At the Confluence:
Participatory Development, State-Society Relations, and Transboundary Water Management in the Kura River Basin

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Abstract

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The water sector is part of a larger impetus in environmental policy towards public participation, particularly as water management practices have expanded from purely technocratic approaches to include diverse stakeholders and societal groups (Brethaut 2016, Pahl-Wostl et al., 2007). In particular, broad stakeholder participation has been shown to help build regulatory success and legitimacy for multilateral donor-funded projects in international river basins (Gerlak 2007). Incorporating local stakeholders in project development and implementation has been described by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), a large multilateral financial mechanism promoting international cooperation on global environmental protection, as critical to the longevity and impact of projects related to the management of international waters. Public participation is also a key tenet of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM), a holistic approach to water management aimed at overcoming fragmented governance in the water sector and endorsed and pursued by multilateral donor institutions (Brethaut 2016). Evidence suggests, however, that local

stakeholder participation remains circumscribed in GEF international waters projects, despite the fact that such participation is considered essential for project sustainability, replication, and influencing government policies (GEF OPS3, Chen and Ganapin 2013).

If local stakeholder participation is so important, then why is it limited? More broadly, how are transnational development projects implemented locally? To explore these questions, I engage in an ethnography of a multi-year, multi-million dollar GEF-funded transboundary river management project in the Kura River Basin of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. My research aims to explain how local stakeholder engagement strategies in transboundary water management projects are negotiated between development actors and state-level actors across transnational, domestic, and local scales. I answer the puzzle of limited local stakeholder participation in GEF international waters projects by drawing attention to the role of side payments as the site of negotiation between state and development actors at the transnational, national, and local scales. Side payments – forms of compensation to induce an agreement or cooperation among actors (Schelling 1960) – either facilitate or constrain local stakeholder participation in transboundary water management projects depending on the state agenda and the capacity of development brokers to translate or obliquely include participatory strategies.

I argue that this process of negotiation has an important effect on water management in a transboundary river basin by affecting whether and how local stakeholders can engage with the river basin in ways that meet their needs for water, economic opportunity, health and safety. My conclusions contribute to an emerging literature on the effects of third-party intermediaries on state-society relations and natural resource management.

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Foreword

This dissertation tells the story of the Kura River Basin, but it does not begin with the Kura. Rather, like a migratory salmon (or a Caspian sturgeon, which would be a more regionally appropriate simile for the South Caucasus), this story begins in the sea before traveling upstream.

In the fall of 2002, I was a newly-minted college graduate living in Istanbul as a Fulbright fellow. Having always had a fascination with environmental issues, particularly in relation to water, I had received my Fulbright grant to research the international environmental law governing the oil tankers transiting through the Turkish Straits. I soon learned that the laws governing safe transit by oil tankers in Turkey, and the regulation of marine transportation through straits in general, was a critical part of a much broader body of oceans law. In the process of conducting my research, I was fortunate to meet an expert on international law and law of the sea, Dr. Nilufer Oral, and to work as her assistant in Istanbul for nearly three years. My exposure to the theory and practice of law of the sea through her mentorship was invaluable. We traveled around the world to attend various legal meetings and conferences relating to law of the sea and marine environmental preservation. I spent six months at the United Nations secretariat in New York, conducting legislative research on environmental preservation of straits used for international navigation for the UN Division of Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea.

At the time, I was an aspiring law student. I was fascinated by the development of law and policy to preserve the marine environment, particularly as the pressures of economic development and climate change continued to change the status quo – and to create additional legal challenges as a result. In Turkey, at the UN, and in my international travels with Dr. Oral, I listened to countless experts discuss existing and evolving legal frameworks for marine environmental preservation. Yet nearly every discussion, every UN resolution, and every article I

read essentially ended in the same way, which was something to the effect of: “The critical challenge of implementation comes next, which is beyond the scope of this (article/discussion/resolution).” It seemed as though the legal profession was handing over its baton to other stakeholders – the most visible ones being policymakers and international organizations – without addressing the most critical issue: the processes and actors on the ground that determined whether and how painstakingly-wrought laws would ever shape the status quo.

I became intrigued with the process of implementation for two reasons. The first was because the value of the massive scholarship and effort spent in negotiating and devising international law could only be realized through the process of implementation. The second was because most analyses indicated that despite having achieved formal international agreement on paper, the condition of the marine environment (and global environment, for that matter) continued on balance to decline. I couldn’t yet articulate the reason for the gap between the creation of international agreements and policies and the fact that these policies never seemed to be implemented on the ground as they were written on paper. It wasn’t solely an issue of capacity to act, as important as that capacity was, since even countries with high bureaucratic capacity are unable to implement environmental agreements to the letter.

This brought me to the question: what was implementation, really? Implementation of laws ultimately depended on the capacity and will of a plethora of stakeholders to translate laws into reality. I realized that the question came down to the complex and contingent processes of getting different sets of actors and individuals to do what law and policy says they should do, processes which themselves are filled with implicit and explicit contestation. I grew increasingly dissatisfied with international relations approaches in political science that seemed to ignore these processes on the ground. It was evident that I needed a different set of social science tools

to unpack this idea of implementation, and to understand how it worked – and often *didn't* work – in practice.

In my doctoral studies, I maintained my focus on international environmental issues related to water in Turkey and the South Caucasus, albeit with a shift from oceans to transboundary river basins. The switch to river basins uniting multiple riparian countries allowed me to explore a similar set of issues and actors that I had been exposed to in my previous work, while allowing for a smaller, more manageable set of states. Focusing on transboundary rivers also allowed me to maintain a stronger regional focus on Turkey and the South Caucasus/Central Asia in my work, which I was keen to do. When I delved into the literature on transboundary river governance, however, I found many of the same problems that had plagued my research on oceans law and policy. The literature on transboundary waters mainly focused on the process of creating agreements for cooperation between states, with a focus on the formal legal mechanisms established through treaty processes, as well as debates on water scarcity and security water wars, and technical approaches to improved water management.

Although there has been increasing attention paid to sub-state actors in transboundary water management and the effects of devolution of decision-making capacity to the local scale, few studies have connected sub-state actors and phenomena with the implementation of international political agreements on water management. In instances where there was a focus on the actors involved in implementation of agreements or water management principles, particularly at the local scale, this was often discussed in a way that bypassed the process of translating an international agreement to the local level, or focused on the outcome of the project rather than the broader political effects.

The dissertation that follows is my attempt to connect transnational policies and development projects to local implementation using a state-society approach, using the Kura River Basin as a case study. While I have benefited from the input of many individuals and sources in the course of my research, all errors and omissions in fact and/or interpretation are entirely my own.

Acknowledgements

It was in Joel Migdal's State and Society class that I first started reading the acknowledgements of books and realized that they offered fascinating insight into the life behind the words on the page. Since then, I have pondered what my own acknowledgements would contain. Once I actually tried to write, however, I found myself quite at a loss for words. I am overwhelmed and humbled by the outpouring of support I have received from so many people along my path to a PhD. What follows is a wholly inadequate yet heartfelt attempt to express my gratitude to those whose support, friendship, and love has helped to propel me forward and pick me up when I stumbled.

Scott Redford introduced me to Turkey in 2001 as the director of Georgetown University's study abroad program in Alanya, an experience which has had the most profound effect on my professional and personal life trajectory since then. Few people could have done such an excellent job of introducing Turkish history and culture to undergraduate students. The group of students with whom I studied have become lifelong friends. Our collective first experiences in Turkey were a series of unforgettable adventures. It was Scott who suggested I apply for a Fulbright to return to Turkey after college; that, too, was a life- and career-changing moment. I am deeply indebted to him, and to Tim Beach, for spending hours assisting me with my Fulbright application and for giving me the opportunity to do geomorphological and archaeological research in Turkey with them. Without realizing it at the time, my experience in the field with Tim and Scott was my first foray into ethnography.

The late Christopher Joyner was a tremendous mentor at Georgetown in the fields of international environmental law and law of the sea. Chris saw my passion for international environmental governance, particularly in relation to water, and gave me the chance to co-author

my first peer-reviewed article with him. There are not words to thank him for his encouragement and for the doors he opened to me. I wish he was still here so that I could nonetheless try.

It was through Georgetown that I first met Nilüfer Oral, who took me under her wing for three years as her research assistant at Istanbul Bilgi University. Without question, I would not be where I am today without her devoted friendship, mentorship, and the experience I gained working with her on marine law and policy in the Black Sea and Turkish Straits. I owe her a debt of gratitude that can only be paid forward. I have so many fond memories of our adventures around the world together, and she remains a role model to me for her selflessness, principle, and passion for her work. Emine Nur Diler, Figen Oğuztaş, and all of the members of the Sevgili family are among my adopted family in Turkey. I thank them for opening their homes and hearts to me hundreds of times over, and for making Turkey feel like home to me as well.

At Columbia University, it was a privilege to work with Stephen Hammer, who first gave me the opportunity to pursue an official career in research. I am deeply grateful to Steve for believing in me and for encouraging me to apply for a doctorate. Albert Bressand, the creative and visionary leader of our research center, encouraged me to develop my area studies interests and gave me the invauable opportunity to begin expanding my work into the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Astrid Benedek, Mirlyne Pauljajoute, Chantal Mbuyi, Sara Bryan Pasquier, Furhana Husani, Benoit Lefevre, Kamran Agasi, and Lily Parshall Wachter offered friendship along the way. Recalling Rana Duran's support, patience, and endless wisdom always makes me smile with gratitude. The late Etem Erol was a relentless champion of all of my Turkey-related pursuits, and I miss his friendship greatly.

At the University of Washington, I am honored to have had the chance to work with Reşat Kasaba, Joel Migdal, Jim Murray, and Scott Radnitz. Jim introduced me to the R/V *Knorr*,

fulfilling a lifelong dream, and graciously supported me when I first reached out about applying for a PhD. Though my subject has morphed considerably since the early days of my doctoral studies, I am grateful for Jim's continued support of my work. At critical junctures, I am thankful that Scott helped me to think practically about the work that I wanted to undertake. His insightful questions made me step back from the details and ponder the broader implications of my study. Reşat's thoughtful mentorship in Turkish Circle, in my academic work, and in my work within the broader Turkish community is one of the things that I will treasure most about my time at the University of Washington. Joel's deep commitment to excellence in research and writing, his patience and detailed comments on drafts, and his thoughtful approach to teaching have left an indelible impression on me of what it means to be a scholar and educator. I thank them all from the bottom of my heart for their guidance, time, and commitment – and for letting me go silent for long stretches of time as I pursued community work and grappled with translating my ideas into a dissertation.

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when I was at my lowest point. And I simply could not have asked for a better cohort-mate than Anat, whose sagacity and dry wit are a source of both deep admiration and stitches of laughter.

My work with the Turkish American Cultural Association of Washington during my time at UW was a true labor of love. In the four years I spent with the organization, I learned much about organizational leadership, about principles, and about doing what is right even when it's not easy. I am thankful for the many wonderful friends that I made while working with the Turkish community in Seattle, especially Ecem Ecevit-Pogge along with Steve and Karsu Pogge, the Soysals, the Sans, and the Aygüns.

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At the Azerbaijan University of Languages, I was privileged to receive private lessons in Azerbaijani over the summer of 2010 on a U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship. Sabina Aliyeva, Fiale Abdullayeva, and Irada Vahabova began as teachers and became close friends. The entire Sadrzadeh family opened their home to me that summer and again when I returned for my field research. I thank them for their love.

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I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Andrew Hudson at UNDP and Vladimir Mamaev at GEF for allowing me insights into work of international waters at the organizational and project level. It was with their blessing that I was able to conduct the research that I did. I thank them for their kindness and openness as I sought to learn about GEF International Waters, and for so graciously including me in the IW family.

I am not sure how to even begin to thank the Kura II Project team and the community around it, and specifically Ahmed, Maka, Tamuna, Farda, Anar, and Ayten, all of whom went out of their way to help me. Most of all, I thank Mary Matthews from the bottom of my heart. This dissertation would have never happened without the support of Mary, and words cannot express my appreciation and admiration towards her. What I thought would be a one-off conversation back in 2014 has turned into hundreds of hours of conversation and mentorship over the past four years. Mary has a gift for creating a family around her, and together with Bill Patrick she cares for every creature great and small – human and otherwise! She is a true role model and educator, deeply committed to her work and to the people with whom she works. Mary has taught me with generosity, candor and warmth. A doctoral student could not ask for a more precious gift. Again, I can only repay my debt of gratitude to Mary for her selfless support and friendship by paying it forward.

Lastly, I would like to thank those people who cheered me on from outside my doctoral work. Allison Porter, Stephanie Chamberlin, Nika Cull, Alexandria Walton Radford, Sarah Barger Ranney, and Meaghan Keeler Pettigrew are women I admire to no end. I am fortunate to have friends who patiently tolerate and forgive my disappearances for long stretches of time.

I met my husband, Can Cömertoğlu, in my first year of doctoral studies. He often jokes that he has only known me as a student and isn't quite sure what to do now that student life is behind us. He has observed and experienced my PhD journey more closely than anyone else besides me, remaining supportive through months of fieldwork and the inevitable ups and downs of dissertating. I am grateful to Can for his humor, his boundless and unconditional love, for allowing me to be a serial adopter of cats despite his severe allergies, and for being willing to embark on the adventure of building a life with someone who doesn't stay in one place. Zuhal and Bülent Cömertoğlu and Deniz Ünal have welcomed me into their family selflessly, unconditionally, and with much love as well.

Finally, my most profound thanks and love go to my family, and especially my parents Kathy and Frank Mitchell for their countless silent sacrifices, their constant support, and the freedom to follow my dreams, which I now realize was the ultimate gift. My grandparents, Peggy and George Walther, have been among my biggest cheerleaders in life and I owe my fascination with the environment to them. My sister, Kelly Sparkman, is a wise, hilarious, brave soul and soulmate. Sula and Ziggy (yes, I am thanking my cats!) always seemed to sense when a few cuddles were necessary. The adventure of rescuing Kismet from the streets of Baku as a kitten and bringing her back to the U.S. was a happy externality of my field work.

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandpa George Walther, better known as Papa, who passed away just as I was getting ready to leave for my field work. Papa always said that knowledge was power. May I use whatever power I have acquired for good, and seek ways to share with others the gifts that have been so selflessly given to me.

Note on Spelling and Transliteration

I have used a system of transliteration that allows proper names and places to be accessible to non-speakers of Turkish and Azerbaijani while still being recognizable to those with familiarity with the languages. I have therefore omitted most uses of the Azerbaijani letter “ə”, replacing it with “a” instead. I have also used the transliterated spellings which most often occurred in the project documents and texts I was using.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Aid is an intensely political act. My experience in the countries that I've worked in is that aid is 10 percent technical and 90 percent political. This is why better leadership in local management is crucial to success, because it's about how politics works on the ground.

John Davidson, Assistant Director General, AusAID[1]

The Kura River Basin

When floodwaters overtook the Sabirabad lowlands in May 2010 – located at the confluence of the Kura and Aras rivers in Azerbaijan – over 20,000 people found themselves displaced from their homes and their livelihoods. "The Kura River made us Internally Displaced Persons, not the Karabakh conflict," explained one woman through tears. "The water suddenly caught us… It was strong and no house could withstand it."[2] Thousands of homes were either submerged or destroyed, along with 50,000 hectares of farmland.

The floods were later partially attributed to an uncoordinated release of water from major dams on the Kura and Aras rivers at nearly the same time by both Azerbaijan and Iran, respectively. Since there are no formal mechanisms for coordinating between countries on transboundary river management in the South Caucasus, each country behaved independently with disastrous results. Even within the Azerbaijani bureaucracy, the hydropower agency responsible for reservoir management reportedly did not consult with other ministries involved in water management prior to releasing water from the Azerbaijani dam (Interview, July 2015).

Five years later in August 2015, I found myself standing in the Kura River Basin's dry riverbeds in Ismayilli, a region to the north of Sabirabad. I had joined a group of hydrologists doing

[1] Brookings 2011: 8.
[2] Muradova 2010.

a field study on the rapidly changing topography of several flood-prone tributaries in the Kura basin. As I observed the small settlements built right up to the edge of the expanding floodplain, I couldn't help but wonder what these communities might do in a disaster of 2010 proportions. I posed the question to an elderly woman fetching drinking water near the trickle of the river that remained in the summer month. She shrugged nonchalantly. The location of the settlements were clearly not a concern to her. "When it floods, we get drinking water from the wells in the village upstream," she said.

Less than a year later, when I heard that floods had inundated the İsmayıllı region in June 2016, my thoughts immediately returned to the woman wielding her water bucket. Was her home intact, her family safe? Were the upstream wells upon which her village relied in emergencies also under water? I had no way to know.

Figure 1.1 Fetching water from a Kura River tributary near İsmayıllı, Azerbaijan, August 2015 (Photo credit: author)

Too little water is as problematic as too much. Upstream in neighboring Georgia, the Ministry of the Environment noticed an unseasonal and otherwise inexplicable drop in the level of the Kura River in 2014. The decline had the potential to affect downstream hydropower generation and other competing demands on the river, such as irrigation for agriculture. It was eventually determined that water was being withheld in Turkey in order to fill the reservoir behind a new dam. The responsible Turkish ministry had done so without informing Georgian authorities. Lamented one Georgian water official, "We are trying to collaborate with Turkey, but it's really a problem ... due to [Turkey's] hydropower development."

The Kura River, which flows from northeastern Turkey through Georgia and Azerbaijan, is the most important watershed in the South Caucasus region in terms of surface area, water flow, freshwater ecosystems, and socioeconomic importance of the water resources (Kibaroğlu et al. 2005). The basin is a seriously degraded international river system which continues to be threatened by transboundary water management problems, including flooding, depletion of groundwater reserves and water pollution (Ibid). The headwaters of the Kura River rise in northeastern Turkey, flowing through Georgia and Azerbaijan before terminating in the Caspian Sea. Because the literature on transboundary water resource management in the region has overwhelmingly focused on the Tigris-Euphrates basin, the critical role of the Kura River Basin, particularly in Turkey, remains "understudied and barely considered" (Kibaroğlu et al. 2011, Lorenz and Erickson 2014). While the Kura may be understudied, it is not for lack of fodder. Over 60 development projects have been undertaken in the basin since 2005, with objectives ranging from fostering technical cooperation among riparian countries, to reducing the impact of flooding in mountain communities, to creating an NGO forum for environmental preservation of the basin.

Figure 1.2 Map of the Kura-Aras River Basin[3]

As evidenced by the stories above, the Kura River Basin is plagued by transboundary water management problems, including fluctuations in flow, depletion of groundwater reserves, and institutional fragmentation. These transboundary problems both impact, and are impacted by, local stakeholders in river management. Using a multi-country United Nations Development Programme - Global Environment Facility (UNDP-GEF) project in the Kura Basin as a case study, my dissertation explores the processes of negotiating a multilateral donor-funded project aiming to improve transboundary water management across and within Georgia and Azerbaijan. I use this case study to explore the puzzle of why local stakeholder participation[4] appears circumscribed in

[3] By Shannon1 - Own work, GFDL, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=48708140

[4] For the purposes of this dissertation, I define "local stakeholders" as including various and diverse types of communities and organizations, including NGOs, farmers, women, the scientific and technological community,

GEF international waters projects, despite the importance of such stakeholders' inclusion. My study specifically considers how negotiations between state and development actors, embodied by side payments, affect local stakeholder participation strategies in transboundary waters development projects.

At the Confluence: River management across scales

Managing transboundary river basins is a process which requires integrating information, policies, and actions across different scales, from the international to the national and local. As Abers and Keck (2009) explain,

> Water problems confound prevailing models of decentralization and local participation because both their causes and their effects are inexorably regional. Rivers connect cities to huge regions comprising nested river basins. Solutions often come from interventions outside the areas in question. […] This system thus seems better described by the term multi-level governance – a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers – supranational, national, regional, and local.

Much attention has been paid to why and how states cooperate to manage resources, and how transnational actors pressure and incentivize national governments to engage in such cooperation (Young 1999, Miles et al. 2002, Keck and Sikkink 1998). These studies focus on the process of establishing formal agreements and environmental regimes, but ignore the processes of negotiation involved in the on-the-ground implementation of these agreements. Particularly in the absence of formal legal agreements between countries, international donor organizations play an important role in the process of negotiating and implementing environmental cooperation between countries through development projects.

youth and children, indigenous peoples and their communities, business and industry, workers and trade unions and local authorities. This definition is drawn in part from the GEF Council's definition of civil society organizations (Council Document GEF/C.39/10/Rev.01).

My work explores the role of a donor organization in negotiating local stakeholder participation in water management through a political ethnography of one of the largest and longest-running development projects undertaken in the Kura basin – a United Nations Development Programme-Global Environment Facility (UNDP-GEF) project titled "Kura II: Advancing IWRM Across the Kura River Basin" (the Kura II Project). A multi-million dollar project which commenced in 2005 and is now in its fourth phase, the Kura II Project's objective has been to create a forum among riparian countries to reduce transboundary water pollution in the Kura basin, improve technical and institutional capacity for water management, control water level fluctuations, and facilitate local stakeholder participation in resource management.

Method. In the dissertation that follows, I attempt to explain the puzzle of limited local stakeholder participation through a political ethnographic approach. My work involves research, interviews and observation in the meeting rooms of ministries and development organizations, the villages of the Kura River Basin, the halls of international water conferences, and many conversations over tea as well as over Skype. My work offers rare insight into the day-to-day negotiations among development professionals and state actors as each group negotiates the outcomes of development resources on stakeholder engagement and water management.

My approach to exploring participation is unconventional in several respects. In addition to examining explicit stakeholder participation strategies formally embodied in the project, I consider how side payments *not* explicitly aimed at affecting local stakeholder participation nonetheless have implicit effects on participation. Furthermore, rather than focusing on local communities at the periphery of the state, as is often the case in studies using a state-in-society approach, I instead focus on the relationships between state actors and development actors at the very center of power. My reasoning for this is because I seek to understand the processes of project

implementation and the incorporation of local stakeholders as it is negotiated off of the official transcript of the project. It is these processes of negotiation that go uncaptured by other analyses of transboundary water governance, yet have important political, participatory, and water management effects.

The Kura II Project is a useful case study for examining participatory strategies in transboundary water governance in several ways. The first is that the project has an explicit stakeholder engagement component that embodies strategies for local participation. Secondly, the project's longevity in the region means that the development professionals associated with it have a broad and established network of relationships with actors at different scales. Thus, the Kura II project offered the opportunity to use ethnographic methods in order to understand how these networks, and the contingent processes of negotiations between actors, end up affecting my study's dependent variable: namely, participation strategies in a transboundary water management project.

The context of multilateral development projects and the GEF

Development assistance allocated to multilateral donor organizations continues to grow (OECD website, 2017). Funding to multilateral organizations reached $59 billion in 2013, equaling 28% of the $145 billion in total Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocated for the year. Over 60% of these flows were allocated to the European Union, the various divisions of the World Bank Group, and United Nations programs and funds (OECD 2015).

As funding levels to multilateral organizations reach new heights, there has been commensurate concern from donors, recipients, and donor organizations to ensure that aid dollars attain the development objectives they set out to achieve. Voluminous literatures exist on aid effectiveness, program design, and program monitoring and evaluation; equally voluminous

literatures exist on the repeated failure of multilateral organizations to respond to humanitarian, economic, and environmental problems facing large swaths of the global population. Meeting the needs of refugees, eradicating extreme poverty, and ensuring access to vital natural resources are development challenges that share a common element: they require multi-country collaborative efforts to design and implement solutions.

Environmental and natural resource management is an area where international cooperation is especially necessary. The effects of pollution often transcend political boundaries, as evidenced by global climate change. The effects of natural resource management in one country can have cross-border implications, as is the case with water resources straddling multiple countries. As a result, transboundary environmental issues are growing as a focus of multilateral donor organizations – especially as environmental concerns are mainstreamed into development cooperation and the effects of climate change are borne out globally (OECD 2015). While the founding of the United Nations Environment Programme in 1972 marked the beginning of multilateral donors' efforts to preserve the environment, environmental sustainability concerns are now being mainstreamed throughout the entire UN system.[5]

Background on the GEF

Funding for multilateral environmental initiatives in particular has grown over the past 40 years, with the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) providing billions of dollars in environmentally-focused multilateral aid (GEF website). The GEF is a multilateral financial mechanism promoting international cooperation on global environmental protection (Gerlak 2004). Since its establishment in 1991, the GEF has evolved from a pilot program in the

[5] See the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform website, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/unsystem/mainstreaming.

World Bank to an independent institution with 183 partner countries, 18 implementing agencies, including UNDP, and six focal areas.

The GEF was initially designed to provide new and additional grants and concessional funding to cover the "incremental" or additional costs associated with transforming a development project with national benefits into a project with global environmental benefits. While this is still a core part of its mission, the GEF's objectives have expanded to developing new institutional governance arrangements for environmental protection, thus representing a "shift toward a multilateral cooperative international development aid model" (Gerlak 2004a). As of 2015, the GEF had directly invested $14.5 billion dollars and leveraged an additional $75.4 billion in environmentally-focused aid funds, supporting nearly 4,000 projects in 167 countries (GEF Secretariat, 2016).

Funding for the GEF comes from 32 donor countries, with the largest donors occupying a permanent place on the GEF Council. Recipient countries for GEF funds are either parties to the aforementioned environmental conventions, or qualify for technical assistance grants from UNDP or World Bank loans (Gerlak 2004b:110). The present replenishment cycle for GEF, from 2014-2018, is $4.43 billion USD, the largest amount in the history of the GEF (GEF website, Funding). Significantly for the purposes of this study, GEF-funded projects must involve the public in project design and implementation (among other criteria) in order to be eligible for consideration.

The International Waters focal area: the puzzle of local stakeholder participation

International Waters (IW) is one of GEF's six focal areas for funding. The objective of the GEF International Waters focal area is to foster transboundary cooperation and trust-building between states through joint management of transboundary surface water basins, groundwater

basins, and coastal and marine systems. Over 20 years, IW has been the recipient of over $1.3 billion in GEF grants spanning 170 countries (Duda and Hume 2013).

Evaluations of GEF International Waters projects indicate that they are effective at increasing scientific knowledge and bringing together state-level stakeholders, within and across countries. The processes involved in developing projects draw bureaucratic attention to regional problems. Public participation is evident in the project design process and in the drafting of project proposals (Gerlak 2007); indeed, meaningful incorporation of local stakeholders in the project design is reportedly the best way to ensure continued local engagement in full-size IW projects (Interview, May 2016). According to implementing agency officials, broad public participation has been shown to help build regulatory success and legitimacy for international waters projects (Gerlak 2007:65).

While the GEF has filled a unique need in international development by helping countries meet their obligations to environmental conventions and facilitating regional approaches to solving environmental problems, it has also been criticized for its insufficient attention to increasing local stakeholder participation and civil society organizations in project development and implementation (Young 2002, Gerlak 2004, 2006a; Chen et al. 2013). According to Chen et al. (2013), the GEF process "still largely revolves around government actors only, and frequently lacks the participation of local communities and non-governmental actors in the process and ignores local, indigenous knowledge" (Chen et al. 2013:245). They further state that:

> Large-scale international waters management projects usually focus on fostering formal intergovernmental cooperation processes, which often lead to limited on-the-ground impact. In contrast, community-based international waters projects are often local, individualistic and stand-alone projects, lacking regional linkages and perspectives (Ibid).

Given the size and complexity of transboundary water projects, where much effort is necessarily spent on acquiring the political will among countries to collaborate, it is admittedly a Herculean task to incorporate local actors in project development and implementation. GEF evaluations have pointed to the frictions which can emerge when a multitude of local groups are given voice (Project Implementation Review of the GEF, 1997). And yet, as the GEF itself stated in its 1997 Project Implementation Review: "These problems [of stakeholder inclusion] do not argue for avoiding increased stakeholder involvement. On the contrary, resolving issues like these may well be essential for achieving long term sustainable development and global environment benefits. But they illustrate some of the complications more participative approaches can entail" (Ibid). This study aims to elucidate how participatory strategies are negotiated among development and state actors in light of these complications.

Development and State-Society Relations

Development objectives explicitly aim at changing the relationship between state and societal actors. One way that this change occurs is by facilitating local stakeholder engagement in water policy processes. This restructuring of state-society relations can take multiple forms: by creating institutions which improve public or private service provision to individuals and communities, through changing local behaviors, or by fostering greater local input in governance and decision making. Though there are notable exceptions, state leaders usually want to project an image of progress in these areas, or at least good intentions. Development projects are one way to achieve this image. From an instrumental perspective, development projects are a triple win for state actors: they generate prestige and attention, they bring in external funds, and they help states improve upon the status quo, at least in theory.

Development actors, in turn, need access to and the blessing of state actors. Given the political ramifications of development projects, and especially transboundary ones, projects must receive approval at the highest echelons of the state and must therefore mesh with state priorities. Yet development organizations have their own sets of interests and requirements for projects, reflecting donor priorities and global trends and targets that are not always congruent with state priorities. I focus on this process of negotiating and translating the terms of a development project in order to find a middle ground between actors' different interests. Gugerty and Prakash (2010) point out that non-governmental organizations, like private-sector firms, behave instrumentally: "[W]hile NGO actions are certainly informed by (liberal) normative concerns, NGOs also pay close attention to instrumental concerns that bear upon organizational survival and growth. They deploy resources in strategic ways and compete and cooperate with other 'firms' in the same industry" (Prakash and Gugerty, 2010:4). This same logic can be extended beyond NGOs to multilateral donor organizations. Like any large organization, multilateral donors have their own internal dynamics and power struggles. Their survival is contingent upon continuing to disburse money in the form of projects, as well as producing a narrative of success in achieving development goals.

The continual process of aligning state and organizational interests in pursuit of project implementation is complex enough at the single-country level. Securing mutual agreement between state actors and multinational donor organizations for a multi-country development project magnifies the complexity, creating an overarching layer of negotiation processes and power struggles at the international level. An OECD report on multilateral aid claims that "[m]ultilateral organizations are politically neutral conveners of global partnerships, vehicles for upstream pooling of resources, facilitators for multi-stakeholder cross-border operations, and setters of

global standards and norms" (OECD 2015). In the dissertation which follows, I demonstrate that multilateral organizations do indeed control massive resources; that they are uniquely positioned vis-à-vis bilateral donors to mobilize these resources for cross-border programs involving many stakeholders; and that these organizations do attempt to promote global standards and norms in the process. However, the practice of these organizations in convening global partnerships is anything but apolitical. The process of allocating and disbursing massive resources, of bringing together different state actors in formal partnership, and of appeasing stakeholders with different interests and power spheres is – as acknowledged in the quote at the beginning of this chapter – an intensely political act, contingent upon relationships between state and development actors. The unitary images of states and multilateral organizations perpetuated by publicity brochures, and reinforced by an international relations approach to political science analysis, belie the labyrinthine complexity and political negotiations necessary to simultaneously realize development projects at the international, national, and local levels.

