are of differing value for the stabilisation or creation of the water discourse strand. Since even the systematisation in topics and sub-topics is relatively arbitrary, these numbers are already interpretations. Jäger, *Kritische Diskursanalyse*, 330.
24. Capitals mark a loud voice; numbers in brackets count pauses in seconds. Interview 17 IL: Lines 117–127.
25. Interview 16 IL: Lines 235–245.
26. Interview 11 IL: Lines 402ff.
27. Interview 01 IL: Lines 113–144.
28. Interview 01 IL: Lines 181–188.
29. Interview 01 IL: Lines 243–253.
30. Interview 11 IL: Lines 510–524.
31. Interview 16 IL: Line 575f.
32. Interview 05 PAL: Lines 41–45.
33. Interview 08 PAL: Lines 38–78.
34. Interview 04 PAL: Lines 196f.
35. Interview 09 PAL: Lines 74–77.
36. Interview 14 PAL: Lines 213–253.
37. Interview 04 PAL, Lines 380–389.

38. Interview 02 PAL: Lines 478–482.  
 39. Interview 12 PAL: Lines 517f.  
 40. Interview 15 PAL: Lines 401–417.  
 41. Interview 08 PAL: Lines 147–152.  
 42. Jabri, *Discourses on Violence*, 7.  
 43. Buckley-Zistel, 'In-Between War and Peace'; and Diez et al., 'European Union and Border Conflicts', 4.  
 44. Ochs et al., 'Detective Stories at Dinnertime', 109.  
 45. Vasquez, 'War Endings', 672.

## References

- Bar-Tal, Daniel, 1998. 'Societal Beliefs in Times of Intractable Conflict: The Israeli Case'. *International Journal of Conflict Management* 9, 22–50.
- Bonacker, Thorsten and Thorsten Groves, 2007. 'The Concept of Securitisation as a Tool for Analysing the Role of Human-Rights-Related Civil Society in Ethno-Political Conflicts'. *SHUR Working Paper 05/07*. Available at: [shur.luiss.it/files/2008/10/shurwp05-07.pdf](http://shur.luiss.it/files/2008/10/shurwp05-07.pdf).
- Buckley-Zistel, Susanne, 2006. 'In-Between War and Peace: Identities, Boundaries and Change after Violent Conflict'. *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* 35(1), 3–21.
- Buzan, Barry, Jaap de Wilde and Ole Wæver, 1998. *Security. A New Framework for Analysis*. Lynne Rienner, Boulder, Co.
- de Châtel, Francesca, 2007. 'Perceptions of Water in the Middle East: The Role of Religion, Politics and Technology in Concealing the Growing Water Scarcity'. In *Water Resources in the Middle East. Israeli–Palestinian Water Issues—From Conflict to Cooperation*, eds. Hillel Shuval and Hassan Dweik. Springer, Berlin, 53–60.
- de Châtel, Francesca, 2007. *Water Sheikhs and Dam Builders. Stories of People and Water in the Middle East*. Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick.
- Diez, Thomas, Stephan Stetter and Mathias Albert, 2006. 'The European Union and Border Conflicts. The Transformative Power of Integration'. *International Organization* 60(3), 563–593.
- Emel, Jody, Rebecca Roberts and David Sauri, 1992. 'Ideology, Property and Groundwater Resources. An Exploration of Relations'. *Political Geography* 11(1), 37–54.
- Gad, Ulrik Pram and Karen Lund Petersen, 2011. 'Concepts of Politics in Securitization Studies'. *Security Dialogue* 42(4–5), 315–328.
- Hayward, Steven F., 2006. 'Environmental Science and Public Policy'. *Social Research* 73(3), 891–914.
- Jabri, Vivienne, 1996. *Discourses on Violence. Conflict Analysis Reconsidered*. Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Jäger, Siegfried, 2004. *Kritische Diskursanalyse [Critical Discourse Analysis]*. UNRAST-Verlag, Münster.
- Jägerskog, Anders, 2006. 'Functional Water Co-operation in the Jordan River Basin: Spillover or Spillback for Political Security'. In *Facing Global Environmental Change—Environmental, Human, Energy, Food, Health and Water Security Concept*, eds. Hans Günter Brauch, Úrsula Oswald Spring, John Grin, Czeslaw Mesjasz, Patricia Kameri-Mbote, Navnita Chadha Behera, Béchir Chourou, Heinz Krumpal, Berlin, 633–640.
- Jägerskog, Anders, 2007. 'Why States Co-operate over Shared Water: The Water Negotiations in the Jordan River Basin'. In *Water Resources in the Middle East. Israeli–Palestinian Water Issues—From Conflict to Cooperation*, eds. Hillel Shuval and Hassan Dweik. Springer, Berlin, 195–202.
- Leont'ev, A.N., 1984. 'Der Allgemeine Tätigkeitsbegriff' [The Common Term 'Action']. In *Grundfragen einer Theorie der sprachlichen Tätigkeit [Basic Questions Towards a Theory of Linguistic Action]*, eds. A.A. Leont'ev, A.N. Leont'ev and E.G. Judin. German edition edited by Dieter Viehweger. Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 13–30.
- Link, Jürgen and Ursula Link-Heer, 1990. 'Discourse / Interdiscourse and Literary Analysis' [in German]. *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik (LiLi)* 77, 88–99.
- Lowi, Miriam R., 1995. *Water and Power. The Politics of a Scarce Resource in the Jordan River Basin*. Updated edition. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Mauer, Victor and Myriam Dunn Cavelty, 2009. *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*. Routledge, London.
- Naff, Thomas, 1994. 'A Case for Demand-Side Water Management'. In *Water and Peace in the Middle East. Proceedings of the First Israeli–Palestinian International Academic Conference on Water, Zurich, Switzerland, 10–13 December 1992*, eds. Jad Isaac and Hillel Shuval. Elsevier, Amsterdam, 83–92.
- Ochs, Elinor, Ruth C. Smith and Carolyn E. Taylor, 1996. 'Detective Stories at Dinnertime: Problem Solving Through Co-Narration'. In *Disorderly Discourse*, ed. Charles L. Briggs. Oxford University Press, New York, 95–113.
- Ó Tuathail, Gearóid and John Agnew, 1992. 'Geopolitics and Discourse. Practical Geopolitical Reasoning in American Foreign Policy'. *Political Geography* 11(2), 190–204.
- Rouyer, Alwyn R., 1996. 'Zionism and Water: Influences on Israel's Future Water Policy during the Pre-State Period'. *Arab Studies Quarterly* 18(4), 25–48.
- Selby, Jan, 2003. *Water, Power and Politics in the Middle East: The Other Israeli–Palestinian Conflict*. IB Tauris, London.