The source of this complexity is multifold. The high-level ministers and negotiators involved in approving development projects at the state level are not necessarily those involved with developing and implementing a specific inter-ministerial work plan among mid-level bureaucrats and technical experts. Neither are the mid-level bureaucrats – with the needed technical knowledge to implement such a project – necessarily in regular contact with the local communities whose daily lives and practices are affected by the project. Beyond just the international-level negotiations, the allocation of resources and power among national and local-level actors is also political – rife with micro-power struggles and negotiations with gatekeepers,

and highly contingent upon personal networks and relationships.[6] Since state-level stakeholders are able to extract resources from development organizations, competition, negotiation and stonewalling ensues over access to these resources. Neutrality on behalf of development professionals is impractical, and sometimes downright impossible, if the objective of the multilateral organization is to secure approval for the implementation of projects which will then satisfactorily pass internal and external evaluation processes. How, then, is a compromise reached between the interests of the state and development organizations in project implementation, and how does this compromise end up affecting local stakeholder participation in water management?

Brokers, Translation, and Side Payments: A Theoretical Discussion

Mosse and Lewis' (2006) work on the ethnography of development shows that governance brought by development schemes cannot be imposed; such governance instead requires collaboration and compromise. Mosse and Lewis draw attention to the role of key individuals, which they call brokers and translators, which have the capacity to build connections across levels of stakeholders – both within development organizations and among the recipients of development aid – and translate and modify the terms of the development project according to the context.[7] As different state and societal actors compete and negotiate for development resources, the personal relationships of brokers are necessary to navigate through stonewalling and power struggles and create a project narrative that is satisfactory to all veto-holding parties.

Given the highly contingent nature of the brokering and translation process, it is unsurprising, even expected, that development projects rarely turn out as they are intended to on

[6] Mukhtarov and Daniell (2016) cite Sehring (2009) when referring to this process [of shaping institutions] as *bricolage*, or assembled practices which are contextual and devoid of pre-existing pattern.
[7] Mosse's ethnographic study of brokers and translators in an agricultural development project in India showed how success is produced through the creation of hidden and public transcripts. Yet Mosse's research was not a transnational project, and the focus was not on how state-society relations were altered by this project.

paper – even if the overall result is deemed successful by whatever evaluation criteria are being used. Much of the literature on development which explores project implementation does so by examining this process of *bricolage* in particular contexts, at times engaging in cross-country comparison (Fritzen, unpublished, 2014). Yet there has been surprisingly little overlap between this literature and political science approaches which could draw generalizable conclusions about the multi-level political dynamics affecting development projects – as well as the off-the-transcript effects of such projects. Likewise, there is limited political science theorizing on how the process of translating a development project from international agreement to local implementation affects state-society relations. These lacunae are especially surprising, given the local turn (Warren and Visser 2016, Smith 2008) in development theory and practice over the past two decades.

Weinthal's (2002) work on the Aral Sea basin most closely parallels the approach that I undertake in this study, although Weinthal takes an international relations approach to explaining why donor organizations failed to solve the transboundary water management problem causing the desiccation of Central Asia's Aral Sea. Weinthal argues that transnational actors induce cooperation among countries by negotiating with state elites at the international level while simultaneously engaging in domestic-level bargaining with a wide array of societal stakeholder groups (Weinthal 2002:60). This bargaining is conducted through side payments, or forms of compensation to induce an agreement or cooperation among actors (Schelling 1960). These side payments can take the form of technology transfers, cash transfers, or other non-monetary incentives to cooperation (*e.g.*, side meetings, inclusion in a working group, leadership responsibility). In the context of my study, side payments never imply corruption or otherwise unethical or inappropriate compensation. Beyond just looking at explicit participation strategies for local stakeholders in development projects, I consider the implicit, and sometimes unintended,

effects of side payments on participation strategies. Whereas previous scholarship in transboundary water management has described the role of side payments as compensating losing parties from the development project (Weinthal 2000), I instead argue that side payments tend to be allocated to the winners – namely, the state actors that benefit from the project and have the capacity to determine its success or failure.

The significance of allocating side payments to winners is twofold. The first is that side payments end up altering nodes and networks of power within the state in relation to water management, supporting key state actors in the pursuit of their broader domestic political agendas. The second is that side payments create an opportunity for state actors to affect local stakeholder participation strategies, either implicitly or explicitly. The dynamic process of negotiation between state and development actors over side payments sheds light upon the ways that participatory development strategies are brokered outside of the formal transcript of a development project. State actors, far from being the passive recipients of development aid, are able to support their domestic agendas through side payments. Development actors, in turn, engage in translation and creative reframing of participatory concepts into strategies that are palatable to state actors while still meeting donor objectives. The interaction between these two groups sets the stage for engaging local stakeholders.

Taking Weinthal's approach as a starting point, my research modifies her framework of analysis by adding a stronger focus on state-society relations (Migdal 1988, 2001). Combining a state-society approach with Weinthal's three-level games model calls attention to the multi-level bargaining process that occurs between different groups of actors and nodes of power. While Weinthal uses the three-level game model to explain her dependent variable of state consolidation, strategies for stakeholder participation are my dependent variable. I consider how the *process* of

bargaining between state and development actors reshapes the objectives and power of state agencies, development organizations, and other public and private stakeholders. I also build upon Weinthal's work on side payments as my independent variable, the intersection between the interests of the development professionals and the state-level stakeholders. Side payments are the window to the behind-the-scenes of the development project, and the evidence of the negotiations undertaken by the different actors. Side payments enable development professionals to produce success by enticing key state actors to acquiesce to the project, but can also produce unintended effects, particularly in relation to participation. Using a political ethnographic method, I explore the effects of these side payments, and specifically how their expansion outside the official transcript of the project impacts strategies for local stakeholder participation.

A political ethnography of the Kura II Project

By considering the role of development organizations in transboundary water management, my work builds upon a recent focus in state-society relations which considers the role of third-party intermediaries (Watts 2013, Belge 2013). Watts (2013) suggests that "instead of a two-way relationship between state and social actors, we need to move toward a triadic exchange among state actors, 'society', and intermediary political institutions" (Watts 2013: 30-31). In order to understand this triadic exchange, I use an ethnographic approach. As Schatz (2009) notes in his volume on political ethnography, "Research conducted at close range invites the researcher to 'see' differently: heterogeneity, causal complexity, dynamism, contingency, and informality come to the fore" (Schatz 2009:11). Indeed, my ethnographic work allowed me to see each of these elements in action.

The necessity of receiving both political endorsement and assistance with implementation of a development project allows state actors to use side payments in order to meet objectives that,

while potentially related to the project, are nonetheless not included in its official transcript. In line with Weinthal's findings, it is these side payments which make the project go forward; contrary to Weinthal's findings, however, I found that side payments were not benefiting the losers from the project, but rather the winners – the state actors with the most to benefit from the project's success. These state actors poised to benefit from the project also held de facto veto power over the project and were in a strong negotiating position as a result. State actors can therefore end up curtailing local stakeholder participation both directly and indirectly through the side payments they extract.

Development actors, however, are far from powerless in the negotiation with state actors. When it comes to local stakeholder engagement, much depends on the creativity, interests, and personal connections of the development brokers. While state blessing may be the *sine qua non* for the implementation of a development project, my research shows how the negotiation of side payments creates other opportunities for development actors to seek engagement of local stakeholders. My objective is therefore twofold: to explain the effects of side payments on local stakeholder participation strategies, and to explain how the process of allocating side payments affects state-society relations. Thus I highlight the dynamic processes of interaction between state and development actors, and how these processes change the strategies, power and interests of the groups themselves.

Out of all of the international waters projects that I could have researched, my decision to use the Kura basin as a case study was a decision borne out of three factors: my background in Turkish/South Caucasus area studies, the basin's conduciveness to comparative research design, and the serendipitous fact that the project leadership allowed me to accompany their team in the field for the Project Preparation Phase of the Kura II Project. What I thought would be a one-off Skype conversation with the Chief Technical Advisor back in September 2014 turned into

hundreds of hours of conversation over the course of nearly three years, both on the ground in Tbilisi, Baku, Istanbul, Stockholm, and the city of Athens, Georgia, as well as over the internet and telephone. I am indebted to the Kura II Project team for enthusiastically including me in the preparation and stakeholder engagement process for the third phase of the project, and to GEF and UNDP for giving me the freedom to candidly observe and analyze their work.

From a comparative research design perspective, the Kura Basin case is suitable in several respects. The first is that the countries in my study are all connected by the river basin itself. The physical linkage provided by the basin provides a common basis for comparison. Secondly, the fact that Georgia and Azerbaijan are part of the Kura II Project, while Turkey is not, allows for consideration of the impact of the project. Third, the natural experiment provided by the dissolution of the Soviet Union makes it possible to identify causal variables explaining the differences between Georgia and Azerbaijan in domestic and local contexts.

I was present and involved with the project preparation phase of the Kura II Project on the ground in Georgia and Azerbaijan, spanning from June to November 2015. I also spent an additional month in Georgia and Azerbaijan, and four months in Turkey in the spring of 2016. Being present for the project preparation phase was preferable to showing up during the execution phase – which commenced in March 2017 and will take a period of four years – because I would have only had the opportunity to observe whatever piece of the project was happening during my window of fieldwork. Furthermore, observing the project preparation phase gave me a window into the process of reviving relationships from previous phases of the project and establishing new ones, of development professionals presenting and negotiating the terms of the project, and of solidifying the approval of key stakeholders through side payments. It also gave me an overview of all relevant stakeholders within a short period of time. Because the Kura II Project's objective

was the implementation of policy recommendations derived from the scientific analysis which had come in previous phases, it was also uniquely insightful for me to be present during the project preparation phase, since it gave me a synopsis of the previous work that had been done. I had the opportunity to meet all of the key personalities involved in the project, and to observe development professionals, state bureaucrats, water experts, scientists, NGOs, and community members engaging in their craft. Over the course of my fieldwork, I conducted interviews and attended meetings with over 80 individuals in Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, as well as at global water conferences in Stockholm and Colombo, Sri Lanka.

I would have never been able to attain the elite access that I did in Azerbaijan and Georgia if I had not been allowed to accompany the Kura project directors to their stakeholder meetings, particularly within ministries. I was extremely grateful to have established a rapport with the project directors, who introduced me to stakeholders as a graduate student, providing me with instant trust on behalf of the actors with whom we met. In several instances, I acted as an Azerbaijani-English translator for the project leadership in their meetings with state-level stakeholders. The introductions provided by project leadership also enabled me to return to these stakeholders to ask follow-up questions on my own, as well as have those individuals act as "fixers" for further interviews. In Turkey, I mostly relied upon previous contacts from my experience as a researcher in oceans law and policy, as well as contacts through UNDP administrators. While I attempted to avoid the ethnographer's dilemma of becoming too close to one's subjects to be objective, I also do not pretend that complete objectivity is possible. It was the mutual trust which I established with my interlocutors that allowed me to gain the access and ensuing insights that I did.

As Schatz et al. (2009) note, political ethnography contributes to the study of power by allowing the researcher to observe processes and dynamics that are impossible to capture in individual interviews. Simply being able to be a "fly on the wall" (Schatz 2009) during meetings provided me insights into the way development projects become reality. Mukhtarov and Daniell (2016) are among the scholars of water and development policy who call for a larger role for ethnographic research to dismantle the black box of the work of water professionals in development policy. The work which follows casts light into that black box, contributing to the literature on water and participatory development.

Beyond just meeting with individuals directly or indirectly affiliated with the Kura project, my work also permitted me to establish contacts with a broader community of individuals involved in international development related to water and environmental issues. I was invited to Sri Lanka to attend the closed meeting of GEF International Waters experts, during which I had invaluable interviews with the leadership of GEF and UNDP in international waters. At World Water Week 2015 in Stockholm, where I was again invited by the Kura project leadership, I had the opportunity to broaden this network of water and development professionals even further, speaking with leadership from the U.S. Department of State, the IUCN, and the Stockholm Environmental Institute. These actors provided context to my observations in the specific context of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey, and provided useful feedback on my analyses and ideas. The information from these interactions permitted me to make more general observations about the connections between international projects and local actors.

Linking the domestic and the international: side payments across scales

Getting the multitude of actors germane to water management to negotiate with each other in a way which promotes collective decision making on water management is the primary

challenge of development projects. The 'nested governments' of which Abers and Keck speak may exist in theory, but not necessarily in reality. The 'territorial tiers' to which the authors refer are also not monolithic groups, but are categories comprised of multiple groups with their own interests, problems, power struggles, personality clashes, and day-to-day responsibilities. Absent some sort of emergency which creates an imperative for coordination, inertia is often the default, if suboptimal, state of affairs. The role of development organizations is to provide the external resources and expertise to create connections between these groups and across scales. I summarize the primary issues at the various scales below.

The national scale. The Kura II Project offered several key side payments to engender support among key state actors, which I discuss as case studies in individual empirical chapters. At the national scale, the most significant side payment of the Kura II project was supporting the environmental ministries with which the project was associated as they tacitly defended their particular agendas vis-à-vis other ministries. In Azerbaijan, the authority to manage surface and groundwater is distributed across several ministries, including the Ministry of Emergency Situations and the Ministry of Energy in addition to the Ministry of Ecology. All of these ministries are powerful in terms of their resources and in terms of the political connections between the President and the ministers who run them. Mid-level bureaucrats across ministries repeatedly lamented the lack of an internal domestic coordinating body on surface and groundwater management. The key bureaucrat with whom the Kura II Project was affiliated at the Ministry of Ecology was eager to have the Kura II Project help bring about such a coordinating body with the Ministry of Ecology at the helm.

In Georgia, the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources Protection was in a diplomatic dance with the Ministry of Agriculture, which wanted to avoid charging for water, and

the Ministry of Energy, which was interested in maximizing its ability to generate hydropower. Recent bureaucratic reorganization of the ministries had placed the Ministry of the Environment in a precarious position with respect to other ministries with a stake in water management, and it was particularly important to the Deputy Minister of the Environment that the Kura II Project help bolster his ministry's position. Because the Kura II Project was affiliated with the environmental ministries in both Georgia and Azerbaijan, the project maintained its endorsement through the side payment of tacitly supporting these ministries' particular domestic agendas while negotiating with other key stakeholder ministries germane to water management.

The link between domestic power struggles and local stakeholder participation lies in the priorities of the affiliated ministries. In short, securing local stakeholder engagement is not necessarily the primary concern with representatives of the ministries, who are concerned with higher-order political concerns. In a highly-centralized political context like Azerbaijan, where public participation in governance has not historically been encouraged and express permission must be given for interaction with representatives of civil society, the form and context of local participation is contingent upon the personal relationships and connections of development professionals and the permission of mid-level bureaucrats acting as gatekeepers. In development projects in general, restrictions on participation can result in one-off programs and technical projects in areas designated by state bureaucrats, creating an ephemeral type of participation not perpetuated outside of the particular project. In Georgia, where civil society organizations have flourished since independence, a different challenge exists. Highly-professionalized NGOs acting as de facto consultancies can co-opt the connection to local communities in a way that is expedient for development professionals as well as the state bureaucrats with connections to these NGOs. While these NGOs have institutional memory and continued connection to communities, using

such organizations as the primary form of local stakeholder engagement demonstrates how the definition of participation can be dominated by one particular local stakeholder group.

Consideration of the linkage between the local and domestic scales shows how official stakeholder engagement strategies of the Kura II Project reflected both domestic priorities and sensitivities, as well as the need to harmonize participation approaches across countries. Its emphasis on incorporation of non-political, non-controversial stakeholders is also reflected in the participation strategies emerging from transnational-level side payments.

The international scale. The major side payment at the international scale was the coordination of a meeting between experts in Georgia and Azerbaijan on the management of the Alazani-Ağrıçay underground aquifer linked to the Kura Basin, and straddling the Georgian-Azerbaijani border. In 2010, Azerbaijan completed construction of a $1 billion pipeline to provide drinking water to Baku from this aquifer. The pipeline was intended to provide 24 hour access to water for 75% of the city, which previously has not had universal access to municipal water. Georgian officials were concerned that water was being withdrawn at an unsustainable rate, preventing the aquifer from recharging itself, and that the future ability of Georgia to withdraw its rightful water from this aquifer was being compromised. These concerns were repeatedly expressed by Georgian officials during the preparatory meetings for the Kura II Project. Yet if one country were to request a meeting to discuss joint management of the aquifer, it would require formal coordination through each country's foreign ministry, which would both politicize the issue and slow down its resolution through bureaucratic processes. It would also require technical experts to spend additional time trying to make a scientific and technical subject digestible by non-technical bureaucrats. The preferable alternative for both parties was to coordinate a meeting of experts between the two countries as an add-on to the Kura II stakeholder negotiation meetings.

The development actors in the project were able to secure champions within the state ministries by offering this meeting a side payment, thus enlisting the political support of technical bureaucrats for further collaboration in the project. Arranging this meeting demonstrated both the project's value and the capacity of its leadership to be of use to its affiliated ministries at the international scale.

At the time of my research, environmental experts and local communities in Azerbaijan expressed strong reservations about the sustainability of the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer, and NGOs active in the area had received local reports of orchards and forests drying up due to a falling groundwater table. Because resolving the aquifer-sharing issue was a critical side payment to actors negotiating at the international scale, local implications and concerns about the pipeline were not discussed in the context of the negotiations. Because Azerbaijani NGOs must remain apolitical to be permitted to operate within the country, and development projects need state-level endorsement of the project to continue, direct engagement with the organizations expressing concerns was impossible. On one hand, the side payment bypassed local participation in a context where such participation would be useful to local communities and the project alike. On the other hand, the access provided to the development brokers allows for obliquely approaching local stakeholder concerns within the basin through the frame of science for governance, rather than a direct engagement of civil society actors on a contentious issue.

The Turkey question. Turkey, as an upstream country interested in safeguarding its unilateral water policy in the Tigris-Euphrates basin, has yet to engage in formal cooperation on water sharing with Georgia and Azerbaijan. Furthermore, despite the presence of local environmental activism and small-scale UN-funded programs in the Turkish portion of the Kura basin, these groups and projects are unable to connect with cross-border initiatives in a sustained

manner that would secure Turkey's involvement in transboundary management of the Kura. The addition of Turkey as a case study is instructive in two ways. One is as a control case, as a country outside of the Kura project, but nonetheless a country whose actions in water management are of concern to downstream riparian countries. The second is as an example of development organizations being able to foster local involvement in projects within the Kura basin while remaining unable to establish champions within the Turkish state for higher-order cooperation. The Turkish case reinforces the argument that high-level political support is needed for transboundary development schemes.

Conclusion

The objectives of development organizations may not match the objectives of recipient countries in transboundary resource management schemes. A middle road has to be found that preserves critical political endorsement while meeting the terms of both sets of actors. The puzzle is why local stakeholder participation remains circumscribed in GEF international waters projects, despite the value of including such stakeholders in devising and implementing water management solutions.

To explain this puzzle, I focus on side payments as the sites of negotiation between development and state actors. Weinthal (2002) argues that side payments are used to incentivize cooperation, and has identified side payments as being used to compensate the losers in the context of state-building. I, however, find that side payments are instead directed to the gatekeepers – those who stand to win from the new resource management arrangement but also hold the power to veto the project.

The significance of allocating side payments to winners is twofold. The first is that side payments end up altering nodes and networks of power within the state in relation to water management, supporting key state actors in the pursuit of their broader domestic political agendas. The second is that side payments create an opportunity for state actors to affect local stakeholder participation strategies, either implicitly or explicitly. The dynamic process of negotiation between state and development actors over side payments sheds light upon the ways that participatory development strategies are brokered outside of the formal transcript of a development project. State actors, far from being the passive recipients of development aid, are able to support their domestic agendas through side payments. Development actors, in turn, engage in translation and creative reframing of participatory concepts into strategies that are palatable to state actors while still meeting donor objectives. The interaction between these two groups sets the stage for engaging local stakeholders.

Compromise often has to be made in order to maintain the critical political endorsement at the right levels, particularly in a transboundary project where multiple players must be kept in the game. Development actors act as brokers to negotiate between levels to seek compromise between key stakeholders and translate the terms of the project. The answer to the puzzle of participation in GEF international waters projects therefore lies, in part, in how participation is framed formally, but also how stakeholder engagement is facilitated and/or impeded through side payments.

Structure of the dissertation

The chapters progress as follows.

Chapter 2 is divided into two parts. The first part provides background on the physical and political history of the Kura basin, with a specific focus on the history of transboundary water

management between Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. It explains the current problems with environmental degradation, fluctuations in water flow, and surface and groundwater management, and discusses how the current and previous phases of the Kura II project attempts to address these problems. The second part of Chapter 2 engages in a deeper theoretical discussion of state-society relations, the anthropology of aid, and participatory development. It situates my study within the extensive literature on transboundary water governance, while highlighting its contribution to presently limited body of ethnographic work on water-related development policy. It also further elaborates on how this study bridges a gap between political science and anthropological approaches in explaining the process of implementing transboundary resource management regimes, and makes an original contribution to the literature on third-party intermediaries in state-society relations.

The next three chapters present the empirical part of my research, and explore the overarching puzzle of circumscribed participation through an exploration of side payments. In Chapter 3, I explore how development professionals affect power balances and resources between state-level ministries in Georgia and Azerbaijan through tacit support for their affiliated ministry. I then explain how participation in the form of trainings and demonstration projects demonstrates a reframing of notions of civil society and participation in order to be palatable to state-level gatekeepers. In Chapter 4, I use the case of international negotiations between Georgia and Azerbaijan over groundwater use in the Kura basin to answer the question of how local concerns can be bypassed in the pursuit of high-level political support for development projects.

Chapter 5 is entirely devoted to Turkey, a silent yet critical player in transboundary water management in the Kura basin. Turkey, who controls the headwaters of the Kura, has been notoriously cautious in avoiding any transboundary agreements over water management in order

to not jeopardize its claims to water in the Tigris-Euphrates basin. Local-scale environmental initiatives in the Turkish portion of the Kura basin, funded by development organizations, are active in areas of relevance to the Kura II project. I ask why development professionals are unable to establish champions within the Turkish state despite their funding organization's involvement on the ground, and explore how the project attempts to offer other side payments to indirectly engage Turkish actors.

In Chapter 6, I reflect on the negotiations between development and state actors in transboundary water governance in the Kura River Basin, and how this confluence of actors and interests affects strategies for local stakeholder participation. I conclude with reflections on the broader implications of this study for state-society relations, development theory and practice, and natural resource management.

Chapter 2. Background on the Kura River Basin and Theoretical Framework

In a transboundary setting of a shared basin, barriers towards effective national and transboundary coordination are exponential. Failure to harmonize informed efforts at the local, national and transboundary levels will result in increased [water] insecurity across the basin.

Kura II Project Document (UNDP-GEF 2016c: 8)

"It's a shame, what we do to this river. Water is alive, you know. It transmits energy. I feel that sending polluted water to our neighbors sends bad energy throughout the region."

Em and I stood on the rooftop of a hotel in Tbilisi, where we were both attending a meeting on transboundary river governance hosted by the UN Economic Commission for Europe. We gazed over the murky waters of the Kura, which on this particular spring day was coursing rather lazily through the city. An experienced development professional with years of expertise on transboundary water projects in Georgia, Em often spoke of the Kura in terms of technical analyses and project documents. Hearing her talk about the river in emotional, almost spiritual terms caught me off-guard.

Upon returning to Baku, I related Em's sentiments to a close Azerbaijani colleague. Half-laughing, he replied, "Yeah, well, we used to say that we feel close with our Kura neighbors, because we grew up drinking their [excrement]." A bit of off-color sarcasm perhaps, albeit rooted in truth, since Azerbaijan meets nearly 70% of its freshwater consumption needs from the Kura-Aras basin. By the time the water reaches Azerbaijan, it has been polluted with untreated sewage from multiple upstream sites in Georgia – a sore topic in both political and practical terms.

Several months later in Turkey, a water expert and well-intentioned friend shook their head at me as I explained my dissertation topic and how I sought Turkish perspectives on how donor organizations facilitate transboundary cooperation. "But why are you spending your time on the

Kura? There are no problems with it!" was his reply. I pointed out that Turkey has plans to divert water from the Kura into the Çoruh River Basin and that this was a concern for Georgian officials. My friend politely dismissed this as a problem, as did a contact from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Rivers link broad geographical areas, but the viewpoints above demonstrate how perceptions of transboundary water management problems are inevitably a matter of local perspective. The previous chapter highlighted the importance of including local stakeholder perspectives in water management efforts, since these are the communities that bear the brunt of water management decisions. While the international donor community – and particularly the Global Environment Facility – may recognize the value of local stakeholder participation in transboundary water management, realizing such participation in a deep and sustainable manner is an elusive goal. This brings us back to the central puzzle of my dissertation: if local stakeholder participation is so important, why is it circumscribed? Particularly when the incorporation of local stakeholders is considered essential to implementation of water management programs, it is puzzling that these actors would be excluded by projects intended to benefit them in the first place.

The objective of the first half of this chapter is to provide background on the history of the Kura II Project and the physical and political history of the Kura River Basin, in order to explain the river's significance in the region and why the problems which plague it demand both international cooperation and local participation. In the absence of a comprehensive river basin management plan between riparian countries, development projects like Kura II provide resources and allocate side payments to implement Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM)

principles throughout the basin, a key tenet of which is public participation. I outline the explicit stakeholder engagement in the Kura Project.

The second half of the chapter transitions into the theoretical underpinnings of my study. I discuss how my work engages in discussion with literatures from the state-in-society approach to comparative politics, the ethnography and anthropology of aid (including participatory development and the notions of brokerage and translation), and side payments. My study makes several theoretical contributions. In addition to adding to the limited body of state-society scholarship on the role of intermediaries, as well as the ethnography of development and water projects, I revise previous work on transboundary river basins using the three-level games approach. Contrary to previous studies, my research shows that the allocation of side payments to state actors affects the image and practice of both the state and intermediary organizations and has important implications for participation strategies. The background provided in this chapter forms the basis for the three empirical chapters which follow.

Part I. The Kura River Basin: a physical and political history

The Kura River Basin is the main transboundary water system in the South Caucasus. Its surface and groundwaters provide the primary water source for hydropower, industry, agriculture, and municipal use in the riparian countries of Georgia and Azerbaijan (UNDP-GEF 2016c). Relative to these countries, the Kura has historically been of lesser importance to Turkey, the furthest-upstream riparian. This is because the smallest proportion of the river is located within Turkish territory and because the exploitation of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers has thus far been a higher national priority, though the Kura has always been an important water source within the eastern part of Turkey. As hydropower development and agriculture intensifies in eastern Turkey,

the Kura has recently acquired greater national attention and strategic value, with significant downstream implications for water quantity. This issue is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

While the focus of this research and the Kura II project focuses exclusively on the Kura basin, the Kura is hydrologically and politically linked to the Aras River, which flows to the south of the Kura and joins it in Azerbaijan, shortly before the rivers discharge into the Caspian Sea. The basins of the two rivers are often referred to jointly as the Kura-Aras river basin. This background discussion therefore includes both rivers and discusses broader Kura-Aras river basin before focusing exclusively on the Kura.[8]

Together, the Kura and Aras Rivers comprise "the most important watershed in the [South Caucasus] region in terms of surface area, water flow, socioeconomic importance of water resources and [the need for] preservation of freshwater ecosystems" (Klaphake and Kramer 2011:263). Azerbaijan alone meets 70% of its water needs from the Kura-Aras basin, but the water quantity and quality problems within the basin are profound. Wolf et al. (2003) go so far as to describe the Kura-Aras basin as "at risk" for conflict over water resources in the future (Klaphake and Kramer 2011:263). Before discussing the problems which plague the basin, a physical description gives a sense of the size and relative importance of the basin to its riparian countries.

Physical characteristics. The Kura-Aras watershed includes Turkey, Iran, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, and covers 64% of the territory of the South Caucasus countries of

[8] My decision to focus solely on the Kura basin was for reasons of practicality as well as research design. Conducting research in Armenia was politically challenging for me, given my extensive work in Azerbaijan and Turkey; conducting research in Iran would be virtually impossible as an American citizen. I also do not have local language expertise in these countries. Including the Aras basin in my work would be more comprehensive from a hydrological standpoint, and would account for previous phases of the UNDP-GEF project which included Armenia, but the latter country had already left the project by the phase during which I conducted my research. Since the Kura and the Aras cannot be entirely divorced from each other politically or hydrologically, however, I refer to the Aras basin and the Aras riparian countries as it is relevant to my work on the Kura.

Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The total size of the watershed is about 88,000 square kilometers, with a length of 1,364 km (Ibid: 264). Of the total water discharge in the basin, the Kura River is a larger contributer at 55%, while the Aras contributes 45%.

The Aras River (Araks in the Armenian language) originates in eastern Turkey, near Kars, and flows through the country for 300 km before forming part of the border between Turkey and Armenia, Turkey and Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan and Iran (in two places), and Armenia and Iran. The Aras joins the Kura near Sabirabad, Azerbaijan, 80 kilometers after crossing into Azerbaijan for the second time. The length of the Aras River is 1,072 km, with a total watershed of approximately 102,000 square kilometers.

The headwaters of the Kura River (Mktvari in the Georgian language, Kür in Azerbaijani) rise in Göle, near Ardahan, in the Anatolian highlands of eastern Turkey (Ibid). The river flows for approximately 210 km through Turkish territory before reaching the border with Georgia. The Kura then winds through Georgia for approximately 390 km, passing through the center of Tbilisi, where smaller tributaries caused disastrous flooding in the capital city during June 2015. Approximately 20 km before the border with Azerbaijan, the Kura accumulates more water from the Khrami river, fed by the annual spring melting of snowpack from the Lesser Caucasus Mountains to the south of the river (UNDP-GEF 2016c:10).

After crossing the Azerbaijani border, the Kura flows through the Şamkir and Yenikend reservoirs before reaching the Mingaçevir reservoir. Here, the Iori (Qabırrı in Azerbaijani) River and the Alazani (Qanıx/Ganikh in Azerbaijani) River join the Kura as tributaries, both beginning in northeastern Georgia and flowing into Azerbaijan. The natural confluence of the three rivers has been submerged in the Mingaçevir reservoir, the latter being a massive feat of 1950s Soviet engineering intended to control flooding and provide water for irrigation and hydropower

generation. It is the largest reservoir in the Caucasus, covering over 600 square kilometers, with a maximum capacity depth of 75 m.

The Alazani-Ganikh river basin – a subset of the Kura basin – is significant as the site of an important transboundary aquifer spanning eastern Georgia in the Alazani Valley and the northwestern part of Azerbaijan. Groundwater from this reservoir is used by both countries for irrigation and consumption, and the 260km Oğuz-Gabala-Baku pipeline was completed in 2010 to bring drinking water to the city of Baku. The challenges of managing transboundary groundwater resources in the Alazani-Ganikh basin are the topic of Chapter 4.

East of Mingaçevir, the Kura is fed by several more tributaries before its confluence with the Aras River in the city of Sabirabad. The Kura then flows another 60 kilometers before reaching its delta with the Caspian Sea. It is the third largest river to discharge into the Caspian, after the Volga and Ural rivers.

This physical description of the Kura-Aras basin gives a sense of the basin's size and relative importance to its riparian countries. Next, I describe its ecosystem characteristics and environmental challenges in order to further illustrate the necessity for coordinated preservation and water management efforts.

Ecosystem characteristics and environmental challenges. Beyond just the physical characteristics of the river basin, its ecosystem characteristics and environmental problems demonstrate the need for coordinated preservation and water management within the basin. The Kura river basin is home to a wide variety of climates, landscapes, and biodiversity (TACIS 2004, in Klaphake and Kramer 2011:264). Conservation International has identified the Caucasus ecoregion as one of the world's 25 biodiversity hotspots for its threatened local ecosystems and

high levels of species diversity (UNDP-GEF 2016c:10). Its banks are home to unique alluvial forests, particularly in Turkey, and the delta contains important wetland habitat. The river is also vital for the protection of the Caspian Sea's ecosystems, due to the amount of water it discharges into the sea (Kibaroğlu et al. 2011:367).

The climate varies across the basin. Annual rainfall generally declines from west to east across the basin, as do evaporation rates, which contributes to pollution levels tending to increase from west to east as well. Average annual rainfall is 500mm at the Turkey-Georgia border, but only 200mm in Azerbaijan at the discharge point into the Caspian Sea (Klaphake and Kramer 2011:264-265), contributing to Azerbaijan's perceptions of water stress in its portion of the basin. The Turkish portion of the river basin and Eastern Georgia are also quite dry (Ibid; UNDP-GEF 2016c:10). The combination of arid and mountainous landscapes and varied precipitation levels are the natural cause of large seasonal and geographical fluctuations in river flow, resulting in flooding, mudflows and droughts (Ibid). The challenges of managing flooding and mudflows have serious implications for local communities, and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Transboundary water sharing agreements. Having described the physical and environmental characteristics of the basin, I turn to the institutional environment which shapes the basin's governance. The relevance of the Kura basin as a case study is the fact that despite the importance of the river to its riparian countries, and the impact of these countries upon water quality and quantity, there is currently no formal basin-wide cooperation on the use of Kura river resources. Political relations between riparian countries in the broader Kura-Aras basin have contributed to limited cooperation in water management across countries, despite the water quantity and quality problems within the basin (Klaphake and Kramer 2011:263). Armenia and

Azerbaijan do not have formal diplomatic relations, nor do Armenia and Turkey. Relations between Iran and Turkey, and Azerbaijan and Iran, are also not characterized by deep cooperation.

In spite of the lack of formal cooperation, the entire basin is highly transboundary. The Kura and its main tributaries cover four border crossings, and four sections of the river form the border between two countries. In the Aras River, twenty minor tributaries either cross a border or discharge into the Aras where the latter serves as a border (Ibid: 264). In total, about 40 river segments or tributaries within the Kura-Aras basin have a transboundary element (Ibid; TACIS 2004). A regional approach to managing the Kura is therefore necessary.

Within the Kura basin, riparian country relations between Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan are generally amicable. Yet this has not given rise to anything more than rudimentary cooperation between the countries in the management of the basin, both formally and informally (Klaphake and Kramer 2011: 271). Political fragmentation after the fall of the Soviet Union meant that among the countries of the South Caucasus, water management of the basin – as well as hydrological and water quality data – became fragmented at the country level. As for Turkey's relationship with other Kura-Aras basin countries, arrangements convened during Soviet times, some as early as 1927, are still in effect with Georgia and Armenia as well as Iran (Ibid: 266, 271). Most of these historic agreements address hydropower infrastructure and water sharing on the Aras and its tributaries, since the Aras basin has played a more significant role in agriculture within Turkey (Ibid: 268).

Because of the lack of agreements, there is an opportunity for development organizations to facilitate cooperation in management of the river at the regional scale. Under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's (UNECE 1992) Helsinki Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, a bilateral agreement between

Georgia and Azerbaijan has been under negotiation, titled "Cooperation in the Field of Protection and Sustainable Use of the Water Resources of the Kura River Basin," but the signing has been stalled for years between both parties. The European Union Water Framework Directive and Floods Directive – aimed at reducing pollution, reducing transboundary flood risk, and increasing public involvement in water governance – is being implemented in Georgia but not Azerbaijan. The latter has chosen to abstain from formal participation in the Floods Directive as an expression of protest against the EU's stance on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and is reportedly only implementing EU best practices into its domestic legislation without formally signing on to the directive.

Turkey's role in management of the Kura has been barely considered in the water politics literature, despite the fact that Turkey controls the headwaters of both the Kura and the Aras (Kibaroğlu et al. 2011). Turkey was expected to be a project participation in the early phases of the Kura project, but pulled out prior to any formal participation, and has since engaged in a policy of bilateral management of transboundary rivers in place of regional initiatives.

This discussion shows how the lack of formal cooperation despite the highly transboundary nature of the river basin creates an opportunity for development projects to play a role in fostering and implementing cooperation in water management, across and within countries.

Institutional problems. The environmental challenges in the Kura are a manifestation of deeper-rooted institutional, technical, and capacity-building problems in water management. These core problems include the lack of data and data-sharing mechanisms, lack of a conjunctive management approach to surface and groundwaters, and the absence of local stakeholder input and involvement in water management. The five components of the Kura II project specifically attempt to address the problems discussed below.

1) *Lack of data and data sharing mechanisms, at the international and domestic scales.* While water quality is currently addressed at the national level, it would benefit from standardization at the transboundary level, access to reliable information for decision-makers, and information on the real cost of pollution in water and river systems on national economies (UNDP-GEF 2016c: 22-23). Open access to reliable and plentiful hydrological data is a problem throughout the basin, especially for groundwater monitoring and management. Soviet-era hydrological and meteorological stations fell into disrepair and disuse throughout the basin after the fall of the USSR, and Soviet data itself is sometimes missing, outdated, or simply inaccurate. There are no formal mechanisms for hydrological or meteorological data-sharing between countries, and sometimes even *within* countries, despite the fact that such data would provide critical forewarning of impending floods or water pollution to downstream communities and countries. Furthermore, disparate pollution measurement standards across countries complicate efforts at transboundary cooperation in water quality monitoring.

2) *Lack of conjunctive management of groundwater and surface water.* Despite the physical linkages between groundwater and surface water in the Kura basin – particularly in the Alazani-Ganikh basin, where the river is primarily fed by groundwater – the use of groundwater and surface water has not previously been considered or managed conjunctively within the basin. Part of this is due to a previous focus in the water management sector on quality rather than water quantity, while another part is the thus-far limited technical and financial capacity to engage in extensive underground water resource monitoring. The advent of water management approaches such as Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) and the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus have only

recently resulted in attention to the ecological and economic need to jointly consider management and exploitation of groundwater and surface water.

With the flow of the Kura and its tributaries becoming increasingly unreliable, exploitation of underground aquifers has become a more popular option for agriculture and municipal/household water consumption, also requiring less investment in water purification. Azerbaijan's billion-dollar Oğuz-Gabala-Baku pipeline is drawing water from the Alazani-Ganikh shared aquifer, which raised concern within Georgia over whether such use was sustainable and whether Azerbaijan was infringing upon Georgia's ability and right to exploit the water in the aquifer. This issue is discussed as an empirical case study in Chapter 5.

3) *Absence of local stakeholder input.* Traditionally, water and flood management in the South Caucasus has relied upon top-down, structural approaches with little focus on the role of local stakeholders in responding to and mitigating water management problems. In former Soviet countries, and particularly Azerbaijan, the role of local participation has not historically been on the radar of the state. Furthermore, while civil society organizations are generally free and prolific within Turkey and Georgia, this is not presently the case in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, as Lang (2014) notes, the participation of formal civil society organizations does not guarantee meaningful local stakeholder participation.

An extensive literature has emerged in the past decade on the role of social capital, community empowerment and local leadership in conservation and development programs, as part of a wider discourse on social inclusion as essential to equitable development and sustainable resource management outcomes (Warren and Visser 2016). Increasing the role of civil society through expanded public participation and empowerment is a key element

of a global strategy embraced by donor organizations, particularly with regard to commons resources like water (ibid). In some cases within the Kura basin, the flood data held within local communities was better than state-level data. In other cases, local land-use practices aggravated the human and economic risks posed by flooding. Both examples demonstrate the value of local participation in water management, both in project development and implementation.

Addressing Transboundary Water Management Problems in the Kura: A Question of Scale

When considering the aforementioned environmental and institutional problems, it becomes evident that the scale at which these problems originate often differs from the locus of where the problem is experienced. Some water quality problems are domestic and municipal-level public investment issues, such as the lack of adequate wastewater treatment plants and research capacity. Others are clear transboundary quantity management problems, with upstream countries exerting their sovereignty over withholding, diverting, and/or polluting river water. Yet others are the lack of cooperation among national ministries, and the ensuing turf wars between those ministries with a stake in how surface and groundwater is to be exploited within the country. Finally, some problems are caused by local practices, such as altering land cover through clear-cutting and building homes in flood plains.

For many – though not all – of these environmental and institutional problems, higher-order solutions than that of the individual are necessary. At the transboundary level, agreements on quantities of water sharing, on water quality standards, on regional ecosystem preservation and on data sharing would theoretically mitigate water management challenges. For pollution, domestic-level enforcement of standards for municipal wastewater treatment, additional public investment in wastewater infrastructure and private investment in technology upgrades would be

expected to make a difference in water quality. Improved land-use regulations coupled with enforcement could help to reduce the erosion and sedimentation which aggravates both flooding and drought. Regional and local flood awareness measures could temper the losses experienced when natural disasters strike.

Regardless of where the origin of the problem resides, those who bear the brunt of the environmental and water management problems in the Kura are almost always at the level of communities and individuals: the flood-prone village, the farmer using inefficient irrigation practices while local groundwater resources are drying up, the urban centers forced to exist under a permanent water rationing regime and the communities and individuals suffering the health effects of exposure to water pollution in the river basin. It is a relatively recent phenomenon to attempt to approach water resource management from a perspective that recognizes the need to integrate issues, stakeholders, and environmental processes across different scales.

Integrated Water Resources Management, or IWRM, is a management approach which attempts to achieve this integration. Though there is no single definition of IWRM, the Global Water Partnership's definition is widely accepted: "IWRM is a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems" (GWP website). From a hydrological perspective, IWRM is similar to watershed management, in that it calls for the "integrated use of water, land, and vegetation in a geographically discrete drainage area for the benefit of its residents, with the objective of protecting or conserving the hydrologic service which the watershed provides and of reducing or avoiding negative downstream of groundwater impacts (Lenton and Walkusky 2009: 17, in Mukhtarov 2009:2). Though IWRM draws attention to the fact that water problems are

interconnected, this approach does not address the question of how and whether the relationships between key actors exist to act upon water problems. Stated otherwise, water management problems are often a combination of a lack of attention to the interconnected nature of water resource management, as well as a lack of incentives to solve problems in an integrated fashion. Networks are needed between stakeholders at the international, national, and local levels, as well as across ministries and organizations.

It is these networks which development projects either explicitly or implicitly aim to build, offering outside resources as an incentive for state and societal actors to participate in integrated water management across scales. I now describe how the Kura II Project and its preceding phases have attempted to address the problems of transboundary water management in the basin.

Part II. The History of the Kura II Project

The objective of this descriptive section is to explain the history of the Kura II Project – the motivations behind the project, the previous phases of activity, and the various components encompassed by the current project. I then discuss the political and environmental context of the river basin in order to understand the problems which the Kura II Project tries to address, and why local stakeholder participation matters in this context.

The Kura II project, despite its name, is actually the fourth phase of over twelve years of involvement by UNDP-GEF in the Kura River Basin. From 2005 to 2007, the "Reducing Transboundary Degradation in the Kura-Aras River Basin Project" was undertaken, at a cost of 1.56 million. The financiers were GEF, participating countries, and the Swedish International Development Agency (German Federal Ministry 2010: 33). At this exploratory stage, it was

envisioned that Turkey and Iran would participate in basin-wide efforts to improve water management in the entire Kura-Aras basin.

The first full phase of the project, from 2008 to 2011, was the UNDP-GEF "Regional Partnership for Prevention of Transboundary Degradation of the Kura-Aras River Project." At this stage, both Turkey and Iran had elected not to formally participate in any donor-funded basin water management programs, and the target countries for the project were Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. The project budget was 2.9 million dollars, with the objective of maintaining water quantity and quality to meet the short and long-term needs of the basin ecosystem and the communities it encompasses (German Federal Ministry 2010: 33). The purpose of this project was undertaking a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA), a scientific approach pioneered by GEF to enhance transboundary cooperation in water management through a cooperative scientific process among riparian countries. A more detailed diagnostic analysis and the elaboration of a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) occurred from 2011-2014, through the UNDP-GEF "Reducing Transboundary Degradation in the Kura-Aras River Basin Project." The results of the Strategic Action Programme were then endorsed at the ministerial level by Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, beginning the process of developing and implementing an integrated approach to water resource management across countries.

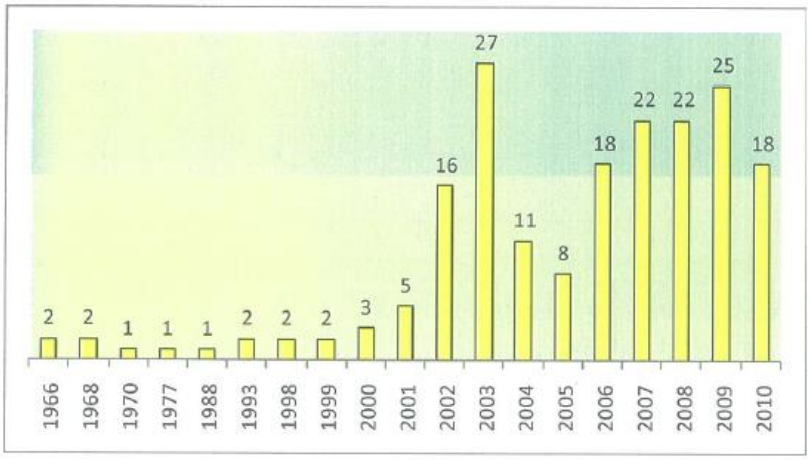
In the current phase of the project, known as the UNDP-GEF "Advancing IWRM across the Kura River Basin through implementation of the transboundary agreed actions and national plans" (the Kura II Project in abbreviated form), the Strategic Action Programme is being implemented in Georgia and Azerbaijan, with Armenia choosing to undertake implementation independently. The objective of Kura II is to strengthen and harmonize coordinated conjunctive transboundary ground and surface water management by a) addressing the priorities and needs

outlined in the SAP and b) implementing national-level Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) plans.

According to the results of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis, the Kura River's greatest environmental problems stem from increasing anthropogenic influence on natural processes already being exacerbated by climate change. These problems include variation and fluctuation in hydrological flow, flooding and climate change, ecosystem degradation, and deterioration of water quality. Each of these problems are linked to each other, and require multilateral, multi-stakeholder efforts to address them.

1) *Fluctuations in hydrological flows: flooding, drought, and climate change.* While flooding is not a new phenomenon in the Kura-Aras basin, the frequency and severity of floods is increasing as the effects of climate change become more pronounced in the South Caucasus. Though the Mingaçevir Reservoir was built to control flooding, it has not been as useful as expected in managing floods (Musayeva 2013). In 2012, flood damages in the region were estimated at $18-25 million annually for infrastructure alone, with disproportionate impact on inhabitants of poor, rural communities (UNDP 2012).

Figure 2.1 Number of Observed Floods in Azerbaijan by Year, 1966-2010 (source: UNDP 2012)



Accentuating the effects of climate change are anthropogenically-induced changes in water flow. Dams have been constructed throughout the basin to regulate flow and provide irrigation water, though such infrastructure comes with its own set of problems – such as uncoordinated management of reservoir water across different stakeholders, water-borne disease vectors, increased evaporation, inefficient irrigation practices, and threats to the integrity of the existing infrastructure caused by extremes in water levels. Changes in water withdrawals from the river due to increased hydropower development in and around the Kura basin within Turkey are a recent factor affecting water quantity. The Turkish portion of the Kura supplies 1 BCM to the Georgian border (Klaphake and Kramer 2011: 265), yet up to a reported 70% of this total volume is planned to be diverted by Turkey into the neighboring Çoruh River basin in order to increase the latter's hydropower potential. The transboundary challenges and local responses to the alteration of water flow from the construction of dams for hydropower development are discussed in Chapter 5.

The tendency to seek engineering solutions to controlling water flow has led to river bed excavation and lining in some locations, which also alter the course of the river (German Federal Ministry 2010). Erosion and sedimentation – aggravated by deforestation, changing land use practices and irrigation, and flood irrigation – indirectly change the course of the river and contribute to flooding and mudflows (Klaphake and Kramer 2011: 267).

The impacts of climate change on the Kura river basin are expected to cause greater variation at both extremes of hydrological flow within the river basin. Increasing temperatures will increase the rate of snow melt, causing higher water levels in areas fed by mountain rivers; in dry areas, however, water availability is expected to decrease

(German Federal Ministry 2010). In the Alazani-Ganikh and the Khrami-Debed tributaries to the Kura, climate modeling scenarios estimate that stream flow is to decline dramatically by 26-35% and 45-62% respectively by the end of this century (UNDP-GEF 2016c). The level of the Caspian Sea may also increase or decrease, affecting the Azerbaijani coastline and the use of the delta where the Kura flows into the sea (Ibid). Increasing reliance upon groundwater resources for irrigation and consumption purposes may also deplete these resources beyond their capacity to recharge, and may affect the water table in proximity to wells and aquifers. Chapter 4 uses the Alazani-Ganikh sub-basin of the Kura basin to discuss the issue of transboundary effects of groundwater depletion.

2) *Deterioration of water quality.* Water quality is linked to water quantity, as reduced water flow increases concentrations of pollutants in the river. Due to the aging and outdated industrial technologies still in use throughout the former Soviet part of the Kura basin, water extraction levels are unnecessarily high, as are pollution levels (UNDP-GEF 2006). Overall, the water quality of the Kura declines the further it travels downstream, affecting communities within and across countries (World Bank 2003). Water quality problems are caused most significantly by discharge of untreated municipal wastewater, agricultural fertilizers, and organic and heavy metal pollutants from industry (UNDP-GEF 2006). A stakeholder engagement survey, discussed in Chapter 3, attempted to gauge local perceptions of the severity of these problems as part of the Kura II project's formal participation efforts.
3) *Ecosystem degradation.* The change in hydrological flows and the deterioration of water quality, along with additional direct and indirect impacts of human activity, are the cause of ecosystem degradation within the Kura basin (UNDP-GEF 2016c: 23). Since the 1950s,

economic development in the Kura basin has paid little attention to the value of ecosystem functions and services (UNDP-GEF 2016c: 24). Human activities have caused the loss of natural filtering processes in key catchment areas, the loss of floodplain wetlands from the construction of dykes to create additional agricultural land, and degradation of the vegetation cover that controls erosion and sedimentation in the river. Changes in aquatic macro and microflora and fauna have also decreased the natural ability of the aquatic environment to regulate pollution (UNDP-GEF 2016c:23). Chapter 3 discusses the ways in which the Kura II project formally engages with local communities to educate stakeholders on sustainable land and water use practices.

To address the aforementioned problems, the Kura II Project has five components:

1) *Support for institutional governance protocols.* This component of the project assists Georgia and Azerbaijan on the formal harmonization of regional, national and local laws, policy and regulations within the Kura basin related to water and IWRM, including coordination with environment, agriculture, energy, municipal water and industrial sectors. Currently, both Azerbaijan and Georgia are in the process of aligning their policies with the European Union Water Framework Directive.

2) *Professional development and capacity building for water managers across sectors.* This component aims to strengthen the capacity of the institutions responsible for implementing IWRM in the sub-basins, countries, and at the transboundary level across sectors through providing technical trainings and study tours to different countries.

3) *Stress reduction measures in critical environmental areas.* This component includes the introduction of water-saving measures and technologies in the municipal and agricultural

sectors, pollution abatement plans, and small-scale river restoration demonstration projects in each country. The intent is that these demonstrations will be scaled up by the countries after the conclusion of the project.

4) *Stakeholder education and empowerment.* This component is of the greatest relevance to my study. Its objective is to facilitate local stakeholder participation in IWRM throughout the Kura River Basin via trainings and education for members of the public, academic exchanges and conferences, social marketing campaigns, awards for innovation in adaptation to climate change, and sharing learning experiences with other water professionals through GEF's International Waters knowledge exchange hub, known as IW:LEARN.

5) *Enhanced science for governance*. This component is designed to improve monitoring, data assessment and analysis systems in support of improved decision making, and facilitate increased exchange of information and analyses between sectors and countries for integrated water resources management.

Before delving into the empirical chapters which explore the puzzle of limited local stakeholder engagement in transboundary water governance, I now explain the theoretical basis and contributions of my study.

Part III. Theoretical discussion

My dissertation engages several threads of literature: transboundary waters governance, comparative political science with a focus on state-society relations, and the anthropology of aid with a focus on participatory development. As Barnes (2014) notes, although there is a large body of scholarship on transboundary water governance, much of it occurs at a single scale of analysis

(Barnes 2014: 27). At the international scale, a prolific literature has focused on the establishment of formal agreements at the international scale (Young 1994, Wolf 1994, Wolf 2007, Miles et al. 2002), the political dimensions of transboundary water governance (Biswas 1993, Allan 2002, Waterbury 1979, Strosser et al. 2017), debates over water scarcity and security (Postel and Wolf 2001, Wolf et al. 2003, Mohan et al. 2010, Katz 2011, Vener et al. 2012, Lorenz and Erickson 2014), and technical approaches to achieving cooperation in transboundary water management (Vener and Campana 2010). While this literature may be useful for explaining the international drivers of water governance, it glosses over the processes of negotiation among actors at multiple scales, both within and outside the state, that ultimately shape how formal agreements are translated into practice. In contrast, at the local end of the scale, increasing attention is being paid to sub-state actors and local communities in water management within particular locales, as well as the effects of "hollowing out the state" in the devolution of decision-making capacity to the local scale (Rzayeva 2013). However, few of these studies have placed these sub-state actors and dynamics within their broader national and international context (Norman 2014 and Norman and Bakker 2009 are notable exceptions).

Orlove and Caton (2010), as cited by Barnes (2014), write that it is no longer possible to study water without recognizing "the profound presence and involvement of the transnational community of water experts" (2010: 411 from Barnes, 2014: 19). These water experts represent an array of international development banks and donor organizations that command massive financial and political capital, thus making their effects an important subject of study. Most of this literature, however, ends up replicating the scale of analysis problem discussed above. Some of the literature addresses the role of international organizations in bringing about formal cooperation on transboundary water management (Gerlak 2004). At the local scale, critical development

literature problematizes and contests the effects of international donor organizations in solving local problems (Galvin and Habib 2010), challenging the notion that societal groups are the passive recipients of aid-driven policy. And yet, this literature does not explore the dynamic relationship between state actors, societal actors, and third-party intermediaries like donor organizations. How are state actors able to resist, reshape, and negotiate the terms of development projects, and how does this process change both the state and the development organization itself?

State-in-society and the anthropology of development

In line with how Migdal (2001:23) describes the state-in-society approach to comparative political science research, my ethnographic study focuses on the *process* of cultivating interactions between groups, rather than static and conclusive outcomes of these interactions. Similarly, my work rests upon the dual image of the state as both "(1) the powerful image of a clearly bounded, unified organization that can be spoken for in singular terms… and (2) as the practices of a heap of loosely connected parts or fragments, frequently with ill-defined boundaries between them and other groupings inside and the official state borders and often promoting conflicting sets of rules with one another and with 'official' Law" (Migdal 2001:22).

As Migdal notes, theories that only consider one side or the other of this paradoxical dual state either idealize the ability of the singular state-as-image to implement policy, or focus too strongly on the heterogeneous, multiple actors of the state-as-practice without considering how these practices shape the image of the state. Focusing on both sides is critical to my research because development projects refer to and reinforce the perception of states as unitary actors, whereas the process of negotiating implementation occurs within the networks linking the loosely-connected parts of the state. In Migdal's words, the dynamic process of interaction between groups

of actors at the state level and societal level "changes the groupings themselves, their goals, and ultimately, the rules they are promoting" (Migdal 2001:23).

There is presently a limited body of comparative political science scholarship using a state-in-society approach to consider the role of intermediary, third-party organizations, including within environmental studies (Hager and Haddad 2015). Watts and Belge (2011) draw attention to the lacuna in the literature on state-society relations regarding the role of intermediaries, and call for extending the state-in-society approach to a triadic conceptualization of state, society, and intermediary actors. Watts specifically describes intermediaries as "a third set of actors who transform the state-society dynamic from a two-way relationship to a more complicated triadic exchange of cooperation, co-optation, bargaining, and challenge" (Watts 2011). This triadic conceptualization of state-society relations focuses on the contestation and negotiation taking place between the various actors which compete for social and political power. She calls for a consideration of "intermediaries that penetrate and link both state and society and as actors who accumulate resources, offer spaces for the development of collective identities, produce new frames, and exert influence" (Watts 2011: 39-40).

While I embrace Watts' (2011) triadic conceptualization of state-society relations, I bracket my approach to the interactions between state actors and development actors, borrowing the notion of brokers and translators from the anthropology of development to explore these interactions. In my work, I also narrow the definition of intermediaries to international donor organizations.[9] My research highlights how donor organizations are characterized by the same fragmentation and multiple nodes of interests that characterize the state. I have chosen donor organizations because

[9] Lieberman (2004) does address international development organizations as intermediaries. His focus remains on how social fragmentation shapes state policies in response to the AIDS pandemic.

the massive resources that they command – and the political and social power that they wield through their disbursement of aid and technical expertise via projects – produce deeply contested development effects on the livelihoods of millions of people in developing countries (Vorholter 2012). Donor organizations also merit closer examination under a state-society approach precisely because they explicitly try to reshape the interaction between state and societal actors to bring about development outcomes, though this process is often wrought with unintended consequences.

A state-in-society approach which excludes focus on third-party intermediaries would attempt to explain why participation is circumscribed by considering how the complex interactions between state and societal groups impact participation. In the case of development programs, this approach overlooks the dynamism and influence of interactions between states and development actors in reshaping notions of participation, and how the negotiations of facilitating the inclusion of some and the exclusion of others. It also does not focus on explaining how these actors both affect and are affected by engaging with state and societal actors in an iterative process. My study therefore contributes to the state-in-society approach by extending the notion of the paradoxical dual state to the intermediary organization itself – a paradoxical dual intermediary. I attempt to go beyond the unitary organization-as-image to explain the heterogeneous organization-as-practice, while demonstrating how practices shape the image of the organization as well as the image and practice of the state – which in turn affects the relationship between state and societal actors.

Much of the rich literature on state-society relations has considered the unintended effects of policies and programs in the peripheries, among social actors outside of capital cities. For a study that considers local stakeholder participation as a dependent variable, this approach would seem logical. I, however, take a somewhat unconventional approach by focusing on the negotiation of development projects in capital cities, at the very center of state power. My justification for

doing so is threefold. The first is my hypothesis that interactions between state bureaucrats and development professionals play a critical role in shaping whether and how social actors are engaged in development projects in the name of participatory development. By unpacking the 'black box' of development and water studies through the interactions between state and intermediary actors, my work offers insight into how these actors mutually constitute each other, and how this in turn affects strategies and opportunities for participation by local stakeholders. Second, when considering the management of transboundary rivers, though scale may simply be a heuristic device to some degree, the politics of scale nonetheless matter and are made real by social production (Barnes 2014). State actors play an important and indispensable role in making diplomatic, technical, and infrastructure decisions in water management across and within political boundaries, the effects of which are borne by actors at the local scale. Though local actors are not without agency, local practices in water management are usually responses to regional or state-level action (or inaction). Third, in contrast to a literature that stridently critiques the hegemony of development actors over the targets of development, I show that state actors can wield great influence over the translation of projects into implementation strategies. This influence, however, is constantly negotiated by the process of brokerage and translation between state and development actors, which I discuss below.

Links with anthropological approaches: the anthropology and ethnography of development

Anthropological approaches dovetail nicely with the state-in-society approach, because as Migdal describes, a method is needed that carefully looks at the different parts and levels of the state and analyzes how these various components relate to one another – in spite of the fact that they are "often impelled by conflicting interests and pulling in different directions" (Migdal 2001:116). An anthropology of the state calls attention to the different forces that shape the

environments in which state officials wield their power, and thus sees the formulation and implementation of policies as "a set of different actions based on the particular calculus of pressures that each engaged component of the state faces in its particular environment of action" (Ibid).[10]

This study acknowledges the insight provided by anthropological approaches by embracing a different set of literature: the anthropology of aid and agencies, and participatory development. Independently, anthropological and ethnographic approaches to understanding aid, agencies, and development largely focus on the organization-as-practice and engage in evaluating the development outcomes in the particular context they consider. The problem with an exclusive focus on the ethnography of aid is that such a micro-level view of the project bypasses how development projects might affect the image and practice of the state, although Mosse and Lewis (2006:13) cite Bierschenk (2002) in calling for broader, macro-level comparisons which relate the ethnography of aid to state and social power. A notable exception is Ferguson (1994), who argues that development practices serve to hide and de-politicize state strategies of domination over societal actors.

Combining the ethnography of aid with a state-society approach calls attention to the conflicting interests, coalitions, and loci of pressure and support (Migdal 2001:116) that development organizations and actors are subject to, and how these actors – and the massive resources which they mobilize – thereby shape interests and alter the balance of pressures among different state-level stakeholders. In particular, Mosse and Lewis' work on the ethnography of aid

[10] Bierschenk et al. (2000), in their anthropological analyses of development, argue that development is indeed only possible in a post-colonial context, where institutions experience the same kind of fragmented social control discussed in Migdal's description of Third World governance.

calls attention to key actors which operate at the interfaces of state, development organization, and society: they call these actors brokers and translators.

The act of translation – which Mosse and Lewis (2006) define as "the mutual enrollment and the interlocking of interests that produces project realities" (Mosse and Lewis 2006:13) – is the process by which development projects "become real through the work of generating and translating interests, creating context by tying in supporters …" through the work of brokers (Latour 1996 and Mosse 2005, in Mosse and Lewis 2006:13). Mukhtarov (2009, PhD dissertation) applies the concept of policy translation in the water sector as the process of the travel and modification/interpretation of the concept of IWRM at the national level. My work takes this notion of translation beyond the national to the local level by considering the way the notion of participation is translated, both explicitly within the project and implicitly through the effects of side payments.

Defining participation and participatory development

The field of anthropology has shown a growing interest in the study of development organizations over the past two decades (Vorholter 2012, Hobart 1993). The use of anthropological methods to study the impacts of development interventions has helped show the significant and often unintended effects of development upon people and communities (Ibid). Studies have focused on the targets of development interventions and outcomes of projects (Mosse and Lewis 2003), but to date, there are few ethnographic studies of development organizations that can cast light into the black box of development organizations (Vorholter 2012, Bierschenk 2008:12, Mukhtarov and Daniell 2016). My ethnographic study therefore addresses an urgent need to explain the dynamic processes of development from the inside.

My study focuses on a particular element of the development organization agenda, and thus the development literature: the effort to include local stakeholders in participatory approaches to development (drawing upon the work of Chambers 1997). There is no single definition of participation in the development literature. It is precisely because of this flexibility in defining participation that development projects can have such flexibility in defining participation strategies, and thus meeting participation requirements.