- Selby, Jan, 2003. 'Dressing Up Domination as "Co-operation": The Case of Israeli–Palestinian Water Relations'. *Review of International Studies* 29(1), 121–138.
- Selby, Jan, 2003. 'Governance and Resistance in Palestine: Simulations, Confrontations, Sumoud'. In *Global Governance, Conflict and Resistance*, eds. Feargal Cochrane, Rosaleen Duffy and Jan Selby. Palgrave, Basingstoke, 118–134.
- Selby, Jan, 2005. 'The Geopolitics of Water in the Middle East: Fantasies and Realities'. *Third World Quarterly* 26(2), 329–349.
- Selby, Jan, 2007. 'Joint Mismanagement: Reappraising the Oslo Water Regime'. In *Water Resources in the Middle East Water Issues—From Conflict to Cooperation*, eds. Hillel Shuval and Hassan Dweik. Springer, Berlin, 203–212.
- Shellenberger, Michael and Ted Nordhaus, 2004. *The Death of Environmentalism. Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World*. Available at: [http://www.thebreakthrough.org/images/Death\\_of\\_Environmentalism.pdf](http://www.thebreakthrough.org/images/Death_of_Environmentalism.pdf) [Accessed 22 January 2012].
- Sherman, M., 1999. *The Politics of Water in the Middle East—An Israeli Perspective on the Hydro-Political Aspects of the Conflict*. Macmillan, London.
- Shuval, Hillel and Hassan Dweik (eds.), 2007. *Water Resources in the Middle East. Israel–Palestinian Water Issues—From Conflict to Cooperation*. Springer, Berlin.
- Tajfel, Henri and John C. Turner, 1986[1979]. 'The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour'. In *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, eds. S. Worchel and W.G. Austin. Brooks/Cole, Monterey, CA, 7–24.
- Vasquez, John, 1997. 'War Endings: What Science and Constructivism Can Tell Us'. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 26(3), 651–678.
- Wæver, Ole, 1989. 'Security, the Speech Act: Analysing the Politics of a Word'. Working Paper, no. 19. Center for Peace and Conflict Research, Copenhagen.
- Wæver, Ole, 1995. 'Securitisation and Desecuritisation'. In *On Security*, ed. Ronnie D. Lipschutz. Columbia University Press, New York, 46–86.
- Wæver, Ole, 2002. 'Security: A Conceptual History for International Relations'. Paper presented at the annual conference of the British International Studies Association, London School of Economics and Political Science, 16–18 December.
- Wæver, Ole, 2004. 'Aberystwyth, Paris, Copenhagen: New "Schools", in Security Theory and their Origins between Core and Periphery'. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, Montreal, 17–20 March.
- Warner, J., 2003. *Images of Water Security: A More Integrated Perspective*. Flood Hazard Research Centre, Middlesex University.
- Zeitoun, Mark, 2007. 'Violations, Opportunities and Power along the Jordan River: Security Studies Theory Applied to Water Conflict'. In *Water Resources in the Middle East. Israeli–Palestinian Water Issues—From Conflict to Cooperation*, eds. Hillel Shuval and Hassan Dweik. Springer, Berlin, 211–223.