Part of the process of translating policy down to local stakeholders is enlisting their participation in various forms. As noted by Brethaut (2016), public participation in environmental policy has garnered increased attention over the past several decades. The focus on participation in the water sector is due in part to a shift away from exclusively technocratic approaches to water management to the inclusion of societal actors and diverse stakeholders (Brethaut 2016: 293). The dominance of the IWRM paradigm in development approaches, which requires public participation in water resource management, has also facilitated the 'participatory turn' in water management. The Dublin Principles, formulated at the 1992 UN Dublin Conference on Water and Sustainable Development, state the following:

- Fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource, essential to sustaining life, development and the environment;
- Water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners, and policy-makers at all levels;
- Women play a central part in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water;
- Water has an economic value in all its competing uses and should be recognized as an economic good.

GWP/TAC (2000) describe these principles as the foundation for IWRM (as cited in Mukhtarov 2009).

Participation, however, can be characterized by a number of different forms. Brethaut (2016: 293) defines participation as "a mechanism whereby affected stakeholder groups that do not have the power to implement a decision are playing an active role in a decision-making process". He draws upon work by Ingold et al. (2010) and Fishkin (2009) to describe four modes of public participation in river governance. The first is *information*, or a one-way stream of information by decision makers towards affected publics. The second is *consultation*, where stakeholder views are sought, though not necessarily incorporated into decision making or implementation. The third mode is *deliberation*, where the input of concerned stakeholders is incorporated into the decision-making process. The last, most participative mode is *coproduction*, where stakeholders play a role in the entire decision making process through implementation (Brethaut 2016: 295).[11] I draw upon this continuum in evaluating the participatory approaches of donor projects in water management.

Participatory development is a branch of critical development studies which explores and challenges the role of local participation in international development. Part of this literature is deeply critical of participatory approaches as a form of top-down tyranny imposed on the objects of development by donor organizations and their professional cadres (Cook and Kothari 2001). The argument is that development outcomes are not necessarily improved by the incorporation of local stakeholders; rather, local knowledge and actors are instead manipulated to serve the ends of development projects rather than to actually tailor solutions to the communities the projects are trying to aid (Ibid; Mosse 2001). An alternative, less cynical view is that participation in

[11] In his study of river management in the Rhone, Brethaut goes beyond this continuum from information to coproduction, instead defining three criteria for the embodiment of participation in river management. *Social efficiency* considers whether participatory approaches affect stakeholders in an equitable manner, while *substantial efficiency* asks whether the involvement of stakeholders has a concrete impact on a given situation. *Procedural efficiency* examines the effects of participation on decision-making processes (Ibid).

governance must occur on a broader scale for development projects to be effective, involving "multi-scaled strategies that encompass the institutional and structural" (Hickey and Mohan 2004: 12).

The latter approach begins to call attention to the underlying goal of development programs to start changing the "social relations, institutional practices and capacity gaps which cause social exclusion" in governance processes (Ibid, 13). This is precisely the starting point of my study. When we consider participation requirements in development projects as part of a broader goal to change social relations, the political significance of a participatory approach to development becomes evident. The relevance of combining development studies and a state-society approach to comparative political science is in illuminating how strategies for participation in a development project both produce and are the product of broader political effects.

Transboundary waters, three-level games, and side payments

Up to this point, in discussing the social science approaches undergirding this study, there has been nothing specifically addressing its transboundary nature. Stated otherwise, the same methods, concepts and insights would be applicable to a single-country study and a comparative study of unrelated cases. What is unique about development projects in transboundary river basins is the additional layer of negotiations between state and development actors within as well as across political boundaries linked by water resources. The transboundary element of my study elevates the importance of state actors, due to the fact that diplomatic negotiations are involved, but also gives development actors additional leverage in these negotiations because of the need to maintain coherence across multiple countries.

We can observe how this process of negotiation between development and state actors happens through the distribution of side payments, or forms of compensation to induce an agreement or cooperation among actors that are not explicitly included in the scope of the development project (Schelling 1960). These side payments can take many forms: technology transfers, cash transfers, or other non-monetary incentives to cooperation (*e.g.*, side meetings, inclusion in a working group, leadership responsibility).[12] The side payments emerging from the processes of brokerage and translation are the 'hidden transcripts' (Scott 1990) of the project, the locus of negotiation between development and state actors.

When discussing side payments, the issue of scale again comes to the fore. Analyzing the local effects of transboundary environmental regimes requires integrating international and domestic level politics, since resource management policies are agreed upon at the regional level yet the task of implementation occurs at the local level. Putnam (1988) is known for linking the domestic and international scales by modeling international agreements as a two-level game, where negotiators use the threat of a domestic veto to gain leverage in international negotiations. Weinthal's study of the Aral Sea Basin (2002) alters this model by adding a third level for transnational actors, such as multilateral donor organizations. In the three-level game model, transnational actors "induce cooperation by negotiating with the dominant players (i.e. state elites) at the international level while simultaneously bargaining with a wide array of societal interest groups at the domestic level" (Weinthal 2002:60).

[12] Weinthal uses the three-level game model to show how development community side payments aimed at creating a water-sharing regime among Central Asian states filtered down to the local level, albeit in a way which preserved traditional networks of patronage created by Soviet cotton monoculture. The ultimate effect according to Weinthal was that side payments were used to create a resource-sharing regime that, in practice, has done virtually nothing to save the Aral Sea, a bit more to facilitate water use and energy resource sharing, and a lot to consolidate state power.

The reason that development actors can engage in brokerage and translation in the first place is because of the resources at their disposal, both financial and symbolic. Often, these resources are distributed in a way which is not reflected in the official transcript of the development project. Weinthal argues that this three-level game model of bargaining between domestic and international actors is conducted through side payments. She uses the three-level game model to demonstrate how regional development funds in the water sector helped newly-independent Central Asian states consolidate power locally in the Aral Sea Basin. Her conclusion is that local actors were able to co-opt side payments, allocating them towards the "losers" under the new, post-Soviet economic system and thus perpetuating the practice of cotton monoculture.

My study was largely inspired by Weinthal's work because of the similarities in what we each set out to do: address the role of development actors as third-party intermediaries integrating the transnational and local levels. Though her theory offers a compelling explanation for the particular geography and time period she discusses, and she makes an important theoretical advance by acknowledging and incorporating the role of donor agencies in transboundary water management through side payments and three-level games, her work nonetheless falls short of explaining the situation in the Kura basin. With Weinthal's model, we would expect side payments to be disbursed to those actors displaced by new water management strategies. Instead, my study reveals the opposite situation. Combining Weinthal's model with the state-in-society approach (Migdal 1988, 2001) and the anthropology of aid reveals that in the case of transboundary side payments in the Kura, through the processes of brokerage and translation, the side payments

instead go to the "winners" – those state actors in a position to benefit most from the development project.[13]

The revelation that side payments go to the winners is the key theoretical insight which helps to explain why local stakeholder participation in GEF international waters projects has been challenging to realize. For development projects to access societal actors, and ultimately change state-society relations in water management, the allocation of side payments must be negotiated with state actors. In the chapters which follow, I show how the notion of participation ends up being translated and creatively reframed in terms which are palatable to state actors; in other cases, I demonstrate how side payments negotiated with state actors can bypass opportunities for even informative and consultative participation of communities. Even when the latter occurs, however, the mere existence of the project creates opportunities for obliquely addressing participation issues. In the absence of state endorsement of the project, development brokers cannot engage in the distribution of side payments or connect with local communities, even if there are willing partners.

Conclusion

International cooperation through development projects is implemented locally through translation of the project to the local level. This translation occurs through the work of development brokers and their disbursement of side payments. Combining the notion of brokerage and translation with the state-in-society approach links the anthropological insights of the ethnography of aid, and the image and practice of the development project, with broader insights into the image and practice of the state. The linkages between the "loosely-connected parts or fragments" of the

[13] Additionally, we are not dealing with state formation any more in the post-Soviet context. While Weinthal uses side payments to explain her dependent variable of state consolidation, my dependent variable is strategies of participation in water management.

state are the brokers and translators of the development project. The interactions, conflicts, and negotiations between these various groups of actors representing the state and third-party intermediaries are thus the agents of change and mutual constitution.

The transnational level adds an additional layer of complexity to my work. Rather than solely looking at how development actors engage in brokerage and translation in a single-country context, I explore how this process occurs in a transnational context – where brokerage and translation is happening internationally as well as domestically. While I am not the first to do this – Weinthal's (2002) study of the Aral Sea is my precursor – I adopt a different dependent variable than Weinthal, whose study attempts to explain environmental cooperation in the context of state consolidation among newly-independent states of Central Asia. I instead examine strategies for local stakeholder participation as my dependent variable, in order to explain the puzzle of why participation in development projects is difficult to achieve.

As will be discussed in the chapters that follow, the process of brokering and translating participation results in creative reframings of the notion of participation, while at times side payments bypass opportunities for local participation. This entire process reifies both the image of the state and the development project, while the actual practice demonstrates the state's ability to resist and reshape the ends of development projects. In the next three chapters, I present my evidence for this argument.

Chapter 3. Brokering the Local: Domestic Agendas and Local Participation in Georgia and Azerbaijan

Active involvement of stakeholders from many sectors and levels of society in project implementation is considered critical to achieving buy-in for project processes and outputs, and thus an overall essential factor to the success and sustainability of projects like [Kura II]. The project will therefore promote and engage in the use of inclusive and participatory approaches wherever possible. Special attention will be given to fostering the involvement of women, local groups and communities that are highly dependent on food, water and income directly from the Kura River.

Kura II Project Document (UNDP-GEF 2016c: 98)

In June 2015, central Tbilisi experienced one of the most catastrophic floods in its recent history. Exceptionally heavy rains over a two-day period aggravated debris accumulation in large underground pipes, which normally re-route tributary streams to the Kura River away from the urban center. The effect was a sudden 30-foot wall of water that swept through a small valley in the heart of Tbilisi, at the intersection of a number of important arterial roadways. The flash flood destroyed homes, businesses, and transportation infrastructure, as well as the city zoo. In the aftermath of the disaster, the international media portrayed images ranging from the comically bizarre – such as a large hippopotamus roaming water-filled city streets – to heart-wrenching photos of the limp carcasses of drowned bears being lifted by cranes from the wreckage.

While the Kura has a history of flooding in Georgia, the magnitude and sudden nature of this particular event – combined with the carnage of charismatic megafauna – had especially rattled the population of Tbilisi. I arrived in the city for my research just after the historic flooding events in June 2015. The Georgia-based consultants affiliated with the Kura II Project were exhausted from participating in emergency flood relief efforts organized through an NGO network. According to the account shared with me, the particular NGO's response to the flood was swift

and professional, mobilizing to meet the needs of the affected population before any municipal-level flood response could emerge.

Highly-professionalized NGOs being involved in donor-funded water management projects, and in development projects in general, was a recurring theme throughout my research in Georgia. Financially dependent upon the donor community – and oftentimes under the leadership of someone with connections to the state – NGOs frequently act as a stand-in for civil society representation in development projects. Such an arrangement is beneficial for all parties: the NGO is able to raise its profile among state actors, and the development organization is able to meet its requirements for civil society involvement. Yet rather than restructuring the relationship between state and societal actors in water management – as is the theoretical aim of donor-funded projects – this arrangement can end up supporting the growth of NGOs with little to no grassroots connections to local stakeholders in Georgia, beholden to development organizations for their survival.[14]

The circumstances were entirely different in Azerbaijan. At the time of my fieldwork, formal civil society organizations had been subject to increasing government regulations, with many organizations closing down due to prohibitive registration requirements. The strategy of Azerbaijani CSOs, from the very small to highly professionalized local branches of transnational advocacy networks, was to remain as apolitical as possible in order to pursue their activities unfettered. In Azerbaijan, the dearth of highly-professionalized NGOs, with the exception of a few government-sponsored NGOs, required resourcefulness and creativity on behalf of Kura II project

[14] For this reason, some projects opted against extensive cooperation with formal NGOs, preferring to keep the analysis "in-house" rather than outsource to what many development professionals described as consultancies.

managers to establish some connection to civil society and to reframe notions of local participation and civil society in terms which were palatable to state-level gatekeepers.

This chapter asks how the Kura II Project developed strategies to meet public participation requirements despite varied access to civil society across countries. In Azerbaijan, where CSO activity is limited, development professionals must find creative alternatives in order for their projects to engage local stakeholders. Development brokers engage in translation to reframe the notion of "local" and "civil society" in terms which are politically palatable to state actors. In Georgia, however, the NGO community is both prolific and closely affiliated with both development and state actors. These highly professionalized NGOs can end up crowding out deeper forms of local stakeholder participation because of the NGOs' expedience and experience in helping development projects meet requirements for local stakeholder engagement.

Comparing the cases of Georgia and Azerbaijan highlights the gap between the homogenous image and the heterogenic practice of development projects, as these projects pursue strategies to restructure relations between state actors and civil society groups. My research indicates that donor projects tend to empower groups which are already close to or accepted by key actors within the state bureaucracy – albeit to different effect – depending on context, objectives of stakeholders, and the connections of brokers and translators. In Georgia, development projects often end up reinforcing what Lang (2014) terms the 'NGOization' of civil society, where organizations replace grassroots public engagement. In Azerbaijan, where civil society organizations are circumscribed in their activity, development projects translate notions of civil society engagement into terms that are amenable to state-level gatekeepers.

I begin this chapter with a background discussion of GEF's involvement with NGOs and civil society organizations, both at the Secretariat level of the organization as well as in the context

of GEF-funded projects on the ground. The chapter continues with the Kura II Project's explicit strategies for stakeholder engagement, explaining how these strategies were developed. I then transition into a discussion of how domestic-level side payments implicitly affect local stakeholder engagement through focusing the attention on the broader domestic agenda of affiliated ministries and reflecting these ministries' limited priority placed on participation.

This chapter's contribution to the overall dissertation is twofold. The first is that it presents the Kura II Project's explicit strategies for participation in light of GEF requirements and explains how these strategies reflect reframing and translation of participatory concepts by development brokers given the domestic context. The second contribution of the chapter is that it considers the implicit effects on participation by the allocation of domestic-level side payments. Both contributions help to explain the puzzle of GEF's limited engagement with local stakeholders by showing how formal efforts at participation can go "under the radar" when translated into trainings and information-driven modes of participation, and by explaining how side payments can deflect attention away from opportunities for local stakeholder engagement in cases when such engagement is not a priority for state actors.

NGO and Civil Society Involvement in the GEF

Given the state-dominated organizational structure of the GEF – as is the case with other large development organizations within the UN system – it is unsurprising that civil society organizations (CSOs) have historically demanded more explicit inclusion in GEF decision-making and project implementation processes. In 1995, civil society organizations were included in GEF governance at the Secretariat level through the creation of the GEF-NGO Network, now known as

the GEF-CSO Network.[15] This network acts as a mechanism to provide feedback and monitor the activities of the GEF. Its mission is "to safeguard the global environment through strengthening civil society partnership with GEF by enhancing informed participation, contributing to policy development and stimulating local action" (GEF-CSO Network website).

Regional NGO Focal Points also create a link between the GEF and country-level NGO communities through inclusion in GEF Council meetings and consultations, as well as formal participation in design, execution, and monitoring of projects (Brouder and Garreta 2009, 904-905). The Secretariat also engages with CSOs, particularly in connection with semiannual consultative meetings and discussions between civil society representatives, the GEF CEO, Council members and the GEF Agencies (GEF website).

The official rhetoric of the GEF is decisive in its call for civil society involvement in GEF projects. The New Delhi statement of the First GEF Assembly in 1998 emphasized that "the GEF should increase consultations with NGOs and local communities concerning GEF activities; GEF should develop and implement an action plan to strengthen country-level coordination and promote genuine country ownership of GEF-financed activities, including the active involvement of local and regional experts and community groups in project design and implementation" (GEF-CSO website). The GEF website (2016) further proclaims that "civil society organizations are key partners to the GEF, as they support the achievement of the GEF's objectives through their actions

[15] The GEF Council has adopted a broad definition of a CSO as "a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization that represents different major groups as defined by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 (Agenda 21, Chapter 23). This term includes various and diverse types of organizations, including NGOs, farmers, women, the scientific and technological community, youth and children, indigenous peoples and their communities, business and industry, workers and trade unions and local authorities" (GEF Council Document GEF/C.39/10/Rev.01).

on the ground and ability to leverage partnerships and resources." While the expressions of support throughout GEF literature for inclusion of local stakeholders are too numerous to recount here, the GEF is unquestionably on the record in its rhetorical demand for civil society involvement in its projects and internal governance processes.

The GEF's rhetoric does not always match reality, however. While there may be increased formal channels for NGOs to participate in the GEF Council and interact with the Secretariat in comparison with the pilot phase of the GEF, two problems merit attention. The first is that even if NGOs do have mechanisms for connecting with the major governing bodies of the GEF, the system tends to favor large, highly organized NGOs. These organizations are able to obtain funding from the GEF, generally avoid criticism of the organization (Andresen and Rosendal 2009: 22), and may not always have a direct connection to local stakeholders on the ground. Smaller NGOs are reportedly losing interest in working with the GEF, since they are unable to coordinate their positions and establish a coalition to influence the organization as do the large NGOs (Ibid).

The second, related problem is that NGO involvement within the high-level governance structures of the GEF does not necessarily translate into the involvement of local stakeholders in the development and implementation of projects on the ground. Not all recipient countries see civil society as useful, accountable or trustworthy, particularly if the governance systems in country in question are not highly participatory and/or place restrictions on civil society organizations. As one senior GEF official put it, "Some countries are deathly afraid of NGOs" (Interview, May 2016).

This brief discussion of GEF's history of interaction with CSOs highlights the problems of civil society representation both within GEF as an organization as well as at the project level. I now turn to a discussion of local stakeholder engagement in Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Brokering the Local in Azerbaijan

Nearly everyone I spoke with in Azerbaijan had either a quizzical or resigned look on their face when I asked about local-level involvement in water management. The Azerbaijani expert I was speaking to this particular afternoon smiled patiently and sipped her tea, though her eyes belied her weariness with the subject. "Involving local communities is very difficult. Water is seen as the state's responsibility. Local people don't care."

Seeking a more nuanced answer, particularly on the latter claim, I pressed her. "But *why* is it hard, especially when the effects of water management are so profoundly experienced at, and even to a degree affected by, the local level?"

"The people in local communities aren't used to being mobilized. They don't know their rights." And most significantly: "You have to get permission from ministries to work with local groups."

During this particular conversation, I did not bring up the topic of increasing restrictions on civil society organizations in Azerbaijan, though we were all aware of the situation. The NGO representatives I met with during my research – some of them leaders of long-standing organizations – had each reiterated the same message of difficulty conducting operations within the country, due to increasingly stringent regulations for registering NGOs with the government. The key to being permitted to operate was to be perceived as having a completely apolitical agenda. Ministry officials ultimately held the decision making authority over whether a project could collaborate with an NGO.

Another expert who happened to be listening to our conversation chimed in. "Engaging civil society in a [donor] project doesn't have to mean situating yourself in a local community."

Or working with an NGO, for that matter, as I would come to realize. “There are other ways to accomplish this.”

Over the months I spent trying to understand how these transboundary water projects were implemented at the local level in Azerbaijan, the conversations were variants of this same theme: finding alternative methods to fulfill the local participation requirement of development projects. Obtaining the state support to solve such problems, however, required striking a balance between GEF and Integrated Water Resources Management requirements for public participation while maintaining support for the project among state-level actors, who had different priorities for participation both across and within countries. In the next section, I discuss how the Kura II Project’s explicit participation strategies achieved this balance. I explain how these strategies reflect a framing of the notions of local stakeholder participation in a way which appeals to state actors, and why such framing was necessary in the first place.

Explicit Participation Strategies in the Kura II Project: local stakeholder engagement through trainings and education

One of the five components of the Kura II Project is Stakeholder Engagement and Empowerment. Within the stakeholder education and empowerment component of the Kura II project, the outputs of the project are 1) training courses for local-level stakeholders in IWRM principles; 2) the production of IWRM academic conferences; 3) social marketing campaigns to change behaviors of target stakeholder groups in line with IWRM principles; 4) local competitions and regional showcasing of local stakeholder innovations for climate change adaptation; and 5) publicizing lessons learned throughout all of the components of the project through the IW: LEARN website and conferences, IW:LEARN being a GEF hub for information sharing on International Waters projects.

The expat project leadership for Kura II brought decades of on-the-ground experience in the South Caucasus, a knowledge of local languages, a concern for behaving ethically and respecting cultural norms, and a keen understanding of how to delicately approach potentially sensitive topics for key stakeholders. They drew upon this experience in devising the stakeholder engagement outputs for the project. Regarding Output 2 and the academic conferences on IWRM topics, the focus on engaging academia was a strategic decision, a neutral way of incorporating a local stakeholder dimension into the project. In the previous phase of the Kura project, this approach resulted in the development of master's degree programs in IWRM at Baku State and Tbilisi State Universities. Rather than pitch this to state-level gatekeepers as a civil society initiative, however, it was instead framed as a capacity building measure, aimed at raising a new generation of local professionals skilled in water management. This in itself was a clever strategy. Lack of capacity was a near-constant complaint from development professionals, state-level stakeholders and GEF itself as a barrier to improved water management, meaning that such an initiative would resonate with state-level stakeholders as well as GEF.

Importantly, this strategy also leveraged the particularly strong connections between the project and academia in Azerbaijan while meeting public participation requirements through the engagement of students. In this latest phase of the project, promoting knowledge-sharing by highlighting the work of IWRM master's degree students from the project's previous phase, as well as by bringing together researchers and academics from across the basin on water-related issues, was a way for the project to engage with social groups in a completely apolitical way. The sustainability dimension of bringing together academics was another way that this approach appealed to GEF, whose evaluation processes for projects include how the effects of the project will continue after the funding has ended. In the case of conferences and academic programs, the

idea was that in theory, the connections and increased capacity between countries would perpetuate the benefits of the project after its conclusion in 2020.

In the Kura II Project, the key interaction with local stakeholders in the basin outside of academia was envisioned to be through the "training of trainers" in Output 1 – educating individuals that would, in turn, pass on information on Integrated Water Resources Management principles to their respective social groups. The project document allowed for flexibility in determining which groups would be included by stating that "Stakeholder groups to be trained *may* include academic institutions, NGOs, Water User Associations, River Basin Management Organizations, interested parties and local authorities, journalist organizations, women's empowerment organizations, youth organizations, and others" (UNDP-GEF 2016c: 76, emphasis mine). The challenge for the project was in making sure that the IWRM curriculum for each of these groups was relevant to local needs and experiences. The strategy of the project was to ensure the relevance of these trainings by hiring trainers both familiar with the groups' particular informational needs as well as how to communicate with the groups themselves. Journalists, for example, had a particular interest to visit a demonstration site to see the project in action on the river basin. Water User Associations and River Basin Management Organizations had a need for technical knowledge, and it was simple to use relatively technical IWRM curriculum for these groups. Combining journalists between the two countries was decided against, however, because of varying levels of press freedom and style of coverage on natural resource issues. The inclusion of women's groups, while reflecting the gender mainstreaming concerns of GEF, was expected to be more difficult to realize in practice since many formal women's organizations did not have a mandate that directly related to the Kura Basin or water issues.

In terms of connecting with NGOs, youth organizations, and local authorities, the fact that these organizations would be provided with training was also about as apolitical of an interaction as could be achieved. The inclusion of these groups in trainings reflected GEF concerns for the inclusion of civil society groups. In spite of this, formal permission had to be received in Azerbaijan to meet with such organizations ahead to time merely to discern their interests and needs. State-level actors would ultimately decide which organizations could be contacted for information collection, and which ones could actually participate in a training.

In Georgia, while meeting with such organizations was not a problem, a potential concern was that most highly professionalized NGOs were already aware of IWRM principles and didn't actually need an additional training on the topic. Smaller environmental NGOs, however, tended to operate intermittently on a contract basis and did not have staff available for trainings. Further creative framing would have to occur on behalf of the project leadership to make sure that trainings for NGOs were relevant and permissible. I asked the Kura II project leadership about whom their collaborators would be on these trainings and social media campaigns. "We will most likely work with NGOs," was the answer, albeit one that they carefully qualified. The project leadership was well aware of the 'NGO-ization' of civil society in Georgia, and of the lack of an organic grassroots connection between many NGOs and local communities. Lutsyevich (2013: 4) summarizes the problem below:

> It is because citizens do not know their local NGOs that they are reluctant to contribute their time or financial resources. Instead they mostly donate money to fellow citizens in need, supporting churches, monasteries, beggars and victims of natural disasters…. In Georgia, 83 per cent of NGOs report that they have never received an individual donation. The low levels of NGO membership are reflected in the volunteering numbers: only a third of NGOs in Georgia report having even one or two volunteers. Much evidence today suggests that in the course of the post-Soviet transitions, a rather elitist non-profit-organization sector emerged, which focused on professional consulting and service provision… [M]any NGOs sprang up in response to the supply of Western funding, or as spin-offs of various technical assistance programmes.

While it was too early in the project preparation phase to determine which NGOs would be collaborators on the training projects, the professionals most closely surrounding the Kura II project nearly all had some affiliation to NGOs with a history of service provision to the state. It was this characteristic which made these professionals effective brokers across a wide variety of stakeholders – not only did they have personal relationships with these stakeholders, but they understood their priorities, constraints, and discourses as well.

The most powerful individuals affiliated with these NGOs had previously worked for the state. These individuals had found a niche in either providing the technical assistance that ministries needed for the implementation of donor-funded projects or by using their connections to raise the political profile of particular environmental issues. This created a participation quandary: highly-bureaucratized NGOs were highly effective at working with state actors because of their previous connections but ended up being a stand-in for the participation of local stakeholders affected by water management issues in the Kura basin.

Both Outputs 3 and 4 – social marketing campaigns and competitions for showcasing climate change adaptation innovations – also strategically framed local participation in an apolitical manner while highlighting opportunities for capacity building among local populations. These strategies were a way for the project leadership to gain information about local happenings within the basin while increasing the focus of state-level bureaucrats on the local level, creating the opportunity for altering perceptions that "local communities don't care." State actors from the ministries affiliated with the project would also potentially have influence over determining which communities and innovations to highlight, again increasing the organic connections between state actors and local stakeholders.

For the last component of the explicit stakeholder engagement strategy, sharing lessons learned with IW: LEARN, this was a GEF requirement and a way for the Kura II Project to communicate its successes and insights to the broader GEF International Waters community both through articles in an online portal as well as by participating in international conferences and meetings.

Recalling the discussion from Chapter 2 of modes of public participation in river governance, the explicit participatory strategies of the Kura II Project focus mostly on *information*, or a one-way stream of information towards affected publics, and *consultation*, where stakeholder views are sought though not necessarily incorporated into decision making or implementation. While information and consultation are legitimate ways of engaging stakeholders, and may provide important sources of information to interested stakeholders while exposing state actors to some of the knowledge held by local communities, such strategies call into question the extent that state-society relations are actually changed by the presence of development projects in water management. *Deliberation*, where the input of concerned stakeholders is incorporated into decision-making processes, would imply deeper engagement with local stakeholders in the spirit of "active involvement" described in the quote at the beginning of this chapter.

The significance of this discussion is that it shows how development brokers' accommodation of – and negotiation with – state actors and interests ends up shaping modes of participation in a GEF International Waters project. Because of the need to remain apolitical and technical, participation strategies in the Kura II Project focused on trainings and academia. Engagement with formal civil society organizations is either entirely controlled by the state in Azerbaijan, or dominated by highly professionalized organizations with minimal grassroots connections in Georgia. Social marketing campaigns and competitions created the context for state

actors to learn more about the activities of local communities, though without an imperative to necessarily engage in deliberative engagement strategies. Having understood the process through which the explicit participation strategies for the Kura II Project were elaborated, the challenges of achieving deeper modes of participation in GEF projects – and the degree to which state actors and interests affect participatory strategies – starts to become evident.

One could also question whether a one-off training can be considered as truly participatory. I argue that this depends on the extent that information provided to stakeholders is relevant and accessible, and to the extent that information acquired from participants is incorporated into decision making practices and a sustained relationship outside of the training. In the context of a different development project not affiliated with Kura II, I had the opportunity to observe a community training, held in the Gabala region of Azerbaijan and facilitated by international consultants as well as local staff. This was a one-day workshop, where local government contacts and representatives of the general public within the northern part of the Kura basin were invited to attend by the project managers. There were approximately 80 attendees, six of whom were women.

Special attention had been placed on ensuring that women attended the meeting, reflecting gender mainstreaming priorities. The first part of the day involved presentations by international consultants on the effects of climate change on water resources in Azerbaijan, followed by roundtables in the afternoon where the local participants provided feedback on how climate change was impacting water resources in their community in terms of drought and flooding events.

During my previous interviews with the project leadership in Azerbaijan – which was based at a government ministry and combined both international consultants and mid-level national bureaucrats – I was informed that these trainings with local community members had been very useful in obtaining more accurate information about the locations of previous floods than that

which existed in other official records and meteorological data. The data provided by the communities had been used to develop more accurate flood plain mapping. I considered this to be an excellent example of local input trickling up to a higher level of decision making, and was interested in the way that the same participants were being engaged again. I was curious how these participation modes of information and consultation would continue at this year's training.

I was placed at the women's discussion group table. The handful of women present were teachers, doctors, artists, and housewives. They had no professional background in water issues, which in itself wasn't a problem; they had a keen practical knowledge of their environment and community needs. They had attended the previous year's meeting for the flood project and were invited to participate again, yet it soon became clear that they had missed the objective of this year's presentations and the discussion. My observation from their discussion was that they found the information presented by the consultants in the morning session to be esoteric, and they had difficulty both understanding and explaining how climate change *per se* was impacting the water resources in their village. When I asked them how water level fluctuation had impacted them in the past, one told a story of her family's fruit orchards being swept away in a flood; another talked of how they would have to obtain water from upstream villages when drought affected her community's access to water. When I framed the issue as one of access to water, they understood the point of the discussion. The notion of climate change adaptation, however, was not something they understood.

When listening to the interventions from the rest of the small groups, most of which were comprised of local government officials and individuals involved in water management, it was evident that many of the other groups also found the presentation material difficult to understand; they spoke of needing additional funding support for structural measures to manage flooding and

drought, such as reservoirs and walls, although the objective of the training had been to encourage water users to move away from purely structural solutions to flood and drought management. The connection between integrated water resource management principles discussed at the national and transnational level was all but lost. Nonetheless, the feedback of the different groups were noted, and the groups were told by the project coordinators – some of who worked at a national government ministry – that their comments would be taken into account as the project continued to try to improve flood management and response mechanisms in this particular region.

In debriefing after the meeting with the international consultants running the project, none of which spoke any locally-understood language (Azerbaijani or Russian), they were surprised to hear my observation that there seemed to be a profound disconnect between the information that was presented in their training during the morning session, and the feedback that local community participants gave in the afternoon. They then candidly discussed the challenges of running a project from abroad, where they only spent three weeks a year in-country to monitor progress, and said that it would take time and repetition for many of these concepts to sink in. Much of the consultants' attention was also focused on getting a technological early flood warning pilot system functional by the fall season.

This training, albeit only one example of a community engagement exercise, illustrated several points. One was that the importance of facilitating a connection with local communities in this context depended on development brokers not only translating the transnational policies and messages down to the local level, but also incorporating the local knowledge and feedback both into the development project and into national-level policy. In previous years, this was reportedly accomplished. For the training I observed, however, there was a gap between the way that international consultants conveyed information and attempted to implement the development

project according to the terms of the project document, rather than the terms which may have been most useful in attaining the intended ends. In the case of this particular training, it was clear that the strategies devised by development professionals for engagement on climate change adaptation did not work as they had in previous years.

The relevance of this example is that it shows the importance of both state and development actors in developing and executing participatory strategies. While state actors might set the terms of the nature of engagement with local stakeholders, the capacity of development actors to translate concepts into trainings that are understood by local stakeholders matters as well. Done correctly, this process can produce valuable information that can inform policy and move state actors towards deeper forms of participation; done incorrectly, the training only checks off a box as having met participatory requirements. In the next section of the chapter, I turn to the role of side payments and their implicit effect upon participatory strategies.

Brokering the local: stakeholders and side payments in Azerbaijan

The preparation phase of the Kura II Project in both countries involved conducting a semi-structured, informal written survey, and then meeting with a broad range of stakeholders as part of an information-collecting exercise. There were four main topics on which stakeholder meetings focused. Beyond soliciting background information for the project design, a second objective of stakeholder meetings was to promote awareness of the project among other development actors and establish its scope vis-à-vis other water-related development projects. The third was to determine what sort of local projects might be viable and interesting to state actors. The fourth issue was cooperation with other riparian actors in the Kura Basin. Underlying each of these objectives was the necessity to secure the approval of state actors with veto power over the project, within the Ministry of Ecology in Azerbaijan and the Ministry of the Environment in Georgia.

During the stakeholder meetings, the most underrepresented group among the Azerbaijani stakeholders were representatives of civil society organizations. When the project leadership pointed out this gap, the local staff acknowledged that it was presently difficult to find NGO representatives to meet with, though this was also pitched by project leadership as not being a problem because of the ability to creatively translate participation in other respects, particularly through collaboration with academia.

The Azerbaijani national coordinator within the Kura II Project preparation phase had strong connections to academia and possessed a highly technical knowledge of hydrology, making him of great value to the project when it came to ensuring its technical value and feasibility. More importantly, by virtue of his technical background acquired under the Soviet system, he had long-standing relationships with mid- to upper-level bureaucrats within key ministries related to water, namely the Ministry of Ecology, the water division of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the Hydrometeorology Department, and Azersu, the publicly-owned enterprise responsible for domestic water. Brokers in Azerbaijan seemed to have fewer meaningful connections with the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Agriculture, despite both being critical stakeholders in water management from an IWRM perspective. They also had less established connections with representatives of other multilateral donor organizations and international organizations working on the ground in Azerbaijan and the Kura basin, though the expatriate project leadership compensated for this lack.

Fortunately, the Azerbaijani brokers had a long-standing relationship with the key high-level bureaucrat within the Policy Unit at the Ministry of Ecology, whose approval was required in order to obtain sign-off on the project by the Minister of Ecology himself. This bureaucrat was, among other things, involved in the process of approving the various stakeholder meetings. He

held the power to inquire about meetings, strike stakeholder meetings from the agenda (a power which I witnessed him exercise), and arrange high-level meetings when protocol called for his intervention. The Ministry of Ecology was the primary ministry with which the Kura II Project was affiliated in Azerbaijan. As a result, the project had to maintain the ministry's approval – and more specifically, the approval of the Policy Unit – in order for Kura II to progress. Producing a narrative of success for UNDP-GEF, the project consultants, and for the ministers themselves was contingent upon brokering a compromise for the project content which was acceptable to all.

The Ministry of Ecology's main priority for the Kura II project was not necessarily cultivating a new connection with civil society organizations or local communities. Particularly in light of the increasing restrictions on civil society within Azerbaijan, this would have been a counterproductive use of the Ministry's resources. Rather, their priority was ensuring the Ministry's position in water management within the country vis-à-vis other powerful ministries germane to water management, and particularly the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

It was common knowledge that the minister at the helm of the Ministry of Emergency Situations was highly powerful and closely linked to the President of Azerbaijan. In the aftermath of massive flooding in the Sabirabad region in 2010 – a flood caused by a complete lack of coordination between ministerial parties responsible for water management in Azerbaijan – President Aliyev designated a special water department within the Ministry of Emergency Situations responsible for all surface waters within the country. This designation served to add an additional layer of institutional complexity and heighten the ensuing competition for power and resources, within an already fragmented scenario of institutional power.

From the many meetings I observed, it became clear that the Ministry of Ecology's primary interests were twofold: 1) to create the impetus for a domestic-level water governance

organization, and 2) to use the project to build the foundation for a joint commission on water management between Georgia and Azerbaijan. These messages were both explicitly conveyed both during individual meetings as well as in public stakeholder meetings with other domestic and transnational actors.

Regarding the first point, the Ministry of Ecology was not alone in calling for some sort of administrative body responsible for water governance in Azerbaijan. Under the status quo, responsibilities for various dimensions of water management were spread across ministries in a manner which stymied any efforts at approaching IWRM, much less transboundary water management. International negotiations on water were the realm of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had no technical knowledge of water issues; surface waters were the responsibility of the Ministry of Emergency Situations; environmental quality, pollution control and environmental flow management fell to the Ministry of Ecology; AzerEnergy controlled the massive amount of water held in hydropower reservoirs; AzAmelioration was tasked with supplying water for agricultural irrigation; and Azersu was responsible for the provision of drinking water throughout the country.

Most stakeholders lamented the uncoordinated, sectorally-divided approach to water management in Azerbaijan and the inefficient management which resulted from institutional fragmentation. One stakeholder described the situation as each ministry having different "levers" they could pull at different times. Another pointed out the fact that the political system in Azerbaijan was structured in a manner that the President could virtually immediately decree an overarching water governance body into existence, if there was indeed the political will to do so. As a result, the ministry-level stakeholders most closely involved with the project preparation phase were primarily concerned about elevating the water management issues in the Kura basin to

a political level such that institutional change would occur in their favor. The Kura II Project's objective of implementing a domestic IWRM plan was seen as having the potential to both lay the institutional groundwork for intersectoral cooperation on water management, as well as bring an amount of resources that would garner high-level political attention. Since the Ministry of Ecology was the official state institution formally affiliated with the project, the Kura II platform was an excellent opportunity for Ecology to rise above the fray of other ministries clamoring for clout in the water sector.

On the second point, the Ministry of Ecology was particularly interested in obtaining data on transboundary pollution and environmental flows. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, not only were there large gaps in the data at the domestic level, but there was also fragmentation among countries on measurement and standards. What was considered polluted in one country was not always considered polluted in the other. Stronger informational ties with Georgia, and common methods of measurement and standards, were extremely valuable for water management, flood preparedness, and the influence of the ministry. Adding a sense of urgency to the need for data was the fact that data was not freely shared between ministries at the domestic level in Azerbaijan. This was a source of friction between ministries. One more than one occasion during my fieldwork, I fielded complaints from representatives of ministries regarding other ministries' protectiveness of their data, however insufficient or incomplete that data may have been.

In light of these priorities, it is unsurprising that a large role for public participation was not on the Ministry of Ecology's agenda, despite the advantages to lending legitimacy to transboundary water projects. This situation was compounded by the fact that there were virtually no civil society organizations with which to partner, the brokers affiliated with the project had stronger connections to academia, and that there did not exist a grass-roots movement from

communities for participation. The Kura II project team therefore needed to include public participation in a way that would preserve the focus on the domestic priorities of gatekeepers, including support for the agenda of the Ministry of Ecology, while meeting GEF and IWRM requirements for local stakeholder participation through the project.

Brokering the local in Georgia

The difference in the composition of stakeholders between Georgia and Azerbaijan was striking. While key state bureaucrats remained the core of the roster in Georgia, the set of stakeholders was broader than in Azerbaijan. More time was devoted to project directors of other aid organizations pursuing water-related development projects, as well as with representatives of formal NGOs and transnational advocacy organizations, in order to sensure that efforts were not being duplicated across different development projects.

The difference in the type of stakeholders was the function of a different political and institutional landscape in Georgia, as well as the background of the Georgian country focal point, who had arranged the meetings. The country coordinator was a seasoned independent expert and consultant with extensive connections among ministries, development organizations and highly professionalized NGOs. She was able to seek out and cultivate champions within the state bureaucracy as well as peripheral organizations. Part of what made her an effective development broker was her keen sense of power dynamics between individuals and state institutions.

The institutional environment in Georgia, not unlike Azerbaijan, was a situation of fragmentation and competition among ministries. The key gatekeeper bureaucrat in Georgia was the Deputy Minister of the Environment, who had clear goals for the domestic agenda of the Kura

II project: promote water pricing mechanisms and control over environmental flows[16] vis-à-vis other domestic ministries.

During Saakashvili's rule of Georgia, there had been significant institutional change with implications for water management. In 2011, control over natural resources was transferred to the Ministry of Energy, and then transferred back to the Ministry of the Environment in 2013. The Ministry of the Environment underwent a major restructuring in 2013 as a result, and was renamed the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection. Tensions remained between the ministries over using water for hydroelectric generation and maintaining sufficient water flows within river basins to preserve environmental processes. Complicating the issue of environmental flows was the fact that Turkey, in 2014, had begun withholding water from the Kura River for hydropower development without giving prior warning to their downstream Georgian counterparts (Interview, July 2015).

A difference in perspective on water use also existed between the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture. The latter ministry was opposed to any sort of tariffs on water consumption, based on the view that additional costs would curtail agricultural production in Georgia. The view of the Ministry of the Environment, however, was that minimal costs were necessary to preserve an array of social benefits from water beyond agriculture. Investment in water infrastructure in Georgia is lagging, both in terms of supply infrastructure as well as wastewater treatment. Continued state subsidization of water supply in agriculture

[16] As described by the International Rivers website, environmental flows is a system for managing the quantity, timing, and quality of water flows in a river, with the goal of sustaining freshwater and estuarine ecosystems and the human livelihoods that depend on them. When left in its natural state, ecologically important aspects of a river's flow are extreme low flows, low flows, high flow pulses, small floods, and large floods. Anthropological interference and climate change affects these flows. Environmental flows can be designed to restore these natural flow levels, with the goal of improving water quality, restoring sediment deposition, addressing the life-cycle needs of fish and wildlife, and restoring the livelihoods of river-based communities. For more information, see the International Rivers website at https://www.internationalrivers.org/environmental-flows.

therefore diverts funds from necessary investment as well as encourages inefficient use of water in agricultural practices (Interview, July 2015).

The Deputy Minister had a clear sense of the local participation outcomes he sought from the Kura II project. At the ministerial level, just as in Azerbaijan, incorporating local participation was not the top priority; rather, it was engaging in a tacit defense of the ministry's agenda in water management. The Deputy Minister was considered an "outsider" in his field, in that he had recently jumped from another ministry to head the Ministry of the Environment and had not been brought up within the ranks of the ministry of which he was second in command. Yet he had previously been a staunch proponent of environmental education and trainings for staff, which dovetailed nicely with the constraints placed on public participation in the Azerbaijani context, and he resoundingly approved of the overall plan for social media campaigns to raise awareness of water issues. Such campaigns could potentially play an important role in advocating to the public for water pricing schemes which would maximize the social benefits of water and counter potential resistance from agricultural users. Georgia was therefore also amenable to incorporating local stakeholders in a way which focused on education rather than direct public participation.

Conclusion

Overall, evaluations of GEF International Waters projects indicate that they are effective at increasing scientific knowledge and bringing together *state*-level stakeholders, within and across countries. The processes involved in developing projects draw bureaucratic attention to regional problems. Public participation is evident in the project design process and in the drafting of project proposals (Gerlak 2007); indeed, meaningful incorporation of local stakeholders in this process is reportedly the best way to ensure continued local engagement in GEF international waters projects (Interview, May 2016). According to implementing agency officials, broad public participation

has been shown to help build regulatory success and legitimacy for international waters projects (Gerlak 2007: 65). Yet because the nature of IW projects makes them dependent on the participation of state-level stakeholders, engagement during the project preparation phase does not necessarily translate into longer-term programs of local engagement and implementation.

Part of the culprit is a misalignment of incentives during the project formation process, which must give precedence to the interests of state actors in order for the project to move forward. According to one development professional, "GEF international waters is different [from other GEF focal areas] … since 60% of the eligible countries were unable to write their own project, it was decided that there would be assistance by implementing agencies [in writing project proposals]" (Interview, March 2016). As a result, consultants working on international waters-related projects for implementing agencies write project proposals for submission to GEF. These projects must have two key features: they must meet the objectives of the GEF and implementing agency, and they must have ministerial support from a relevant ministry in the involved countries. The necessity of ministerial support creates an incentive for both consultants and implementing organizations to come up with project proposals that align with the interests of state actors with the capacity to decide and implement such a project, while still meeting GEF objectives and implementing organization objectives.

Incorporating local communities in project development and implementation is not necessarily at the top of the agenda of the countries, agencies, or development professionals to be included in the project. One development professional affiliated with an implementing organization stated that "oftentimes, we have to convince the government of the importance of the project – 90% of the time [this happens]" (Interview, March 2016). In convincing the recipient government of the value of the project, adding an additional element of complexity in a time- and

resource-constrained context is not a priority. The GEF Small Grants Programme is one way that the GEF tries to overcome the problem of limited local stakeholder engagement. I discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 5.

The Kura II project leadership and associated development brokers were individuals with deep experience in the region and abiding personal commitments to securing project outcomes. The translation of a project from the international to the local level is contingent upon relationships between development professionals and state actors with veto power over the project. Brokers are needed as intermediaries to negotiate and translate participatory concepts, and side payments are the currency in which these brokers deal. The reason that the Kura II Project has continued throughout multiple phases is because of the project leaders' ability to engage brokers in agile and creative translation of local participation concepts to appease veto holders and the requirements of the development organization alike. Even as the Kura II project had to meet both GEF and IWRM requirements in its explicit strategies to engage local stakeholders across countries, the project was designed with the flexibility to allow its leadership to translate the notion of local participation in ways that were amenable to the state-level gatekeepers in each country. By brokering new definitions of "local" and "civil society" amenable to gatekeeper bureaucrats in its explicit participation strategies, the Kura II project both facilitates its ability to change the relationship between state and societal actors in water management as well as limits this change to apolitical and technical terms.

With regard to national level side payments, state bureaucrats were entirely within the purview of their professional responsibilities in their attempts to maximize the benefits of development projects for their respective ministries. The side payment of tacitly supporting the agenda of affiliated ministries is one way in which this competition occurs, with the caveat being

that the effects on changing state-society relations in water management are often more circumscribed in nature and scope than official GEF rhetoric and IWRM theory would lead one to expect.

In the next chapter, I discuss how side payments at the international scale demonstrate the capacity of development actors to broker a critical agreement across countries, while showing how this process has implicit effects on participatory practices.

Chapter 4. Transboundary Groundwater Management in the Alazani-Ağrıçay Aquifer

"Mən istəyirəm ki, hər bir şəhərə, hər bir kəndə 24 saat fasiləsiz su verilsin... Azərbaycan əhalisinə verilən və veriləcək su Ümumdünya Səhiyyə Təşkilatının standartlarına uyğun olmalıdır."

"I want every city, every village to be provided with 24 hours of uninterrupted water access…. Water provided to the population of Azerbaijan now and in the future should conform to World Health Organization standards."

President İlham Aliyev (from Azersu JSC website)

Ələkbər's daughter owned a quaint pre-Soviet era flat in downtown Baku, directly across from the U.S. Embassy. I was moving into the flat for the latter part of my research in 2015, and Ələkbər was showing me the quirks of the place.

He grimaced with concern as he pointed out the flat's main water valve. "I know you probably aren't used to only having access to water six hours a day."

I assured him that I was indeed used to it. When I first lived in Baku in 2009, save for a few neighborhoods located near critical infrastructure or important buildings, 60% of the city had water flowing through municipal pipes only twice a day: from 7 to 10 am, and 6 to 9 pm. Weekends were allocated an extra hour of water usage in the morning. To ensure access to tap water during the off-hours, each residence had its own large water storage tank, known as a *bak*, the Russian word for tank. While the water supplied from the *bak* was insufficient for any high-pressure water usage, such as showering, it was sufficient for other household needs. One had to remember to open the water main and fill the tank during water access hours and to close the valve during off hours in order to avoid creating a vacuum in the pipes.

By 2015, despite President Aliyev's wishes expressed above, the situation in Ələkbər's daughter's flat was exactly the same as 2009. Access to municipal water in Baku was still not

universal and not up to World Health Organization standards at the tap – though distribution coverage was officially said to have reached 75% of the city. Merely crossing the street still could make a difference between the hassle of dealing with a *bak* and having 24-hour access to water.[17]

Baku's urban population has continued to grow since the fall of the Soviet Union, due in part by the IDP crisis of Karabakh, a general post-Soviet rural-to-urban migration trend, and the increasing presence of multinational companies in the capital city spurred by energy development. Although the built environment in Baku has greatly changed in the last decade – due to billions of dollars of investment in infrastructure such as luxury high-rise buildings and ultra-modern arenas for the prestigious Eurovision and European Games competitions – the aging Soviet-era urban infrastructure supplying water to the capital city is still in need of upgrade and expansion. Baku has historically struggled with providing its population with sufficient access to municipal water and sanitation (Interview, July 2015). Daily interruptions in water service pollute the municipal water supply at the tap by drawing in groundwater through cracks in the aging distribution pipes, forcing households to spend money on purchasing bottled water for consumption and negating expensive purification treatment prior to distribution (Interview, July 2015).

The provision of municipal water is both a practical and political concern for Azerbaijan. Although Baku is not physically located within the hydrological boundaries of the Kura basin, the city's demand for water has relied in part on the surface waters of the Kura for over four decades. A particular development in water infrastructure, however, has started to impact the basin in an unprecedented way. The Oğuz-Gabala-Baku (OGB) water pipeline – named for the major cities it connects – transports water from the Kura basin to Baku and is reportedly one of the largest water

[17] According to the 2016 National Water Strategy in Azerbaijan, only 46% of the population of Azerbaijan has access to municipal water (4.14 million people). Out of this population with access to water, 2.9 million people have access to water 24 hours a day.

supply projects in the world (Interview, July 2015). The pipeline was completed in 2010 by the Azerbaijani municipal water authority, Azersu, at a cost of nearly $1 billion. Much fanfare surrounded its construction and completion, as the Azerbaijani government sought to advertise the pipeline as a source of national pride for its large scale, cutting-edge technology and the solution to a decades-old problem of water shortage in Baku. The pipeline was also intended to demonstrate how revenues from the State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan are used for social benefit, at least in theory.

Beyond the scale and technologically advanced nature of the project, the OGB pipeline is significant for another reason: unlike the other Kura pipelines which supply water to Baku, the OGB solely transports *groundwater* from the river basin. The Kura basin's Alazani-Ağrıçay artesian (underground) aquifer, from which the pipeline withdraws its water, straddles the Azerbaijani-Georgian border. The management of the aquifer is therefore a transboundary issue, falling under the scope of a number of development projects related to transboundary water management in the South Caucasus – including the Kura II Project.

The central question of this chapter is why side payments aimed at facilitating international cooperation can end up bypassing opportunities for local stakeholder engagement. For over a decade, management of transboundary aquifers in the Kura basin has been a topic of discussion between Georgia and Azerbaijan, and the subject of several donor-funded projects by the UN and the European Union. By 2015, during the development of the Kura II project, the Oğuz-Gabala-Baku pipeline had become a problem for Georgian water authorities. Over the course of the preparatory meetings for the Kura II project, Georgian authorities repeatedly voiced the concern that the OGB pipeline appeared to be drawing water from the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer at an unsustainable rate, preventing the aquifer from recharging itself and potentially compromising the current and future ability of Georgia to withdraw its rightful share of water. Yet if one country

were to formally request a meeting to discuss concerns over joint management of the aquifer, protocol would require coordination through each country's foreign ministry, serving to both increase the politicization of the issue and slow down its resolution through bureaucratic processes. It would also require technical experts to spend additional time trying to make a scientific and technical subject digestible by non-technical bureaucrats.

The preferable alternative for Georgian and Azerbaijani bureaucrats was to coordinate a meeting of experts between the two countries in the context of the Kura II stakeholder negotiations in Baku to discuss groundwater management concerns. This meeting was of both political and technical importance and was thus one of the key side payments offered in the context of the Kura II project preparation and approval process. By coordinating an informal, apolitical discussion about the effects of the OGB pipeline on the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer, the Kura II project leadership was able to broker cooperation and secure champions for the Kura II Project among Azerbaijani and Georgian state-level stakeholders. At the same time, it met the Global Environment Facility's objective of including groundwater management in the project. This meeting also raised the profile of the Kura II Project among veto-holding stakeholders, by demonstrating the capacity of the project leadership to be of use to the ministry at the international level.

From the perspective of the participating Georgian and Azerbaijani stakeholders, the meeting to discuss the OGB pipeline was a successful resolution to a looming hydropolitical problem between the two countries, and part of a set of projects aimed at improving science for governance under the Kura II umbrella. Yet this critical incentive of informal water diplomacy did not address local concerns of the pipeline. Since 2011, environmental scientists, local community members and human rights activists in Azerbaijan have echoed the concerns of Georgian water

authorities, criticizing the sustainability of the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer since the OGB pipeline commenced operations (Ismayilli 2011a). In the vicinity of the wells feeding the pipeline, there have been local reports of orchards and forests drying up and artesian wells disappearing, presumably due to a falling groundwater table (Ismayilli 2011b; other personal communications, 2015). Small landowners impacted by the pipeline construction have reportedly had to struggle for compensation for their land, calling into question the civil and social responsibility dimensions of projects supported by the Azerbaijan State Oil Fund, despite the fact that the Fund is supposed to be public wealth spent in the public interest (Qehremanli 2012).

And yet, local concerns about the pipeline were not discussed with state-level stakeholders in the course of informal negotiations between Azerbaijan and Georgia. Why would the Kura II Project, or any other development project, bypass this opportunity to engage local stakeholders? Other projects addressing transboundary water management in the area surrounding the aquifer have also not explicitly addressed local concerns and allegations over the sustainability of groundwater withdrawal or violations of land use rights, despite the fact that the spirit of public participation in development projects is precisely to address this type of disconnect between levels of stakeholders.

The answer to this puzzle lies in the domestic political significance of the OGB pipeline as well as the interests of state actors. The political significance of the OGB pipeline means that highlighting criticisms of it in Azerbaijan is a non-starter, even if the part of the Kura II Project's objective is to foster public participation in water management. Resolving the problems brought up by Georgian stakeholders, whose information on the aquifer was limited vis-à-vis their Azerbaijani counterparts, was the focus of the side meeting; anything more would have the potential to jeopardize Azerbaijani endorsement of the project. Though the exclusion of local

concerns in the region of the OGB pipeline may seem puzzling given the objectives of the Kura II Project, this side payment of arranging informal bilateral negotiations over groundwater use exemplifies how opportunities for local stakeholder engagement can be circumscribed in the process of engendering state actor support through side payments. This chapter also demonstrates how explicit participation strategies may set the stage for local stakeholder engagement, but they are only part of the story.

In the previous chapter, I explained how local participation is creatively framed as a side payment to broker cooperation among domestic stakeholders. This chapter shifts the focus to how side payments used to broker international cooperation can end up having a different paradoxical effect: bypassing opportunities for local participation. Though donor organizations attempt to change state-society relations in water management through incorporating participatory practices, the efforts that these third-party actors must undertake to foster and maintain relations with key state-level stakeholders can paradoxically impede the project's ability to connect with societal groups.

Each of these findings contribute to my overall argument that state actors wield tremendous power in shaping how donor-funded projects change state-society relations. Rather than compensating losing constituencies that hold veto power, I find that the side payments issued by development projects – in this case, the arrangement of informal international negotiations– instead play the opposite role. Side payments are a mechanism to ensure that the winning constituencies maintain their approval of a development project. This in turn enables the project to fulfill its international objectives of creating cooperation among countries, albeit in a way that can implicitly limit opportunities for public participation.

As Stroup and Wong (2016) note, as the prestige and visibility of international NGOs increases, their ability to pursue anything but non-contentious program agendas decreases. The authors call this phenomenon "vanilla victories." This chapter applies the same theory to international donor organizations to explain the mechanism at work in this particular case, demonstrating how the allocation of side payments to the winners (state-level stakeholders) rather than the losers (local community members) generates the "vanilla" – and sometimes paradoxical – effect of these victories.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the increased attention to groundwater in IWRM, followed by transboundary concerns regarding the aquifers of the Kura basin and the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer in particular. It continues with the history of water provision to Baku, the OGB pipeline project, and the domestic political significance of the pipeline. The chapter provides insight into the informal negotiations which ended up resolving Georgian concerns over the pipeline's operations, followed by a discussion of the unresolved local environmental concerns surrounding the OGB pipeline. I conclude with further discussion of the theoretical insights to be drawn from this case.

IWRM, Conjunctive Use, and the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer

Groundwater is a relatively recent focus in transboundary river basin management projects (Interview, 2015). Management efforts previously focused on quality and quantity of surface waters, since measuring surface water quantity and quality is often easier and cheaper to accomplish from a technical perspective (Interview, 2015). Considering surface water only, however, is problematic from a hydrological perspective. Focusing exclusively on surface waters ignores the role that groundwater and aquifers play in maintaining water quality and quantity in rivers. Polluted surface waters can seep through the ground and contaminate groundwater.

Overconsumption of surface waters can also impede the recharging of groundwater supplies (UNECE 2014). The Kura River itself is 40-50% fed by groundwater reserves (UNECE 2014), meaning that any current analysis and future predictions of water quantity and quality should take groundwater into consideration.

With the adoption of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) principles as best practices in water management projects, *conjunctive use* of groundwater and surface water has become the new development industry standard. The conjunctive use approach refers to the use and management of surface and ground water in tandem. Because surface and ground water are hydrologically linked, conjunctive use attempts to promote sustainable use of water resources by ensuring that consumption of one set of resources does not negatively impact the other. Historically, however, above and below-ground water resources have not been considered together, for both technological and institutional reasons. Assessing groundwater reserves generally requires more sophisticated technology and technical expertise than surface water analysis – capacities which may be nonexistent, insufficient, or unevenly distributed across countries. Building capacity for groundwater analysis and monitoring is therefore a common objective in development projects promoting conjunctive use. These capacities become more important in a transboundary context because access to water quality and quantity information and agreement on measurement standards necessarily precede any agreement on transboundary management, monitoring, and enforcement.

The Global Environment Facility's 6th International Water Strategy has the specific goals of promoting "collective management of transboundary water systems and implementation of the full range of policy, legal and institutional reforms and investments contributing to sustainable use and maintenance of ecosystem services" (GEF 2014). The objective of these goals is to balance

competing water uses in the management of transboundary surface and groundwater. These goals are met through advancing conjunctive management of surface and ground water systems, and use of the water/food/energy/ecosystem security nexus. This is the requirement of all GEF-funded freshwater projects that have completed the foundational phase of conducting a transboundary diagnostic analysis and have received endorsement of the SAP (UNDP-GEF 2016c: 8).

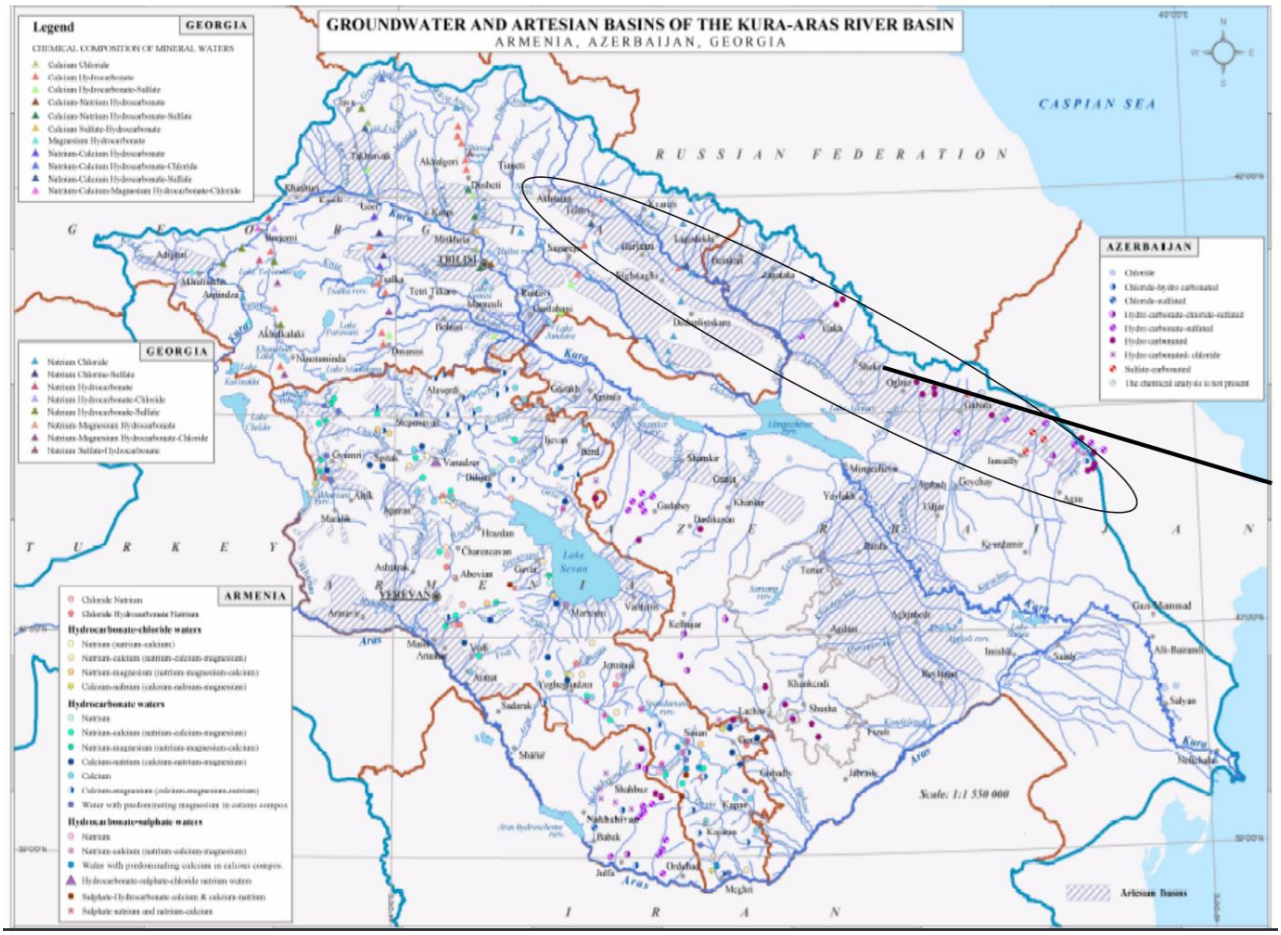
In the Kura basin, Azerbaijan presently has greater technical and financial capacity for groundwater analysis than Georgia. Azersu Open Joint Stock Company is the publicly-owned private entity responsible for municipal water supply, sanitation, and water-related infrastructure in Azerbaijan, receiving over $4.1 billion in state investment in 2015.[18] Azersu has its own science and research division, known as Sukanal, with some of the foremost groundwater expertise in the South Caucasus.

The Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer

The Kura basin has five transboundary aquifers linking various permutations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey (UNECE 2014). Of these five basins, the Alazani-Ağrıçay (Ağrıçay), which straddles Georgia and Azerbaijan, is the largest groundwater resource in the South Caucasus (UNECE 2014). The aquifer is part of the Alazani-Ganikh (Qanix) river basin, a transboundary sub-basin of the Kura. The boundaries of the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer do not exactly correspond to the boundaries of the Alazani-Ganikh River, although the aquifer falls within the Kura basin. The aquifer is 270km long and ranges from 12-15km wide, with 70km located in Georgia and 200km located in Azerbaijan.

[18] See Azersu consolidated financial accounts (in Azerbaijani) at http://www.azersu.az/userfiles/file/Hesabatlar/2016aze.pdf (p. 25).

Figure 4.1 Map of Groundwater and Artesian Basins in the Kura-Aras River Basin (Alazani-Ağrıçay Basin circled) (Source: UNDP-GEF 2007)



The Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer recharges in Georgia, fed in part by the Alazani river, and the groundwater generally flows southeast towards Azerbaijan (UNECE 2015). The high pressure of the water in Azerbaijan in particular makes it easy to withdraw groundwater through artesian wells, and the generally good quality of the water means that it is often used for drinking water (UNECE 2015).

During the first phase of the Kura project in 2007, transboundary concerns for the maintenance of the aquifer focused on several main issues: the unregulated and uncoordinated use of groundwater between Georgia and Azerbaijan, the illegal drilling of wells on both sides of the

border, and the lack of monitoring capacity to determine changes in water quantity and quality (UNDP-GEF 2007). Since the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer's discovery in 1944, over 2000 wells have been dug in the Georgian area of the aquifer, though the majority of these are currently inoperable due to lack of maintenance (UNDP-GEF 2007). Enforcement of water use was also a problem for both countries. State-level stakeholders expressed over a general lack of scientific and technical knowledge on the quantity and quality of groundwater. Pollution and salinization was high in some areas of the aquifer, particularly in Georgia, because of the connection between groundwater and surface waters (UNDP-GEF 2007; UNECE 2014). Back in 2007, though the pipeline was not yet constructed, it was still an item of concern for transboundary groundwater management. Compounding these existing problems is the construction and operation of the OGB pipeline, which is now supplying Baku with water from the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer.

Though the history of water provision to Baku has been discussed in detail elsewhere, a brief discussion here explains both the urgency and the contemporary political interest in supplying water to Baku through the OGB pipeline.

100 years of water provision to Baku: history repeats itself?

Since the late 1800s, local government has struggled with supplying water to the arid region of the Absheron peninsula, where Baku is located. Today, there are still areas in the urban center that only have water for several hours a day. Because of the aging infrastructure, water quality is also a problem. Even if municipal water has undergone adequate purification processes, it becomes contaminated in transit from treatment facilities to the tap. As a result, even in areas of the city with 24-hour access to water, most people will consume only bottled or boiled water. Prestigious water projects therefore bear the fingerprints of powerful politicians and financiers, most recently the Aliyev family.

The first major pipeline constructed to supply water to Baku, known as the Shollar pipeline, was completed in 1917. It is still in operation today, and shares several similarities with the OGB pipeline: it was a major engineering feat in its day, it was largely funded by oil money, and it was also sourced from groundwater due in part to pollution in the Kura already being an issue by the late 19th century (Mammadova 2006). This original water pipeline built to supply Baku, now over 100 years old, still supplies water to the city.

Prior to completing the Shollar pipeline in the early 20th century, the city had already tried desalinization as a method of providing drinking water to the city and had suffered from deadly outbreaks of cholera due to poor water quality and wastewater management (Zelichowski 2002). The famous British engineer William Heerlein Lindley, the designer of numerous water and sewage systems throughout Europe, was brought to Baku in 1899 to help solve the problem. Despite the urgency of the water situation, disputes within the local Duma about the best way to provide Baku with water delayed the project, as did political turmoil within the Russian Empire (Ibid). Ultimately, the contribution of the oil baron Haci Taghiyev's personal funds ensured that the pipeline would be constructed. Historical accounts also credit Lindley's determination with pushing the project forward despite local and international political turmoil. The outbreak of World War I did not stop the construction project; it was completed in January of 1917, some 18 years after Lindley's assistance with the project was first enlisted by Baku city officials.

As Baku grew during the Soviet era, water supply again became a problem. The construction of the Ceyranbatan water reservoir in the 1950s was intended to alleviate Baku's water supply problem, augmented by a second pipeline from the Shollar springs. Water from the Samur river basin, north of Baku, was also brought into the reservoir (Azersu website).

By the 1960s, however, growth in and around Baku had rendered the existing water infrastructure insufficient. The Azerbaijani SSR took the decision to construct a water purification plant on the shores of the Kura River and to pipe the water to the city (Ibid). Spearheaded by Heydar Aliyev in 1969, two Kura pipelines were completed in 1971 and began providing water to Baku. By the mid-1980s, a second purification plant and three more pipelines from the Kura augmented the Shollar pipeline and the Ceyranbatan reservoir (Ibid).

By the 1990s, high pollution levels and increased water quantity fluctuations once again rendered the water supply to Baku insufficient to meet demand growth. A combination of inefficient water distribution infrastructure – with up to 40% loss within the system (Imanov et al. 2004) – as well as competing demands for water across different economic sectors and rapid urban growth still left the capital city parched in some neighborhoods while sated in others.[19]

As Azersu sought to improve the quantity and quality of water supply to Baku, they began to look outside of the Kura River, whose quantity and quality fluctuations made it an increasingly less attractive option. In 2002, then-president Heydar Aliyev announced that it was again time for Baku to enhance its access to clean water and designated the Oğuz-Gabala region's groundwater reserves as the source.

This historical discussion of water provision to Baku explains why the OGB pipeline carries such historical and political baggage. The impetus for bringing water to Baku over a century ago was the rapid growth of the city due to the nascent oil industry. Today, the oil industry and the demand for water are still intertwined as they collectively shape the opportunities for access to

[19] Limiting water access has been shown to paradoxically lead to more wasteful consumption of water resources, due to the tendency to store water excessively and to engage in excessively liberal water consumption during times of access. Furthermore, the negative pressure in the water distribution system during times without water access causes polluted groundwater to be pulled into the municipal water system through cracks in the pipes, making water unsafe for consumption and causing reliance on bottled water for those that can afford it. (Interview, July 2015).

water in Baku. The difference today, however, is both the transboundary and the local impacts of providing water to the capital city.

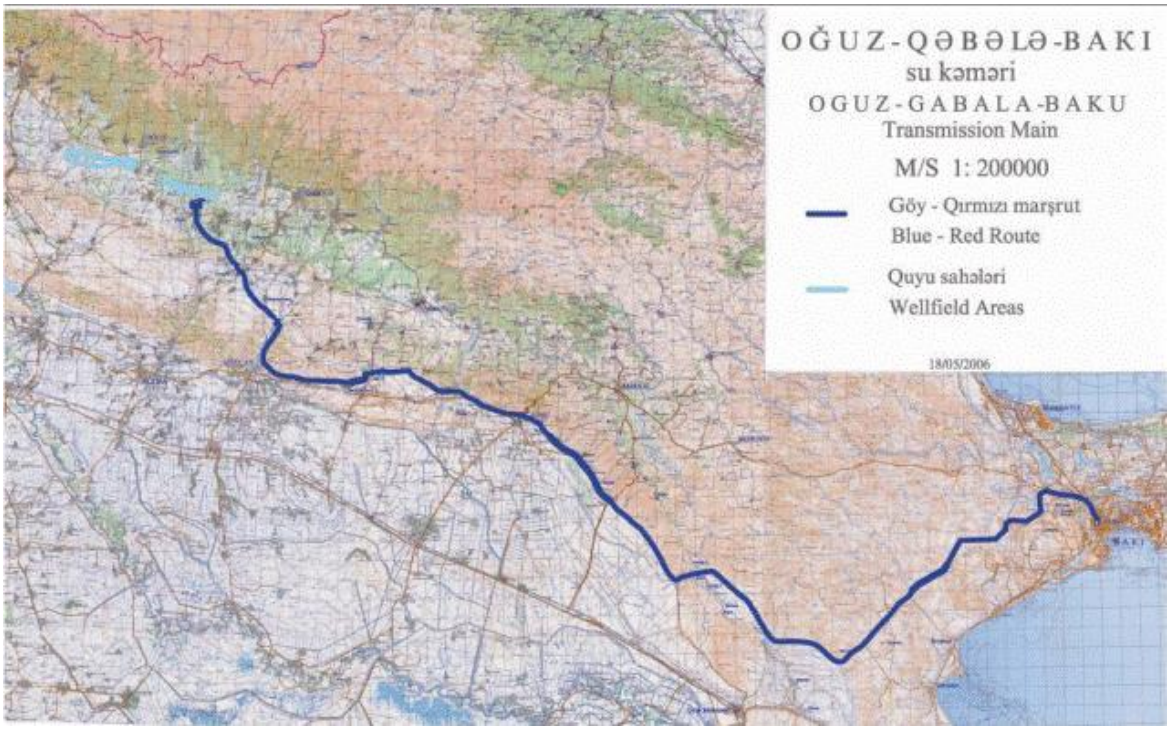
The Oğuz-Gabala-Baku Pipeline and the Kura II Project

Having discussed the historical context of water provision to Baku, I now turn to a discussion of Azersu tendered the bids for the OGB pipeline project and is the official owner of the pipeline. As evidence of its prestige and a source of pride for Azerbaijani state officials, the project is named after Heydar Aliyev. It is also known informally as the "second BTC", or Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, a 4000 km oil pipeline whose construction in the late 1990s and early 2000s was considered a major geopolitical and infrastructural accomplishment for Azerbaijan.

Construction on the pipeline began in 2007 and was completed in 2010 (Interview, July 2015). The pipeline is 262 km long and cost nearly $1 billion USD, paid for by the Azerbaijani State Oil Fund. It has a withdrawal capacity of 5 cubic meters per second, a "very high amount" of water according to a former World Bank water expert (Interview, August 2015), though as of 2015 it was reportedly only operating at one-half to one-third of its full capacity (Interview, July 2015). This was reportedly due to the fact that Baku's water distribution system had not yet been sufficiently improved to accommodate the full increase in water volume created by the pipeline.

Figure 4.2 Construction of the Oğuz-Gabala-Baku Pipeline (Source: Azersu)

Figure 4.3 Map of the Oğuz-Gabala-Baku Pipeline (Source: Oil Workers' Rights Protection Organization) [20]



[20] OWRPO, "Protection of transparency in public revenues independent monitoring report." January 2012. Accessible at http://www.nhmt-az.org/frontend/pages/oil-income-inner.php?id=64.

When the Shollar pipeline was completed, historical accounts at the time described euphoria in the city at the completion of the 18-year project, with the sacrificing of many sheep in gratitude for the provision of clean water to the city. While the opening of the OGB pipeline was perhaps a comparatively more subdued affair, certainly to the relief of many wooly ruminants, President Ilham Aliyev's speech at the 2010 opening ceremony is unambiguous in conveying the political and social magnitude of the pipeline's completion:

> Indeed, this is a great historic event. As you may know, the issue of the availability of clean water sources in the Oğuz-Gabala zone was raised several decades ago and proposals were made on how to deliver the water from this region to Baku. However, it was impossible to implement the project then. Today, in independent Azerbaijan, we have implemented this project, a project that has tremendous importance for our city and country. […]
>
> This water pipeline will be very important for the residents of Baku. As you know, more than 60 per cent of the Baku population receives water intermittently. Of course, this is an intolerable situation for a modern city. The problem with water has existed in Baku for centuries. Various measures were taken at all times to supply Baku with drinking water, but due to the expansion of our capital and population growth, the measures did not produce the desired effect. Therefore, the delivery of clean and high-quality water to Baku from a new source was one of the major challenges facing us. I am very pleased that we have achieved this. According to the information available to me, the Oğuz-Gabala-Baku pipeline will provide 75 per cent of the Baku population with uninterrupted clean and quality water meeting the standards of the World Health Organization.
>
> […] Our policy is socially-oriented. We have allocated significant resources for the construction of the pipeline and are aware that these funds may never be recovered. As you know, this is not a commercial project. This is purely social project [sic], and the allocation of significant resources for it shows that the Azerbaijani government is doing everything to provide its population with high-quality drinking water.
>
> […] Our successful economic policies initiated by great leader Heydar Aliyev and being successfully implemented today, as well as Azerbaijan's oil strategy, have made all this possible… This project has been implemented using the funds from the State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan... The projects implemented through the Oil Fund are of top priority for us, and the inclusion of the Oğuz-Gabala-Baku water pipeline project on the Fund's portfolio illustrates our intentions very well... it is quite symbolic that the project has been financed from the State Oil Fund. The revenues derived from oil production, from the operation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline have been channeled into the construction of the Oğuz-Gabala-Baku water pipeline.[21]

[21] For the full text of the speech, see the official website of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, accessible at http://en.president.az/articles/1346?locale=az.

The text of President Aliyev's speech is instructive in two respects. It emphasizes the social dimension of the OGB project having been supported entirely by the State Oil Fund – the benefits of which are still being challenged by civil society activists. President Aliyev's imparting of much historical, economic, and political significance to the pipeline also explains why addressing any potential criticisms of the project is something that any international donor would try to approach delicately, if at all.

Azerbaijan stakeholder meetings

Having explained the infrastructural and political significance of the OGB pipeline, I now explain the relationship between groundwater extraction for the pipeline and transboundary negotiations in the context of the Kura II Project. In previous phases of the Kura project, though transboundary concerns over groundwater management were topics of discussion, a conjunctive use approach had not formally been included in the project (Interview, July 2015). By the time of the Kura II preparation phase in 2015, conjunctive use had become a focus of the project, due to the recent priority placed on the issue by the Global Environment Facility.

During the very first project preparatory meetings in Baku in July 2015, the Kura II Project leadership was enthusiastic about the prospect of including groundwater considerations in the latest phase of the project. Because there was so much work to be done, I met the Kura II team on a Saturday to receive briefings from an urban planning expert on the status of the OGB pipeline. At the conclusion of the last phase of the project, the pipeline was completed but was not yet fully operational. For this next phase, word had already gotten to the project leaders that Georgian stakeholders were concerned about the withdrawal of water from the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer.

The urban planner was useful for further explaining the how the OGB pipeline was being used to resolve issues of water provision in Baku, but he was not able to answer any hydrological questions about the project. It was decided that a meeting with Azersu's scientific and technical experts at Sukanal was necessary.

The following week, I found myself as the Azerbaijani-English translator in meetings between the Kura II project leadership and the deputy director of Sukanal. For some reason, perhaps because of the political stakes involved with the OGB pipeline, I had expected the meeting at Azersu to be tense. It was anything but tense. The Kura II project leadership had known the deputy director of Sukanal for many years and worked with him on previous phases of the Kura project, so their relationship was warm and collegial.

The Azerbaijani experts attending the meeting assured that detailed groundwater mapping had been conducted and produced a copy of the map. They also assured the UN project leadership that water was being withdrawn from the aquifer at a rechargeable rate. The project leadership asked to see a map of the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer from which the pipeline drew, which the Sukanal representative willingly produced. Now I had the chance to see informal water diplomacy in action – and to play a part in it as translator. The project leadership, having the benefit of the information from the urban planner, praised the OGB project and the potential it held to supply water to Baku. They also addressed the fact that Georgia counterparts were concerned about the rate of withdrawal from the aquifer, highlighting the fact that Georgia did not have the access to the hydrogeological information that Azersu was using with regard to the location and amount of withdrawal of water for the pipeline.

The project leadership diplomatically asked if Azersu would be open for a meeting with the Georgian counterparts, in order to clarify the details of the OGB pipeline project. The Sukanal

counterparts agreed without hesitation, although approval had to first be sought from the Ministry of Ecology as the focal point for the Kura II Project.

Georgia stakeholder meetings

The next week, we arrived in Tbilisi to conduct the same preparatory meetings as in Baku. Our first meeting was with four people from the National Environmental Agency: a representative of the biomonitoring department, the head of the geology department, a water quality monitoring manager, and the head of hydrometeorology, respectively.

Though the project leadership had many contacts in Georgia due to the project hub being previously sited there, the people around the table in this first meeting were new faces – and key state-level stakeholders. The Kura II Chief Technical Advisor explained that they were preparing for the continuation of the Kura project, which had taken place from 2011-2014. During that time, she explained, a transboundary diagnostic analysis was completed in order to understand the primary transboundary issues between Georgia and Azerbaijan. From that analysis, she described how a Strategic Action Programme was cooperatively developed between the two countries, endorsed at the ministerial level in both countries. The next phase would the implementation of Integrated Water Resource Management principles in Georgia and Azerbaijan, as part of the implementation of the Strategic Action Programme.

After providing some background to the Kura project, the Chief Technical Advisor immediately transitioned into what she knew was a primary concern for Georgian stakeholders: the groundwater issue.

"We have $5.3 million dollars for the next four-year phase of the project. With the Strategic Action Programme, we clearly meet the criteria for GEF-6 funding. The priorities [for GEF-6] are

the conjunctive use of ground and surface water. In light of climate change, we also are developing the use of the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus to support integrated water research management."

She had their attention. The Georgian geologist entered the conversation.

"Water resources shouldn't be separated; they should be managed together. Previous projects didn't take groundwater into account. But the groundwater of Georgia and Azerbaijan is really connected, especially in the Alazani basin. There have been requests for joint monitoring, [so] they could send us [information]. On the Azerbaijani side, water is being abstracted from the Alazani aquifer and being transported from Gabala. If there is more than 15% extraction, then the aquifer won't replenish."

The Chief Technical Advisor responded. "The good news is that we are working with Azerbaijan, and Azersu wants to meet with you."

There was a pause. The geologist continued. "*We have been trying for many years to communicate with them.* If the [Kura II] project does this, then that's great. We have started monitoring in the Alazani and will add five more monitoring points; we could provide information to them in the future. We've known until now that groundwater is renewable, but now we can't say it's 100% renewable, especially with climate change."

As an aside, the implications for climate change in the Kura Basin are sobering. In just the Turkish area of the Kura-Aras basin, precipitation levels are expected to fall from an average of 462 cm/year in 2000 to 208 cm/year by 2050. Coupled with an increase in temperature in the region, climate change scenarios indicate that the Kura-Aras basin will have severe impacts regarding changes in mean precipitation (IPCC 2007, in Sen 2011: 77). The increased demand for

groundwater caused by drought and the effects on groundwater recharge capacity due to decreased rainfall place the Georgian negotiator's comments in context.

The Chief Technical Advisor continued the discussion by emphasizing how the project leadership was aware of the importance of transboundary groundwater management and the particular issue of transferring water from the Kura River Basin to Baku, which technically lies outside of the watershed. Another project leader clarified that included in one of the five components of the Kura project was a plan to develop a conjunctive water use strategy between the two countries, part of which would include an assessment of whether groundwater in the aquifer was renewable or not. They also mentioned that the project would be working with Azersu to reduce water losses in the distribution system since it was a serious problem.

The geologist again emphasized that if the aquifer was used in a reasonable manner, it would not be an issue – it was depletion that was a problem.

"Exactly," responded the Chief Technical Advisor. "We need to know the annual draw-down of the aquifer. Azerbaijan is willing to discuss this with Georgian experts. We suggest a meeting in October before the regional meeting [on the Kura II project] for experts from Georgia to go to Baku and meet people from Azersu to discuss what they are doing."

The side payment of arranging an informal meeting between Azersu and the Georgian counterparts had been offered. "We have asked for this before," mused the geologist, implicitly referring to the previous communication impasse with their Azerbaijani counterparts. The Kura II project was offering a key incentive that had been previously unattainable for the Georgian stakeholders.

The project leadership continued. “Azersu is interested in the Kura II project because of ground and surface water. Azersu and AzAmelioration (the agricultural irrigation authority) are eager to participate.”

Informal Water Diplomacy as a Side Payment

Of the major concerns voiced by Georgia negotiators throughout the rest of the stakeholder meetings, they tended to focus on two issues: the lack of Turkey’s involvement in the Kura II project and the transboundary management of the Alazani aquifer. On the latter point, Georgian stakeholders cautioned against the politicization of the issue, which would require the involvement of other actors without the context or expertise to solve the problem expeditiously. Another oft-mentioned problem in both Azerbaijan and Georgia was that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs often did not place enough priority on water-related diplomacy problems, allowing such problems to languish without resolution in some cases by simply not showing up at meetings where they were invited to participate (Interview, July 2015).

The Georgian stakeholders, Azersu, and the Azerbaijan Ministry of Ecology were grateful for the Kura II project’s capacity to address a transboundary water management issue without over-politicizing. It was agreed by ministry focal points in both countries that a side meeting would take place in the context of the full international stakeholder meeting for the Kura II project, to be held in Baku in October 2015. On the day of the meeting, a previously-planned field trip for the stakeholders to visit Ceyranbatan water reservoir – which had just installed a new, highly advanced membrane-based water filtration system – had to be canceled because of a ribbon-cutting ceremony hosted by President Ilham Aliyev.

The side meeting at Azersu was very collegial. It began with a general powerpoint presentation on Azerbaijan's water resources and problems. Though both parties knew the purpose of the meeting, it was not until a diplomatically-worded question from a Georgian counterpart that the conversation turned to the use of water in the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer.

The lead water negotiator for Georgia emphasized that focusing on groundwater is now considered important for Georgia: "We always thought it was renewable, but it's not so much the case." He described the Alazani River, a tributary to the Kura, as an artesian (groundwater-fed) river and that Georgian officials were now aware of its importance. The artesian wells in the Alazani basin had dropped 8-10 meters over the last few years, which he described as "a problem for all of us." Unfortunately, during the last 25 years in Georgia, groundwater had not been monitored, leading to the almost total destruction of groundwater networks. In Georgia's Kakheti region of the aquifer, with the support of Western institutions, "we were able to have 16 wells with modern equipment. We are now collecting data on 10 parameters, twice a year on chemical parameters." Sixteen more existing wells in Western Georgia and other regions will be installed with this equipment.

The water negotiator called for monitoring on the transboundary groundwaters 200 km from the Georgian side and 200 km from the Azerbaijani side so that both parties could be properly informed about water quality.

The Azerbaijani counterpart responded that he was ready for discussion, as the main author of the Alazani project. "As you know, the Alazani groundwater basin is 270 km [in length] along the border [of Georgia and Azerbaijan], 200 in Azerbaijan and 70 in Georgia." He showed the water intake areas on the map and described the most suitable hydrological conditions in the center of that area. The basin, according to him, had a high level of water-saturated rocks. "But at the

center of the basin," he noted, "what we observe is different than other sub-basins [in that it is more suitable for exploitation]."

The Azerbaijani water professional then showed the map of the water intake wells for the pipeline. There were 250-500 meters between wells, which were located at a depth of 170 m. (Previous public reports had described the distance between wells as 1000 m.) He described the productive capacity as 5 cubic meters per second but insisted that "we are only using one-third to one-half of that capacity."

Next, he showed photographs of the wells, with water coming from pipes. He noted that the pipes could be turned on and off from Baku. He then described the history of Baku's water supply. "One hundred years ago, Baku's water came from Shollar; there are also lines drawing water from the Kura. Now, we also have the Oğuz-Gabala pipeline."

The Azerbaijani water professional acknowledged the concerns of his Georgian counterparts, while the lead Georgian negotiator assured him that "we just want to see that we have the proper information." He responded by saying that "the Alazani is far from our intake. Our activity is 140-150 km from the border. In order to close up questions, a monitoring approach is important. There are hundreds of wells between the border and water intake."

A key Georgian stakeholder responded to the discussion by saying that this was all good to know, since there was not joint monitoring of groundwater across countries. She emphasized to the Kura II project leadership that undertaking such monitoring would be a good project to pursue in the context of the Kura project.

The facilitators of the Azersu meeting agreed enthusiastically, which alluded to needing information about this sort of project to alleviate concerns. Another powerpoint presentation was

shown on the construction and operation of the pipeline and the amount of water which it could withdraw. The capacity of the wells – 5 cubic meters of water per second – was said to be "a very high amount" by a World Bank consultant not related to the project. This could explain why the experts at Azersu's Water Research Institute emphasized that even though 5 cubic meters per second was the withdrawal capacity, they were not withdrawing that much.

After about 30 minutes of discussion, which also included sharing groundwater maps indicating that the bulk of the water resource was in Azerbaijani territory, the Georgian counterparts were content with the information they received. They made statements to the effect that this was the kind of information they had been seeking. One person said, "If we have this, then everything is ok."

Ultimately, the achievement of this meeting was twofold. The meeting participants left satisfied: Georgian stakeholders had long-standing concerns addressed and lines of communication opened, and Azerbaijan would receive external support from the Kura II project for boosting their monitoring efforts. As for the project leadership, stakeholders on both sides had seen the value and influence of the Kura II project. The combination of local knowledge and capacity of the project leadership to act as brokers and translators had cemented the support of key stakeholders in both countries. As for me, I left the meeting with Azersu with a broadened sense of how transboundary water management could work and of the role of development projects in this process. Specifically, I saw how the resources and leadership of a development project created the opportunity for informal water diplomacy at the transboundary scale.

Local concerns

Several weeks later, in a study trip with resource management experts outside of Baku – and independently of the Kura project – the conversation turned to water access in Baku and the role of the OGB pipeline in improving water provision to the city. To my surprise, these experts' perspectives on the pipeline were extremely critical. According to their first-hand knowledge, the environmental impact assessments conducted for the OGB pipeline were done quickly and incompletely, with the foregone knowledge that the pipeline would be constructed.

A professional elaborated on their experience in the region. "I worked there. The wells are deeper than usual. People are having trouble finding drinking water, and the forests are suffering. People are suffering."

Someone affiliated with an international NGO working on an unrelated project in the Oğuz-Gabala region spoke of the local community members coming to ask for assistance with a falling water table in the vicinity of the wells. According to local reports and observations by these contacts, orchards – in addition to native forests – were also drying up in the region.

This testimony is corroborated by the Oil Workers Rights Protection Organization (OWRPO) in the Oğuz-Gabala region. Part of the mission of this organization is to advocate for the use of oil revenues in a socially responsible manner. Because the OGB pipeline was funded by the State Oil Fund, the organization – under the leadership of human rights advocate Mirvari Qehremanli – objected to the environmentally and socially detrimental elements of the pipeline construction and operation (OWRPO 2011, 2018). These objections are notable in light of the claims made by the President describing the pipeline as intended for social benefit. Beginning in 2014, financial crisis caused by falling oil revenues has also brought increased scrutiny to how funds from the State Oil Fund are being spent (Aslanli 2015). As is the case in many countries

with resource wealth, investments that do not result in economic diversification or revenue generation have created economic stagnation – hence the term "resource curse".

As early as 2011, the OWRPO was calling attention to the environmental damage being wrought in the region by the pipeline. In an article and interview published in 2011 by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Azerbaijani affiliate, Azadliq Radiosu, Qehremanli noted that a full environmental impact analysis was never completed for the OGB pipeline before construction commenced (Ismayilli 2011a). According to her, over three thousand villagers reportedly had to wait years before receiving compensation for the destruction of fertile farmland for the construction of the pipeline (Ismayilli 2011b). Video footage posted by Qehremanli on YouTube shows local villagers holding up signs claiming, "Azersu, give me my money!"[22]

As late as January 2018, OWRPO continues to publish environmental and social problems created by the OGB pipeline:

> As the ecological examination of Oğuz-Gabala-Baku water pipeline construction project at the expense of oil money was not carried out, the pipeline damaged the social environment around it. Subterranean rivers have changed the pitch, most of the springs dried up, the forests gradually disappeared. The local population suffered serious damage. Preparation for the project and documentation of the environment in construction phases were not publicly disclosed. As a result, the public has been deprived of information about the impact of the project on the impact and the measures to overcome the effects of the impact. No public discussion and awareness campaigns were held during the preparation for the project. The environmental and social policies of the companies, and their commitments in this field were disclosed neither for public nor the communities. Thus, the domestic legislation and the conventions of the country have been violated.[23]

The communities experiencing the adverse effects of the OGB pipeline in the Oğuz-Gabala region are, in theory, exactly the types of communities that would benefit from public participation

[22] YouTube video accessible at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aamgoBfDGis.
[23] "Review of the Constitutional Guarantees of Rights." Oil Workers' Rights Protection Organization, 30 January 2018. Available at http://www.nhmt-az.org/frontend/pages/human-rights-inner.php?id=146. Accessed February 7, 2018.

under the Kura II project. According to Qehremanli, there were pre-existing environmental problems in the region of the wells feeding the pipeline. Engagement of the project with local communities to understand the nature and extent of the water and environmental problems being experienced, to advise communities on rational surface and groundwater use, and to open a channel of communication with technical state-level stakeholders would be in line with the public participation objectives of development projects in water management, even though the negotiation of groundwater management was not part of the explicit stakeholder engagement component of the project.

Why, then, would the Kura II Project – or the other international donor-funded water projects in the region, for that matter – not explicitly attempt to address the concerns being voiced by this community? Answering this question returns to our theoretical framework. Development projects require state endorsement. As has been described in previous chapters, the value of development professionals is in their capacity to act as brokers between different sets of stakeholders with potentially differing interests and to translate notions of participation in a way that is politically palatable to veto-holding stakeholders. In the case of the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer, the project leadership was able to leverage their previous connections with Azersu to engage in the side payment of informal diplomacy, alleviating the concerns of Georgian stakeholders and achieving an important victory for the project and for the countries involved.

The prospect of public engagement with the potential to highlight contention around an iconic publicly-financed project calls attention to the limits of brokers and translators. Given the pipeline's prestige and political support at the highest echelons of the state in Azerbaijan, drawing direct attention to criticisms of the OGB pipeline is a non-starter for any donor project in order for the project to maintain the political support it needs to progress. While defusing problems over the

OGB pipeline was important for garnering international support for the Kura II project, it also had the counterproductive effect of excluding local knowledge and participation in water management in a context where its inclusion could be beneficial.

The capacity of state gatekeepers to shape public participation calls to mind Stroup and Wong's (2016) description of "vanilla victories" by powerful INGOs: policy changes which are widely palatable to state actors but yield only incremental improvements (Stroup and Wong 2016: 3). Stroup and Wong argue that as INGOs acquire greater authority, they are constrained in their choices and activities in order to secure the deference of multiple audiences. Caught in what the authors term an "authority trap," INGOs end up giving preference to organizational imperatives – such as the necessity to build a narrative of success around a project – rather than taking the risk of promoting a more ambitious but potentially unpalatable policy of changing the status quo (Stroup and Wong 2016: 2).

I argue that this logic of an authority trap for INGOs is also applicable to international donor organizations, and the mechanism at work is the allocation of side payments. The allocation of side payments to the winners (state-level stakeholders) rather than the losers (local community members) is what generates the "vanilla" effect of these victories. Local communities in development projects will therefore always be involved in a way that is not threatening or contradictory to the interests of the state bureaucracy that approves the project – and in a way which reflects the relationships and power endowments between actors. The case of the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer and the OGB pipeline draws attention to the kind of inevitable trade-offs that must be made if agreement is going to be brokered among gatekeeper stakeholders. The price of this agreement is the allocation of side payments which appeal to the interests of state actors.

Thus, the case of the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer shows how side payments not explicitly addressing participation can result in missed opportunities for engagement with local communities. At the same time, the access to state actors generated by the side payment opens up the opportunity to obliquely engage in participatory practices under the context of science for governance, or other politically-neutral components of the project. To the extent that stakeholder engagement is kept apolitical and technical, addressing the concerns of the local stakeholders at the source of the pipeline is a possibility that can be negotiated by development brokers. Data collection, ecological assessments of the river, and trainings in IWRM principles for local stakeholders are all neutral ways for development brokers to learn about and indirectly address the problems in the basin. Engagement and participation by local stakeholders in this context is not officially embodied as participation in the project, meaning that participatory practices can sometimes go unnoticed.

Some scholars have criticized the depoliticizing effects of development, claiming that such practices obscure the strengthening of bureaucratic power that occurs through development's technical discourse (Ferguson 1994). Ferguson's study of Lesotho showed how deeply political decisions about allocation of resources were pitched as technical solutions to technical problems, and a way to produce a narrative of success for failed development projects (Ibid). While Ferguson calls attention to the unintended social ills that can arise from depoliticizing development policies, my work also shows how depoliticizing the discourse around participation strategies – while still keeping in mind development's political effects – can facilitate development objectives.

Conclusion

The history of water provision to Baku has tended to repeat itself: major investment in large, sophisticated projects has not produced enough water for the city. The historical discussion in this chapter explains why solving Baku's ever-recurring problems with sufficient access to

municipal water holds great political significance for the Azerbaijani state – particularly because of the use of nearly $1 billion in public funds for the construction of the OGB pipeline. The construction of this pipeline has resulted in tensions between Georgia and Azerbaijan over the sustainable use of the Alazani-Ağrıçay transboundary aquifer. In the absence of formal monitoring and water-sharing agreements in the Kura basin, the Kura II Project was positioned to help the two countries informally exchange information on the use of groundwater in the basin.

The case of the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer demonstrates how a transboundary water management project can soothe transboundary tensions over water use, while simultaneously overlooking local level concerns of groundwater depletion. The side payment offered to Georgian counterparts was sufficient to engender veto-holding stakeholder approval on both sides. Drawing upon their personal relationships and understanding of the issues important to each country involved in the Kura II project, the project leadership was able to use the side payment of informal engagement in water diplomacy to broker an agreement between key stakeholders across the two countries. In the process, the Kura II leadership also secured the endorsement of these stakeholders for the project.

In the process of brokering an agreement between state-level stakeholders, the local problems accounts of the OWPRO and of other experts working in the Gabala region have documented the environmental and social problems being experienced as a result of the OGB project. In the Science for Governance component of the Kura II project – under which the conjunctive use part of the project was included – public participation is not part of the scope. Nevertheless, the side payment of brokering an informal negotiation over the Alazani-Ağrıçay aquifer at the transboundary scale had implications for local stakeholder engagement.

The previous chapter explained the way public participation at the local level was creatively framed as a side payment and how donor support tends to empower key actors within the state bureaucracy. This chapter takes a slightly different approach to demonstrate how the nature of development projects' engagement with state actors affects how the development project, in turn, is able to engage with society. It tells the story of a transboundary-level side payment with the paradoxical effect of bypassing opportunities for public participation in a context where engaging the public could help address social and environmental problems related to water use in the basin.

In the last empirical chapter, I discuss how Turkey, as an upstream country interested in safeguarding its unilateral water policy in the Tigris-Euphrates basin, has yet to engage in formal cooperation on water management with Georgia and Azerbaijan. I argue that despite the presence of local environmental activism and small-scale UN-funded programs in the Turkish portion of the Kura basin, the inability to find a side payment that would entice Turkish state actors to participate results in these groups and projects being unable to connect with cross-border initiatives in a sustained manner.

Chapter 5. When Side Payments Just Aren't Enough: Turkey's Transboundary Intransigence

Turkey has not played a formal role in the GEF supported activities [in the Kura River Basin] to date, though there is an interest from Azerbaijan and Georgia in welcoming Turkey's participation in the [Kura II] project, as the headwaters of the Kura originate in Turkey and there is a strong precedent for transboundary cooperation between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey in multiple other sectors....

Kura II Project Document (UNDP-GEF 2016c: 7)

"We would welcome any relationship with Turkey."

"We invite Turkey to sit at the table, but they have chosen not to participate at this time."

"Turkey is taking an independent approach to water management."

These statements were a near-constant refrain among donor organization leadership and Kura II project leadership. Whenever a stakeholder asked about Turkey's role in a project related to the Kura basin, myself included, the response was always some variation of the above.

The interest to find some angle to connect to Turkish gatekeepers demonstrates the importance of Turkey in the Kura, despite the fact that Turkey is a silent yet critical player in water management of the basin. The headwaters of the Kura originate in Turkish territory, in the mountains of the northeastern part of the country, near the city of Ardahan. The river travels for just over 200 kilometers before reaching the border with Georgia. Water quality and quantity in the Turkish portion of the Kura has historically been comparatively good vis-à-vis its downstream riparians. In comparison to decades-long controversies among countries in the management of the Tigris and Euphrates basins, transboundary governance of the Kura has thus far been relatively straightforward and uneventful for Turkey (Kibaroğlu et al. 2011, Klaphake and Kramer 2011, Kankal and Uzlu 2014). For these reasons, my well-intentioned friend and mentor in Turkey shook

his head in surprise and mild disappointment when I told him I was writing my dissertation on the Kura, lamenting, "But there are no problems with the Kura!"

It is this perception of "no problems" – particularly by Turkish bureaucrats and gatekeepers – that makes the Kura important to study, since the existence of problems is a matter of perspective. The country has yet to engage in formal region-wide cooperation over management of the Kura with Georgia and Azerbaijan. Kibaroglu et al. (2011) describe the Kura as (problematically) "understudied and barely considered" in Turkish water policy. From the point of view of bureaucrats involved in crafting Turkish transboundary water strategies, the problems that exist in the Kura pale in comparison to the Tigris and Euphrates, where Turkey has for decades famously disagreed with downstream riparian countries Syria and Iraq over equitable use of water from these basins.

Perspectives differ from the official Turkish view, however, both downstream and at the local level in Turkey's Kura basin. The primary concern for downstream riparian countries is water quantity, which has begun to be impacted by Turkey's hydropower development on the Kura. Georgia in particular has lamented Turkey's unannounced withdrawals of water from the Kura, for environmental reasons and because of the impact on downstream hydropower development in Georgia. Unpredictable water volumes can render electricity production volumes unreliable and can affect the economic return from hydroelectric projects. For Azerbaijan, as the most water-stressed country in the basin, water quantity is always a concern.[24]

Turkey's hydropower development is presently the greatest concern originating in Turkish territory for transboundary management of the Kura River. Turkey has embarked on an ambitious

[24] See the Azerbaijan National Water Strategy, 2016.

plan to increase hydropower production in the country, generating 30% of electricity using renewable sources by 2030 (Turkish Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources). Because of the hydropower potential in the neighboring Çoruh basin, the State Hydraulic Works of Turkey has announced plans to divert water from the Kura into the nearby Çoruh River, in order to boost that river's capacity for producing hydroelectric energy. Currently, eleven dams and hydroelectric stations are planned for the Çoruh, meeting over 6% of total electricity demand in Turkey (DSI 2009). The diversion of water will reportedly reduce water volumes at the Turkey-Georgian border by 70-80%, depending on the source of the information, even though a representative of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has stated that the diversion has no harmful impact. The State Hydraulic Works has simply stated that its projects around Ardahan will help protect residents from flooding (DSI website, 2017).

Since 2011, members of the community in Ardahan have organized to protest the diversion of water from the Kura, citing the ecological impacts on their community and going so far as to travel to Georgia in support of their cause. The various organizations working to preserve the Kura environment and environmental flows in the river are truly grassroots. A Georgian stakeholder with whom I spoke echoed the concerns of the community organizations in Ardahan, stating that "we are trying to collaborate with Turkey, [but] it's really a problem in the Kura but also the Çoruh because of [Turkey's] hydropower construction. There is a permanent problem with the flow in the Kura."

The puzzles explored in chapters 3 and 4 explain how development projects affect state-society relations in two ways. Chapter 3 explains how projects use brokers and translators to creatively reframe notions of participation to meet development organization objectives, while simultaneously endearing the development project to the state. Chapter 4 shows how side

payments can benefit the implementation of development projects, albeit in ways that can bypass opportunities for local stakeholder engagement.

The case of Turkey poses a different question: what can we learn from a control case? Though Turkey is a critical part of the story as the headwaters of the Kura River, Turkey is not part of the Kura II Project – although the country was originally envisioned to be, and in spite of the fact that the downstream riparian countries in the Kura very much want their participation in the project. Adding to the irony of Turkey's absence from the Kura II Project is that Turkey is the UNDP headquarters for Europe and the CIS, and the project is administered out of Istanbul as part of the UNDP hub's regional portfolio. Furthermore, there are a number of local initiatives within Turkey funded by the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) which could theoretically provide brokers and translators on the ground. Local NGOs, most prominently KuzeyDoğa, are already involved in collaborating with the Small Grants Programme in advocating for the protection of wetlands and prevention of erosion in the Kura and Aras basins within Turkish territory.

The puzzle, then, is why the grassroots efforts in Turkey endeavoring to preserve the environmental flows and riparian environment of the Kura river – initiatives taken in cooperation with UNDP in some cases – are unable to connect to the broader transboundary efforts to water management in the Kura, despite the fact that these are prime examples of public participation and mobilization in preservation of the Kura river basin. How is the ability of brokers and translators to connect to local communities in the Kura basin affected by the presence or absence of a project? What insights does Turkey's absence allow into the role, as well as the limits, of side payments to engender cooperation? Lastly, what does the case of Turkey tell us about the capacity of development projects to change state-society relations in natural resource governance?

To answer these questions, this chapter begins with a discussion of Turkey's contentious relationships over water sharing with downstream riparian countries in the Tigris-Euphrates basin, explaining how Turkey's main priority in transboundary water management is not prejudicing its ability to exploit fresh water for economic development in other transboundary basins which coincide with Turkish territory. The chapter continues with a discussion of local initiatives in the Kura basin in opposition to diversion of the Kura to the Çoruh River. Despite the presence of local environmental activism and small-scale UN-funded programs in the Kura basin, these groups and projects are unable to connect with transboundary donor-funded projects in a sustained manner because of the lack of Turkish state-level stakeholder support. I discuss the disconnect between the Global Environment Facility's International Waters projects and local projects, focusing on the GEF Small Grants Programme, and engage in a comparison with the South China Sea in order to explain why this disconnect exists.

The last question is, what does the case of Turkey tell us about the capacity of development projects to change state-society relations in natural resource governance? This chapter demonstrates the necessity of high-level political support for transboundary water management regimes, and presents the insight that changing state-society relations through development projects must begin with a focus on the state. This chapter also casts a different light on the seemingly contradictory nature of side payments. Despite the fact that side payments can appear to reinforce domestic silos and bypass participation objectives, the capacity of development brokers to creatively reframe the objectives of the project in politically palatable terms opens up opportunity for informal cooperation among stakeholders that does not exist outside of multilateral donor projects.

While the problems of the OGB pipeline can begin to be indirectly addressed within the frame of science for governance in Azerbaijan, the lack of connection to state actors leaves no opportunity for negotiation or creative reframing in Turkey in order to address the issues surrounding the diversion of the Kura River or the preservation of the basin environment. The high politicization of the issue and the ensuing inability to solicit state champions, combined with the institutional gap within GEF that inhibits collaboration between GEF International Waters projects and Small Grants Programme projects, precludes the Kura II Project from officially connecting with local initiatives in Turkey.

Turkey and its Transboundary Basins

The objectives of my field research in Turkey were twofold. The first was to acquire a better understanding of the drivers of Turkey's transboundary water policy in the Kura basin, and particularly the effect of the GAP and the Tigris-Euphrates river basin in shaping that policy. The second objective was to take advantage of my proximity to the UNDP Istanbul hub in order to understand from senior UNDP administrators how the process of brokerage and translation worked in practice.

My field research in Turkey played out much differently from what I intended, presenting me with different insights as a result. I had arranged to spend several months in Ankara at a think tank in the spring of 2016, conducting research with Turkish water policy experts and meeting with contacts at relevant ministries. I also planned to travel to Ardahan and Kars in order to see the river in its geography and interact with the local community organizations engaged in activism for the preservation of the Kura. After bombings occurred in Ankara in February and March 2016, I took the suggestion from my Ankara contacts to postpone my research there until the early fall. In the meantime, I ended up spending additional time conducting research in Istanbul, as well as

returning to Georgia and Azerbaijan, and later heading to Sri Lanka for an internal meeting of administrators and consultants for GEF International Waters. My plane ticket was booked to return to Turkey in August 2016, until a coup attempt took place in July of that year. Due to the political and institutional tumult in the aftermath of the coup, again at the suggestion of my local contacts, my plans to conduct research in Ankara were put on hold indefinitely.

On the second objective – conducting research at the UNDP hub in Istanbul – my interviews and meetings were more fruitful than I had expected in helping me discern how the intervention of development actors shapes state-society relations in resource management. Considering my other field work in light of my experience in Istanbul, I came to a new understanding of the role of the state in shaping, and sometimes constraining, the possibilities for public participation in transboundary water management projects.

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Turkey's general approach to water management has been to promote economic development rather than preserve environmental flows (Berkun 2010, Sümer 2016; Interview, May 2017). As a result, transboundary watercourses figure prominently in Turkey's development programs (Kankal and Uzlu, 2014). According to the Turkish State Hydraulic Works (DSI), nearly 40 percent of Turkey's fresh water potential is characterized as transboundary (Ibid; DSI 2009). Turkey is upstream from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Iran in the Kura–Aras basin, Georgia in the Çoruh basin, and Syria and Iraq in the Euphrates– Tigris basin. Turkey is located downstream from Lebanon and Syria in the Orontes basin and Bulgaria in the Maritza basin (Kankal and Uzlu 2014).

Most of the management issues surrounding Turkey's transboundary rivers are related to dam construction for irrigation and hydropower purposes, and the impact of these works on water quantity available for downstream riparian countries (Kibaroğlu et al. 2011, xxix). It has been Turkey's stance that its policies avoid significant harm (*ciddi zarar*) to downstream riparian countries while still defending the view that waters located within the political boundaries of a country are the right of that country to exploit (MFA, Kibaroğlu et al. 2011, Yildiz 2014).[25] More so than for Georgia and Azerbaijan, transboundary rivers are a contentious topic for Turkey because of notorious water sharing disputes with Syria and Iraq in the Tigris (Dicle) and Euphrates (Fırat) river basin.

In Turkey's official policy towards transboundary waters, it is telling that the only transboundary watercourses mentioned by name are the Tigris and Euphrates.[26] Indeed, it is impossible to discuss Turkey's role in and approach to transboundary water management in the Kura without reference to the Tigris-Euphrates basin. The controversy over Turkey's use of the Tigris and Euphrates is extensively discussed elsewhere in academic literature across disciplines ranging from hydrology to political science to security studies (Biswas 1994, Wolf 1994, Allan 2000, Postel and Wolf 2001, Kibaroğlu 2008, Erickson and Lorenz 2014). To summarize briefly here, the problems which have arisen are due to Turkey's use of the water from these rivers for the

[25] Specifically, "Türkiye, suların hakça, akılcı ve optimum kullanımını, suyun yararlarının paylaşılmasını ve diğer kıyıdaş ülkelere "ciddi zarar" (significant harm) verilmemesini savunmaktadır." See the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs website on Turkey's transboundary water policy at http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye_nin-sinir-asan-sular-politikasinin-ana-hatlari-.tr.mfa.

[26] From the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs website on Turkey's transboundary water policy (http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye_nin-sinir-asan-sular-politikasinin-ana-hatlari-.tr.mfa):
"Su kaynakları ve sınır aşan sular politikamızın temel esasları aşağıda sunulmaktadır:
- Tek bir nehir halinde denize dökülen Fırat ve Dicle Nehirlerinin tek bir havza oluşturduğu genel kabul görmektedir. İki nehir tek havza ilkesi Türkiye için vazgeçilmez bir koşuldur. Bu kapsamda iki nehrin toplam su potansiyelinin kıyıdaş üç ülkenin ihtiyaçlarını karşılamaya yeterli olduğu kanısındayız.
- Türkiye, Dicle ve Fırat suları konusunu tüm boyutlarıyla ve bütüncül bir yaklaşımla görüşmeye hazırdır. Bu çerçevede bir iyi niyet gösterisi olarak talep edilen bilgi ve veriler diğer kıyıdaş ülkelere iletilmiş ve bilgi değişiminin havza bazında karşılıklı olması gerektiği vurgulanmıştır."

massive array of dams and irrigation known by its Turkish acronym GAP (Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi, or Southeast Anatolian Project), a decades-long, multi-billion dollar project with grand political and infrastructural ambitions of spurring economic development through irrigated agriculture in the southeastern part of Turkey.

The international implications of the GAP's massive complex of dams have been the reduction of water volumes flowing to downstream riparian countries, namely Syria and Iraq. In the 1990s, when some of the major dams within the GAP complex were completed and their reservoirs were in the process of being filled, tensions rose with Syria and Iraq over the amount of water being withdrawn from the rivers. Although tensions subsided to a large extent after 1998, Turkey remains judicious about clearly and consistently defending its justification for exploiting the Tigris and Euphrates, and not setting any precedents that would potentially jeopardize its ability to pursue its GAP agenda.[27]

The Çoruh River Basin

In the middle of my discussion with an expert on international waters, the subject abruptly turned from Turkey's activity in the Kura basin to the Çoruh basin. "In the Çoruh, Turkey is *everywhere* on the upstream."

"Everywhere on the upstream?" Clearly I had some river management lingo to learn. It turns out that 'everywhere on the upstream' means exactly what it sounds like – Turkey has extensive plans for the upper 400 kilometers of the river that it controls. Eleven dams are planned to be built on the Çoruh in Turkey as part of the country's river development plan. Beyond those

[27] The effects of the GAP have also been met with domestic debate and resistance within Turkey for lack of attention to environmental concerns, historical heritage, and questionable economic and social benefits. See Tsakalidou (2014).

dams, other privately-funded initiatives are also in various stages of planning.[28] Similar to the grand designs of the GAP on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the Çoruh river basin has been the target of development plans since the 1960s based on its hydropower potential (Klaphake and Kramer 2014). The Çoruh is one of the ten fastest-flowing rivers in the world, with steep canyons contributing to its hydropower generation potential (Ibid: 253). According to the Turkish State Hydraulic Works, the Çoruh River alone has the potential to provide 13% of hydropower potential in the country.

Besides being adjacent river basins that both have Georgia as a downstream riparian country, the Çoruh and the Kura are soon to be linked in another way. The Beşikkaya dam, which is planned to be constructed on the Kura, includes plans to redirect a portion of captured water to the Çoruh in order to further increase the hydropower potential on the river. According to Turkey's former lead water negotiator, the reason for diverting the water of the Kura into the Çoruh is in order to realize Turkey's economic development plans. In his words, the diversion allows Turkey "to tap the capacity of both rivers."

The Kura (-Aras) River Basin in Turkey

With regard to the Kura-Aras basin, Turkey's role as an upstream country has been described as "understudied and barely considered" (Klaphake and Kramer 2011: 263). There are several reasons for this situation. One is the historical lack of controversy with neighbors and the fact that as of yet there have not been major problems with water quality or quantity in Turkish territory, although this situation is changing. Another is that the proportion of the river in Turkish territory water that the Kura provides to Turkey is smaller than that of other river basins,

[28] See discussion in Kankal et al. (2014).

particularly the Tigris and Euphrates. While the Kura-Aras river basin is the most important watershed in the South Caucasus region in terms of surface area, water flow, socioeconomic significance and freshwater ecosystems (ibid), the Kura and Aras do not have the same significance for Turkey on a national level. Turkey contributes 90% and 40% of total annual water discharge to the Euphrates and Tigris river basins, respectively, and 90% of the Çoruh basin but only about 14% of the Kura-Aras basin. While the Tigris-Euphrates and Çoruh have been described as Turkey's most important transboundary river basins for their hydropower and irrigation development projects (Kankal and Uzlu 2014), the Kura-Aras basin is squarely in fourth place.

Much of the older scholarship on the Kura-Aras basin in Turkey describes it as a relatively uneventful basin, with no major problems between Turkey riparian countries. According to a former affiliate of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, management of the Kura is "not an issue at the political level." However, the comparative lack of problems in the Kura, both domestically in Turkey and in terms of its relations with neighboring countries, is beginning to change. Wolf et al. (2003) have described the basin as "at risk" because of the water quality and quantity problems which already exist downstream of Turkey. As one former Georgian parliamentarian and NGO founder explained to me, "Turkey doesn't have communication for water management. They aren't interested in collaborating with others…. Turkey causes many problems in the Kura river. We sent a letter to the Turkish embassy here [in Tbilisi]. They have been building new hydroelectric power installations."

As is the case in the Tigris-Euphrates and Çoruh basins, hydropower plans in the Kura is both Turkey's main domestic priority and the greatest source of frustration for downstream riparian countries. Georgian state-level stakeholders had a great deal to say about Turkey's hydropower development on the Kura, which currently include the Kotanlı and Köroğlu dams; the filling of the

reservoirs for these dams triggered the complaints from Georgia ministry officials above. The Beşikkaya dam is still under construction, which will reportedly be the location of the underground pipes diverting water into the Çoruh.

Georgian state-level stakeholders across various ministries germane to water management were particularly concerned about Turkey's designs for the Kura, and the country's lack of involvement in the Kura II project. The first meeting in Georgia started with why Turkey was not involved in the Kura II project. Again came the usual refrain: "They are always invited to participate and observe, though they aren't at the point where they want to do that. They are developing their water resources independently."

Another meeting participant from Georgia chimed in by saying that they did have relations with Turkey on water quality. "We aren't working formally with them," was the response, "but we are involved in water politics meetings with a number of Turkish experts…. We started to engage in information exchange because Turkey built a reservoir near the border [with Georgia], and started to fill it without notifying us. This is why we asked [about their involvement in the Kura II project]."

Throughout my research in Georgia, stakeholders repeatedly expressed frustration with Turkey's management of the Kura. One senior official related to water management related the following:

> We are trying to collaborate with Turkey; it's really a problem in the Kura but also the Çoruh because of hydropower construction. There is a permanent problem with the flow in the Kura because they took water for the reservoir [of a dam]. We started a dialogue with their Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ours – the head of water resources management services. We asked when they would change the regime of water fluctuation and for the development of information exchange on water quality and hydrology. In truth, we did have messages when they were changing the water flow, but no regular contact. But now the Prime Minister is meeting with the Turkish side; transboundary cooperation will be on early warning systems [for flooding] and hydro peaking. On meteorological issues, on

> information from the ministry of the environment, we do collaborate in this regard. On hydro, we need to re-evaluate. Also regarding flooding. They are not party to the UNECE [Helsinki] convention or the UN convention on international watercourses. At this stage, they just give us the info on what they are going to do – wash out the reservoir, for example.[29]

Turkey has plans for four dams on the Kura and its tributaries in Turkish territory, including the Beşikkaya dam, from which water is planned to be diverted from the Kura river into the Çoruh river in order to boost the latter's hydropower potential. As the immediate downstream country for both the Kura and the Çoruh rivers, Georgian stakeholders are particularly concerned with this development, as are local communities in Turkey in the vicinity of the Kura river. I discuss this in greater detail below.

Turkey and the Kura II Project

My meetings at the UNDP hub in Istanbul were useful in explaining some of the hidden drivers of development projects. One of these revelations was the fact that development projects have to spend serious effort on procuring the support of gatekeepers at the state level. The irony was that my understanding of this reality happened at the UNDP regional hub in Istanbul, where no side payment or framing had yet convinced Turkey of the value of participating in any of the phases of the Kura project – or any donor-funded transboundary fresh water project for the past ten years, for that matter.

According to one development professional at UNDP, "It's not very often that [countries] are dying for a project. We have to convince governments of the importance of a project… We have to convince stakeholders to go forward."

[29] Interview, April 2016.

This idea points to the importance of brokers and translators in negotiating with state gatekeepers to go forward with a project, as well as the importance of high-level gatekeeper support for a project. The act of convincing stakeholders to go forward begins with the gatekeepers, with information being filtered through the mid-level bureaucrats. The process of negotiation, which I observed many times over the course of my fieldwork, was always an affirmation of the value of the project for that particular country. When stakeholders would request something that was outside of the scope of the project, the project leadership would explain how it was possible to change outputs – the specific measures that the project took – but not outcomes, which were the pre-defined, council-approved GEF goals for the project. Knowing what was possible in terms of meeting GEF requirements, and finding outputs that met the needs of the state but still fell within the GEF-defined realm of possibility, were the definition of an effective broker and translator.

At the beginning of the Kura project, however, this intersection of possibility and desirability was never attained for Turkey. According to those with institutional memory, the initial idea for a project in the Kura river basin was the product of UNDP consultants in the early 2000s. Back in the initial stages of the Kura project, Turkey, Armenia, and Iran were all envisioned to be participants, in order to include all riparian countries in the broader Kura-Aras river basin (personal communication). Turkey and Iran were off of the list of participating countries before the first phase of the project started in 2008, but Armenia's participation meant that the scope of the project still encompassed the broader Kura-Aras basin. Armenia was a member of the first two phases of the Kura-Aras project but opted not to be a part of the third phase, thus reducing the scope just the Kura basin for the latest and final stage of the project.

In meeting with a development professional knowledgeable on Turkish freshwater politics, I asked why Turkey had been part of the initial Kura-Aras basin project but never participated.

According to them, “Turkey decided just before the World Water Forum [in 2005] that they weren’t going to be involved in freshwater transboundary cooperation.”

“Why?”

“They just decided not to.” Stakeholders with knowledge of the situation reportedly said it was for political reasons.

Later, I asked Turkey’s former lead water negotiator why this was the case. “We didn’t need the assistance,” he said.

If “Where’s Turkey?” was the most oft-repeated refrain I heard throughout my fieldwork, “Projects need high-level support” was a close second. Through the testimony I listened to and the observation I engaged in, it became clear why the administrators of development projects will engage in compromise and distribute seemingly counterproductive side payments: it is a means of acquiring the high-level support that transboundary projects need to move forward, because progress requires state support. For public participation, brokers and translators engage in creative reframing in order to maintain the outcome of participation, while making the output palatable to state-level gatekeepers. What appears to be a tacit reinforcement of domestic institutional silos in the process of brokering the local is a side payment aimed at ensuring this support.

Another development professional explained it differently. “[Development organizations] are clients of governments… the problem is when governments don’t care [about] or steer [projects].” The problem that arises when gatekeepers do not care about or steer projects is that the project gets bogged down by a lack of high-level support. Mid-level bureaucrats, who might otherwise be acting as agents of the gatekeepers, have more leeway to start exacting side payments for their cooperation – ones which can be contradictory to the overall ends of the project. While

previous chapters have highlighted how side payments can contradict certain objectives of the development project, in each case, these compromises were due to project leadership making compromises to accomplish other objectives. In the absence of interested and involved high-level gatekeepers, it is difficult for projects to maintain the momentum that produces the narrative of success that Mosse and Lewis (2006) speak of.

Yet the benefits of high-level political support can limit the informal negotiations that occur within the context of development projects. Unlike the other countries in the Kura basin, Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a Transboundary Waters Department. Given the water diplomacy issues which have arisen in the Tigris and Euphrates basin, it is not surprising that Turkey, out of all of the countries in the Kura basin, would allocate political and diplomatic expertise to transboundary water management. Yet if transboundary water management has already been elevated to the point of becoming a major international political issue, this removes opportunities for informal negotiations and the allocation of side payments in a transboundary project.

Recalling the negotiations between Azerbaijan and Georgia over the OGB pipeline, the fact that the Ministries of Foreign Affairs were not involved in the meetings was considered a benefit to the project, because they were perceived as not having the necessary technical expertise to facilitate a solution to the project. Involving the Ministries of Foreign Affairs was seen by the participating stakeholders as something which would slow the negotiation process. In the case of Turkey, the fact that there is an explicit transboundary water policy as part of Turkey's broader foreign policy means that any transboundary water issue is already elevated to a high political level. It also means that the institutional ambiguity in Georgia and Azerbaijan between ministries responsible for various aspects of water management also does not exist in Turkey. With a highly centralized and clearly delineated set of institutions for managing the technical and political

dimensions of transboundary waters, it is unsurprising that the Turkish state considers the assistance offered by development projects as unnecessary.

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"What is Turkey losing from this setup?" I asked a UNDP professional. "From not being involved in the Kura project, or any other transboundary river project?"

"Partnerships with neighboring countries, and the benefits it could generate. The minute Turkey is interested, though, they know where to find us. Through Ankara, our office is constantly in touch."

Beyond the Istanbul hub, the Turkey country office for UNDP is based in Ankara. UNDP projects in Turkey, particularly at the local scale, are prolific. The UNDP Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Turkey has been active for over 25 years, disbursing over $5 million in small grants at the community scale, including in the Kura basin (SGP Turkey website). These projects range from promoting sustainable recreational fishing practices, to combating desertification, to creating a protected wildlife corridor in part of the Kura basin.

The planned diversion of the Kura into the Çoruh is the impetus behind a sustained grassroots movement in Ardahan against the project, ever since rumors of such a project began in 2011.[30] These efforts have been largely led by a community organization started in 1987, the Kura Valley Rivers and Lakes Protection Organization, led by retired local police chief Cevdet Şentürk. This organization has taken a leadership role in lobbying against piping the waters of the Kura into the Çoruh.[31] They allege that the expected diversion of 70% of the Kura at the Beşikkaya dam,

[30] "Kura Derneği ARDAFED'le Birlikte Kura'ya Sahip Çıkıyor." *Sanal Basın*, 22 October 2017
[31] "Ercan Şirin: Çıldır Gölü kan ağlıyor, Kura Nehri can çekişiyor." *Ardahan Haber*, 16 November 2017.

where two of the tributaries to the Kura meet, will leave the rest of the Turkish portion of the basin at risk of drought, with potential impacts on agricultural production in the Ardahan plain.[32] These groups also point to the potential impact on the native pine forests in the region, as well as wildlife biodiversity.

Figure 5.1 Map of existing and planned dam and hydropower projects in the Turkish portion of the Kura River Basin, including water transfer to the Çoruh River (in red) (Photo credit: Sanal Basın, 2018)

[32] "Kura Nehri'nin Çoruh'a akıtılmasına tepki." *Ardahan Ses*, 15 June 2017.

This organization has also pointed to the problems which arise in Georgia due to reduction of flow in the Kura.[33] Georgia's wastewater management facilities are already insufficient, causing much of the pollution in the Kura that flows downstream to Azerbaijan. Further reductions in flow of the Kura could potentially aggravate the existing water quality problems in the downstream.

Figure 5.2 Grassroots mobilization against the diversion of the Kura River, Ardahan, Turkey. (Photo credit: Sanal Basın, 2017)

The long-standing civil society mobilization in Turkey's part of the Kura basin, its advocacy for sustainable use of the river in Turkish territory, and its interest in engaging in cross-border collaboration with Georgian counterparts exemplifies the kind of public participation that GEF projects would want to support and capitalize upon. In the case of the Kura basin, and with the support of the GEF Small Grants Program (SGP), a protected wildlife corridor was created, with the benefit of helping to combat erosion in the basin. This project was a major feat for the

[33] Yaşar Doğu Kara. "Kura Nehri Gürcistan büyük elçiliğinde." *Ardahan Haber*, 9 September 2011.

SGP, as well as for the NGO which supported it, KuzeyDoğa. The director of KuzeyDoğa, Dr. Çağan Şekercioğlu, has helped to launch preservation efforts in the Aras as well. KuzeyDoğa and Şekercioğlu's work is focused on biodiversity and habitat preservation rather than water management in the Kura, yet his work – similar to that of Şentürk and the Kura Valley Rivers and Lakes Protection Organization – is the type of community activism that fits the goals and definition of stakeholder engagement, particularly for the incorporation of local knowledge into development projects.

Several features of KuzeyDoğa distinguish it from other environmental NGOs active in the Kura basin. One is the fact that Şekercioğlu is a reknowned ornithologist and academic, who worked relentlessly to win the support of local officials in order to create a wildlife corridor in the Kura basin.[34] Secondly, his NGO, KuzeyDoğa, is engaged in promoting community and student participation in scientific research and biodiversity preservation within the wildlife corridor. Şekercioğlu's form of activism is not one of overt opposition to state-sponsored projects, though he has publicly lamented Erdogan's goal of two thousand dams by the year 2023, the hundredth anniversary of the Turkish Republic (Batuman 2011). Rather, Şekercioğlu has been able to raise the profile of KuzeyDoğa's initiative among key state-level actors, getting the political support needed for the GEF Small Grants Programme to support such a project.

Paradoxically, the Kura II project leadership is unable to collaborate with any of these well-established local organizations, even though institutional and personal relationships existed between the project leadership and UNDP staff on the ground in Turkey. It was simply not possible for the Kura project to officially link with any existing project on the ground on Turkish territory,

[34] See Batuman (2011) for a detailed description of Şekercioğlu's work.

outside of official business with UNDP administrators. Such activity would never be considered by project leadership; it would prevent any potential cooperation in the future because it would be considered a violation of state sovereignty. A senior GEF administrator explained the situation: "When we are in the realm of implementing an agreement, we are in the realm of sovereign states. That sets the stage for local inclusion and the 'socialization' of the agreement" (Interview, May 2016).

The Small Grants Programme and International Waters: The Case of the South China Sea

In order to provide incentives for GEF projects to foster a closer connection with local communities on the ground, the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) was founded as a pilot program in 1992, with its first full operational phase in 1996 (SGP website). The SGP provides small grants of up to $50,000 for capacity building at the community level and for civil society organizations. The SGP has supported over 20,000 projects at the community level since 1992, with approximately half of these projects falling into the biodiversity focal area. Just over 1,000 of projects and $27 million in funding fall under the International Waters focal area, the area with the most full-size transboundary projects.

The SGP has been successful in establishing trusted networks within the countries where it operates, and its model of community-level interventions has been described as perhaps even more sustainable than many of the full-size projects funded by GEF (Chen et al. 2013). Through the SGP's fourth funding cycle in 2011-2014, a total of $450 million in projects had been funded by the Programme. Even with the $111 million allocated to the SGP in 2015-2016, however, the magnitude of GEF replenishment cycles far outweighs the funding of the SGP – and thus limits the SGP's effectiveness and added incentive for cooperation. According to one GEF employee, "The SGP has so little money [to distribute], it's like charity" (Interview, May 2016).

Despite its comparatively limited budget, however, the SGP has in some cases proven effective in connecting local communities with transboundary projects. To further explain this counterintuitive conclusion, it is useful to engage in a comparison with another example of international waters management: the South China Sea. Using the example of the South China Sea, Chen et al. (2013) summarize the disconnect between full-size GEF International Waters projects and GEF Small Grants Programme projects focusing on community engagement:

> Large-scale international waters management projects usually focus on fostering formal intergovernmental cooperation processes, which often lead to limited on-the-ground impact. In contrast, community-based international waters projects are often local, individualistic and stand-alone projects, lacking regional linkages and perspectives.

In their study of the integration between the GEF Small Grants Programme and the South China Sea International Waters project, Chen et al. found that when projects at the community level were specifically designed to address issues in the South China Sea project, the local activities contributed to regionally-defined goals. They present the Small Grants Program as a counterbalance to the GEF process which "still largely revolves around government actors only, frequently lacks the participation of local communities and non-governmental actors in the process and ignores local, indigenous knowledge" (Chen et al. 2013: 245). "The [South China Sea] case demonstrates a proven modality to ensure that internationally, or regionally, developed approaches are implemented locally, and that local activities are integrated and linked to achieve regional objectives aimed at maintaining holistic environmental integrity" (Ibid).

While Chen et al. make a compelling case for the potential of the SGP in fostering connections between full-size and community scale projects and of the value in closer cooperation between the local and the international, they do not explain what made the South China Sea such a unique case – nor why this type of cooperation does not occur more frequently in full-size

International Waters projects. Being in Istanbul presented me with the opportunity to interact with development professionals familiar with GEF International Waters projects, the Small Grants Programme, and the particular case of the South China Sea. My ethnographically-informed research produced an answer not surprising in itself, albeit very much surprising in that it is barely discussed in any GEF literature or external analysis of International Waters projects: integration between the large project and the Small Grants Programme projects occurred because of political will and initiative by state actors which aligned with the will and interest of local actors. Chen and Ganapin (2016) have elsewhere argued that without combining local-level and regional intergovernmental-level actions, the response by donor-funded projects is inadequate. The "top-down" and "bottom-up" approach produced the optimal outcome in the South China Sea that eludes many other International Waters projects, but the reason for cooperation was state-level acceptance and support for combining the full-size project with the local projects – something which Chen et al. (2013) and Chen and Ganapin (2016) do not explicitly acknowledge in their writings.

When I asked high-level administrators affiliated with GEF why the SGP was not more widely used in international waters projects to increase local stakeholder participation, answers supported the conclusion that the commitment of state-level actors was crucial. In the case of the South China Sea, the requirements for incorporating the Small Grants Programme were built into the initial diagnostic and information-collecting process by state actors and project consultants – something which does not normally occur (Interview, May 2016). The fact that the Small Grants Programme was already active in the South China Sea and viewed in a positive light by key state-level actors was a decisive factor in this exceptional circumstance. One development professional

stated that "until change occurs from the top down, it's impossible [for the SGP] to scale up" (Interview, May 2016).

Yet another factor contributes to limited incorporation of Small Grants Programme projects in full-size GEF International Waters projects: the lack of any sort of institutional mandate to do so on either side. "The mechanism for involving local stakeholders, the SGP, runs on a parallel track. They have their own money, priorities, funding cycles – their expectations are different. [Full-size GEF projects] are competing for different resources – they are encouraged to have a multifocal approach. And countries have different objectives. Rarely is it possible to blend country resources [across the SGP and GEF projects]" (Interview, March 2016). Other International Waters development professionals spoke of SGP funds already being allocated to other projects in their respective countries, of not having a working relationship with SGP country coordinators in order to be able to corner funds, and of formal and informal limitations upon civil society organizations within their country that made the state-level bureaucrats wary of any form of collaboration.

Development projects are designed to achieve particular outcomes rather than meet specific ministry or state objectives. Yet as the client of the state, a donor organization has to demonstrate the value of the project as well as find ways to seek compromise with the objectives sought by state-level gatekeepers. This is where the process of brokerage and translation plays a crucial part in making development projects happen. In a transboundary context, where the number of actors is greater and issues of sovereignty are at stake, ensuring that a project has sufficient high-level support across all participating countries is crucial for continuing to move the project forward and crafting a narrative of success. The focus of development professionals is therefore on determining

outputs and distributing side payments that preserve that momentum, even if such focus comes at the expense of participatory objectives. This trade-off ensures that the project moves forward.

It is also the pursuit of high-level support – among actors that are disconnected from local concerns, knowledge and processes – that limits the effect of development projects on state-society relations in the way that it is intended on paper. While facilitating participatory practices in water management may be a priority for GEF and may be a proven method for getting the institutional setup right (Ostrom 2010), the time it takes to do so can only be spent in contexts where that time is not being allocated to ensuring state-level support. Stated otherwise, long-term, substantive engagement of local communities or civil society organizations occurs in cases where state actors themselves encourage or facilitate such collaboration.

In Turkey, Georgia and Azerbaijan, the GEF Small Grants Programme is not affiliated with any International Waters projects – including Kura II – because the funds have already been allocated to other projects. In the case of the Kura basin, where the Small Grants Programme has helped KuzeyDoğa achieve the designation of a wildlife corridor in part of the basin, the absence of Turkey from the full-size transboundary project prevents formal collaboration with what might be considered a model instance of local participation.

As large development organizations continue to be scrutinized for their state-centric approach to development assistance (Galvin and Habib 2003), the GEF is no exception. Returning to the puzzle posed at the beginning of this dissertation, why does local stakeholder participation in transboundary GEF projects remain limited, despite the GEF's insistence on the importance of local participation? For the International Waters focal area, where transboundary projects require high-level political support by state actors, going beyond fulfilling the minimum GEF requirements for public participation and implementation by local stakeholders remains a

challenge. The incentive structure for incorporating local stakeholders in project development and implementation is insufficient within the GEF in general, and within the International Waters focal area in particular. The collaboration between consultants, implementing agencies and state actors needed to secure GEF approval for a project leaves little room for going beyond cursory participation requirements if the state itself does not promote this participatory agenda. When state interest in, or connections to, local stakeholders or to civil society organizations is lacking, it is rare that consultants leading projects have the capacity to overcome this deficiency. The literature on the persistence of the donor-decentralization gap supports this conclusion, with Fritzen (2014, unpublished) noting that donor agencies are frequently ill-equipped to manage the complexity of working directly with local governments and agencies.

The example of the South China Sea case study also empirically supports this conclusion. The Small Grants Programme endeavors to go beyond the formal mechanisms for including civil society organizations in GEF governance by offering grants for community-level projects. While the SGP in the South China Sea has been successful in creating linkages between local-level stakeholders and a full-size GEF project, research into the reasons for the success of the South China Sea demonstrate that it was the political will of the states and the previous connections between state-level actors and SGP staff that created the circumstances for exemplary cooperation in this instance.

The latter point also draws attention to the importance of intra-organization coordination, also discussed by Fritzen (2014, unpublished), who points out that different sections of a donor office develop different relationships with state and civil society actors. This can impair support for local governance projects because "a combination of upper-level stakeholders in the ministries and donor units must coordinate both horizontally, across traditional sectoral partners, and

downwards, across levels of government, to provide integrated technical assistance and monitoring of program implementation." Indeed, in the case of the SGP, part of the problem in integrating with full-size projects is the siloes existing between these two different branches of the GEF, and the absence of an explicit institutional imperative for the SGP to connect with large transboundary projects.

The case of the South China Sea International Waters project demonstrates that, paradoxically, state-level support is crucial for incorporating local stakeholders. Rather than trying to fight against the state-focused, centralized bureaucracy of large development organizations, development professionals involved in project management place greater emphasis on seeking out and collaborating with these "champions" – ideally within the state bureaucracy – who can bridge different levels of actors, from the state down to the local scale. Such individuals can navigate local micro-politics and help secure the will and capacity to ensure that local stakeholders and civil society organizations are incorporated into large transboundary projects.

Conclusion

Returning to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, what insights does Turkey's absence allow into the role, as well as the limits, of side payments to engender cooperation? How is the ability of brokers and translators to connect to local communities in the Kura basin affected by the presence or absence of a project? Lastly, what does the case of Turkey tell us about the capacity of development projects to change state-society relations in natural resource governance?

Initially, I thought that Turkey's absence from the Kura II Project ruined what was otherwise a perfect comparative case study across the three riparian countries of the Kura River.

It was only as I began to reflect upon my research design that I understood how Turkey's absence from the project allowed me to draw stronger conclusions about the impact of multilateral donor projects on state-society relations by seeing the effects of *not* participating in a project.

The addition of Turkey as a case study is instructive in two ways. One is as a control case, as a country outside of the Kura project, but nonetheless a country whose actions in water management affect downstream riparians. The second is as an example of development organizations being able to foster local involvement in projects within the Kura basin while remaining unable to establish champions within the Turkish state for higher-order cooperation. The Turkish case reinforces the argument that high-level political support is needed for transboundary development schemes.

Because of its contentious relationships over water sharing with downstream riparian countries in the Tigris-Euphrates basin, Turkey's main priority in transboundary water management is not prejudicing its ability to exploit fresh water for economic development in other transboundary basins which coincide with Turkish territory. Because the Kura-Aras basin is the most important transboundary basin in the South Caucasus, negotiations with neighbors are a priority for Georgia and Azerbaijan; this same level of priority does not exist for Turkey. The case of the Tigris-Euphrates basin shows the limits of side payments: they can only be useful when state-level gatekeepers first embrace the official transcript of a project, and then seek to expand their negotiation beyond that transcript. In Turkey's case, state policy prevents embracing the official transcript in the first place – thus leaving no room for side payments.

Despite the presence of local environmental activism and small-scale UN-funded programs in the Kura basin, these groups and projects are unable to connect with transboundary donor-funded projects in a sustained manner because of the lack of Turkish state support. The case of the

South China Sea demonstrates that cooperation between transboundary projects and local initiatives exists when the political will by state-level gatekeepers also exists. Conversely, the lack of state support for collaboration with local communities precludes such cooperation between transboundary and local initiatives.

Lastly, what does the case of Turkey tell us about the capacity of development projects to change state-society relations in natural resource governance? This chapter demonstrates the necessity of high-level political support for transboundary water management regimes, arguing that changing state-society relations through development projects must begin with a focus on the state. This chapter also casts a different light on the seemingly contradictory nature of side payments. Despite the fact that side payments can appear to reinforce domestic silos and contradict participation objectives, the capacity of brokers and translators to creatively reframe the objectives of the project in politically palatable terms opens up opportunity for informal cooperation among stakeholders that does not exist outside of multilateral donor projects. As demonstrated by the case of the OGB pipeline in Azerbaijan, promoting science for governance may skim over the local objections to the pipeline, yet it also creates the space for framing transboundary groundwater issues in an apolitical way that allows local problems to be addressed obliquely. Development projects must depoliticize issues in order to include them in their agenda; hence the fact that development projects, including in the Kura basin, have often begun with technical projects to build trust, working their way up to more complex issues and forms of cooperation (Vener and Campana 2010). In the case of the OGB pipeline, using the frame of 'science for governance' allows for this de-politicization, and for approaching problems in a way that shows deference to political sensitivities and state priorities.

While the problems of the OGB pipeline can begin to be indirectly addressed within the frame of science for governance in Azerbaijan, creating the opportunity for negotiation and creative reframing in Turkey in order to address the issues surrounding the diversion of the Kura river or the preservation of the basin environment is a more complicated process. The high politicization of the issue and makes it difficult to solicit state champions, combined with the institutional gap within GEF that inhibits collaboration between GEF International Waters projects and Small Grants Programme projects.

Understanding the change in state-society relations brought about by the massive resources that development projects mobilize thus begins by focusing on the state, and more specifically, state-level actors. Seeking out and collaborating with champions can assist development professionals in building the necessary strategic relationships with key actors across levels in order to be able to design and sustain projects with meaningful local stakeholder participation. As one development professional noted, "At the end of the day, we are not here to fully solve problems. It isn't possible. We are here to create dialogue. If we are able to move the existing dialogue forward, then we will have done our jobs." How that dialogue progresses, and shapes state-society relations in the process, is the subject of the concluding chapter.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

What are the creative possibilities and inherent limitations of outside assistance?
What are the tensions between aid and dependency, between benevolence and autonomy?
And how would you have gone about the task [of development work] –
how would you have acted – if you were me?

Robert Klitgaard, *Tropical Gangsters*

The green cliffs of Borjomi are the backdrop outside my open window. I can hear the sound of the Kura's rapids flowing through the center of this Georgian mountain village, famous since Czarist times for its mineral waters. A sign next to the river warns would-be polluters that this is a protected area due to its prized groundwater. Less than seventy kilometers upstream is the Turkish border; one hundred kilometers beyond that is the city of Ardahan and the source of the Kura. A road sign just outside of town announces that Baku is some 700 kilometers southeast.

I am in the middle of the Kura River Basin, literally and figuratively, attending the meeting of the Kura II Project's international Steering Committee. The committee is reviewing the progress made on the project's five components over the course of the last year. Instead of attending as a graduate student observer, I am now here as a participant: an expert on the Kura II project team responsible for planning and executing stakeholder engagement for the project. The basin I have studied for the past four years is now a laboratory to test my observations on stakeholder engagement. The development scholar and practitioner Robert Klitgaard's hypothetical question – "What would you do if you were me?" – echoes through my head. What will I do, and what can I do, now that I am in Klitgaard's position? What is it about transboundary water governance and stakeholder engagement that I have learned by situating myself at this confluence of transnational, national, and local actors in the Kura River Basin?

My ultimate objective, professionally and personally, remains to understand the contingent process of how transboundary water governance is implemented among local stakeholders. My pursuit of this objective led me to the work of the Global Environment Facility, and the underlying puzzle of my dissertation: if local stakeholder participation is a critical element of transboundary water management and IWRM, why is participation often circumscribed in GEF international waters projects?

To answer this puzzle, I observed a GEF-sponsored, UNDP-implemented transboundary waters project in the Kura River Basin that had both an explicit local stakeholder engagement strategy and long-standing relationships with state-level stakeholders in the region. The Kura II Project's objective is "Advancing IWRM Across the Kura River Basin." My research presented me with the rare opportunity to observe the inner workings of the project, to understand the processes of negotiation among different actors, and to conduct ethnographic scholarship on the work of global water policy experts – an area which Mukhtarov and Daniell (2016) describe as hitherto unexplored.

The UNDP-GEF Kura II Project was an ideal case study for several reasons. Besides the fact that the project had an explicit and comprehensive stakeholder engagement component, the project's longevity meant that the development professionals associated with it had a broad and established network of relationships with actors at different scales. Thus, the Kura II project offered the opportunity to understand how these networks, and the contingent processes of negotiations between actors, end up shaping my dependent variable of participation strategies in transboundary water management projects.

The Kura River Basin is in need of improved water management at the transboundary level. Problems of water quantity and quality across borders, from groundwater to surface water

resources, plague the basin. These problems are the result of economic development pressures from hydropower construction, inadequate wastewater treatment, and burgeoning demand for municipal and agricultural water consumption. Flooding and drought events are occurring with greater frequency due to climate change. An Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) approach calls attention to the interconnected nature of these problems. In the absence of formal water management agreements among the riparian countries of the Kura, development projects such as Kura II attempt to fill in the governance gap. Given the impact of these water problems upon local communities, and the role of these stakeholders in perpetuating these problems as well, public participation is considered an essential tenet of GEF International Waters projects and the IWRM approach. My empirical objective was to understand how these international projects are implemented and translated to local stakeholders through participatory strategies.

My study was theoretically eclectic, integrating multiple literatures. I brought together a state-society approach to comparative political science, anthropological approaches to aid and participatory development, and the concept of side payments from the international relations field of political science. In terms of my contribution to the literature on state-society relations, the Kura II project was an opportunity to understand and clarify the role of third-party intermediaries. The resources provided by intermediaries not only bring actors around the table but should theoretically facilitate the development objective of reshaping state-society relations in transboundary water management. I specifically considered how development actors engaged in brokerage and translation of the concept of local stakeholder participation, reframing it in order to make the project's participation strategies compelling and palatable to state actors while still meeting donor requirements. I also used the concept of side payments as an independent

variable to operationalize the process of negotiation between state actors and intermediaries in an effort to understand how side payments could have an impact on participation.

My approach to exploring participation through side payments was unconventional in several respects. I considered how side payments *not* explicitly aimed at affecting local stakeholder participation nonetheless had implicit effects on participation. Furthermore, rather than focusing on local communities at the periphery of the state, as is often the case in studies using a state-in-society approach, I instead focused on the relationships between state actors and development actors at the very center of power. The theoretical insight that I gained from this approach, and my contribution to the literature, is that side payments are allocated not to the losers as previous scholarship has argued. Instead, side payments are allocated to the winners from development projects – namely, the state actors poised to benefit from the project.

How does this theoretical insight help answer the empirical question of circumscribed participation? In short, it tells us where to look for the hidden determinants of participation strategies, which is the foundation for understanding the participation gap. This point is discussed in Chapter 2, and is the juncture where I bring the theoretical and methodological insights of state-in-society and ethnography of aid to the literature on transboundary water management. I argue that counterintuitively, if we want to understand local stakeholder participation, our focus needs to be retrained to the dynamic interactions between development actors (intermediaries) and state actors rather than intermediaries' interactions with societal actors. State-intermediary interactions set the stage for how intermediaries can reshape state-society relations through participatory development strategies.

Far from being passive recipients of aid, state actors remain powerful in negotiating and reshaping the way development projects are implemented. Not only does this process impact

participation, but it preserves the image of the state while affecting its practice by altering nodes and networks of power among state and societal actors. If the priorities of state actors do not include deep participation strategies, the cooperation of state actors is secured through side payments that reflect those priorities. Development projects can thus end up bypassing opportunities for participatory development in the name of maintaining the all-important political endorsement of the project.

At the same time, development brokers themselves are far from powerless. As I observed in the Kura II Project, development professionals skilled in translating concepts like participation to state actors are able to reframe and negotiate local stakeholder participation strategies. In the absence of a relationship with state actors, even in instances where a development organization is active with communities on the ground, it is impossible to connect to these communities as part of a transboundary project. Doing so would constitute a violation of state sovereignty. Once access to state actors is secured, however, the ability to negotiate strategies that reframe participation and obliquely engage in participatory approaches remains possible. Thus, projects preserve a unified image of the development organization while the interactions with state actors diverge from that image. My work looks below the surface of that deceptively unitary image to show how individuals and group dynamics constantly shape and reshape the practice of development organizations.

The sovereignty question draws attention to that which distinguishes transboundary projects, and specifically transboundary water governance projects, from purely domestic development projects. While state endorsement is necessary for all development projects, the inherently political nature of managing a critical natural resource across boundaries – especially a resource with asymmetric effects between the upstream and downstream – elevates the level of

political significance and the necessity of state actor endorsement. The transboundary dimension adds a layer of complexity to negotiations over water governance that militates against including the often messy and time-consuming processes of deep public engagement. Secondly, water resources – and particularly rivers – are different from other natural resources and resource management schemes because of the deeply overlapping and competing nexus of human, ecological, and economic interests tied to them. The connection between water, energy, food, ecosystems, and economic development is only beginning to be acknowledged through approaches to water management such as IWRM – approaches which must themselves be translated to the national and local scale.

The idea that intermediaries must begin with building relationships with state actors in order to be able to connect with society and to facilitate participatory approaches to development is not new to development actors. It *is* novel to the world of political science research attempting to understand the political dimensions of – and the role of contingency in – the effects of the massive resources disbursed by development projects.

The answer to the puzzle of limited participation in GEF international waters projects is therefore that participatory practices are negotiated and translated in the dynamic interactions between state actors and development brokers. Beyond the explicit participatory mechanisms of the project – which themselves are translated into palatable terms for state actors – participation can be facilitated or limited through the allocation of side payments. In cases where the priorities of state actors lie elsewhere, side payments can bypass key opportunities for participation, thus contributing to limited local engagement of international waters projects. At the same time, I argue that participatory development practices are also going under the radar, as local

stakeholder engagement is translated into technical and depoliticized terms not encompassed in an explicit participation strategy.

Empirically, my research shows in Chapter 3 that at the domestic scale, explicit stakeholder engagement in the Kura II project – which included stakeholder trainings, social marketing initiatives and competitions – focused on strategies that met GEF objectives through informative and consultative participation, rather than the potentially politically-charged and challenging process of coproduction. This revelation helps to explain the participation puzzle by demonstrating how the varying types and depth of participation are negotiated in explicit local stakeholder engagement strategies. The insight here is that participation occurs in different forms than what is implied by overarching donor strategies. After analyzing the Kura II Project's formal stakeholder engagement strategies, I also show how these strategies reflect state actors' domestic priorities. Because of these actors' focus on strengthening the domestic position of their respective institutions rather than public engagement, the side payment embedded in the project participation strategies also reflect high-impact capacity-building measures rather than deeper public engagement strategies which are simply not a priority given the other battles that preoccupy state actors.

In Chapter 4, when considering the case of the Alazani-Ağrıçay underground aquifer, I consider the impact of international scale side payments on participation. I show how the Kura II project was highly effective at bringing state-level stakeholders around the table to resolve tensions over management of a transboundary aquifer in the Kura River Basin. This process of informally convening stakeholders, while not officially part of the project transcript, was a classic example of how the resources provided by development organizations create opportunities for cooperation among actors that would not otherwise exist. At the same time, the

local community impacts of the OGB water pipeline never entered the discussion for several reasons. One was because of the focus on higher-order state objectives in the negotiations, where local concerns were not at the forefront of the state actors' agendas even if local communities ultimately bear the brunt of falling groundwater resources. Another reason in Azerbaijan was because engaging with civil society critics of a prestigious state infrastructure project was simply not politically feasible. Thus, I answer another part of the participation puzzle by showing how international-scale side payments addressing important transboundary water governance problems can bypass opportunities for engagement with local stakeholders. On the other hand, I also argue that the access created by the international-level side payment enables the Kura II Project to address local stakeholder concerns in the affected area through technical and politically-neutral project components, such as science for governance.

Chapter 5 examines the case of Turkey, the critical upstream riparian, and uses it as a control case for demonstrating the importance of connecting with state level actors in order to engage with local stakeholders. Specifically, this chapter asks what happens when a transboundary project is unable to connect to state-level actors. Turkey's reticence to participate in the Kura II Project stems mainly from its concern for not jeopardizing its ability to exploit the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, and its planned diversion of much of the Kura River into the Çoruh River for hydropower development. It is these hydropower designs which have already begun to cause concern for downstream riparians, particularly Georgia. Despite the fact that UNDP and GEF's Small Grants Programme is active with communities in Turkey's Kura Basin, and that there is a sustained local grassroots movement in Ardahan objecting to the diversion of the Kura, the Kura II Project is unable to connect to any of these initiatives in the absence of state actors championing the project. The project leadership is thus also unable to negotiate side payments,

precluding it from even obliquely engaging in participatory strategies. This chapter concludes on a comparison with GEF's work in the South China Sea, where the Small Grants Programme and a full-size GEF International Waters project have worked closely together to overcome the participation gap. The case of the South China Sea demonstrates how the nature and depth of local stakeholder engagement depends on the negotiations between state actors and development actors. This chapter therefore helps to explain the participation puzzle in two ways: by demonstrating how the *sine qua non* of participatory development is the blessing of state actors, and by showing the extent of local stakeholder engagement that is possible when state actors prioritize it and intermediaries facilitate it.

Having outlined the theoretical and empirical contributions of this study, and explained the GEF participation puzzle as contingent upon the relationship between state and development actors, the question remains: what are the practical implications of this study for local stakeholder participation in transboundary water governance of the Kura River Basin, the Kura II Project, and beyond?

The first, most obvious observation is that finding ways to move towards the coproduction of policy with local stakeholders requires starting with state actors that are inclined to engage with local stakeholders, or have a connection with local communities that they can be convinced to develop. The case of the South China Sea is a truly remarkable example of how development actors can facilitate new connections between state and societal actors in achieving improved international waters governance when state actors prioritize such connections. Well before the project preparation phase, when the concepts for new projects are being developed by development actors, finding the proper connections with state actors is crucial for promoting participation. Of course, things always change in the world of politics. State bureaucrats are

moved around or dismissed; priorities and even ministries shift, merge, and fall to the wayside. Despite the tenuous nature of political positions and relationships, having the initial connection with state-level gatekeepers that have participatory inclinations is an important first step. Achieving this level of access to state actors is dependent upon having development actors with the kind of relationship capable of brokering and translating such an arrangement.

The next implication is a general caveat. For development actors seeking to build a relationship with state actors, the tradeoff is that contention – whether embodied in issues, individuals, and/or groups – is skirted in pursuit of amicable relations. Finding ways to address contention in local stakeholder engagement is one of the most formidable challenges in development projects, where development actors are the clients of the state. My work showed me that contention was an indication of opportunity for engagement, and that finding the right way to depoliticize issues was the way to take advantage of that opportunity. Other scholars have criticized development's depoliticizing effects as obscuring mechanisms of social control (Ferguson 1994, Quarles van Ufford 1993). Framing participatory strategies in a depoliticizing way, however, is different than a project of depoliticization. Striking a balance between maintaining high-level political endorsement of a project while simultaneously de-emphasizing contentious political issues is a delicate and diplomatic process, and it does not always work. It is nonetheless essential for any engagement in a contentious context.

Another caveat is that IWRM requires integrating water management across bureaucratic divides, but development projects are affiliated with particular ministries. This situation creates a structural conflict of interest, because projects must maintain the endorsement of affiliated ministries while encouraging collaboration with others. In the case of the Kura II Project, permission sometimes had to be sought from the affiliated ministries for collaboration with key

institutional actors in water management. Again, the winners from side payments were able to shape and constrain the depth of participation of other stakeholders, calling attention to how development resources can have both domestic political effects as well as practical effects on water governance. Designing projects in a way that recognizes what is possible and secures the cooperation of actors across institutional divides ahead of time can reduce the need for side payments that tacitly reinforce partıcular ministries' agendas. The challenge is to find ways to build participation into explicit strategies as well as side payments.

While this study has been focused on explaining how transboundary agreements are implemented at the local scale, the broader international context of foreign policy priorities and regional relations inevitably shapes the structure and effectiveness of development projects. This is particularly true in transboundary resource management and especially in the South Caucasus. The enduring tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and to a lesser extent between Armenia and Turkey, limit the effectiveness that any transboundary water management project can have without Armenia at the table. Armenia's absence from the Kura II Project means that the problems of the Kura River are artificially divorced from that of the Aras River and the broader Kura-Aras basin. Turkey's economic development ambitions and upstream mentality in its exploitation of water resources will continue to impact efforts at implementing IWRM practices across the Kura basin.

In sum, my study goes beyond technical approaches to water management to highlight the contingent processes that such approaches gloss over. I argue that how stakeholder engagement strategies are elaborated – or pushed to the side by other priorities – is the first piece of the puzzle which causes development outcomes to differ from the image of the development project. I have made an effort to contribute to the critical literature on development in a way that

draws attention to development's unintended effects and limitations while giving due credit to both its achievements and tremendous potential. I have tried to eschew cynicism and instead show how the massively complex and politically labyrinthine process of negotiating a development project occurs at the confluence of individuals, interests, power dynamics, and environmental necessity. The contingent nature of this confluence affects development outcomes, thus demanding additional political science research that considers the multiple layers of effects of development organizations on state and societal actors from the transnational to the local level.

The access which I was given to Kura II Project – and the rare window it provided into the Global Environment Facility's challenges in incorporating local stakeholder participation in International Waters projects – is a testament to the candid efforts of development professionals to critically reflect on the practices, effects, limitations, and potential of aid. Communities and individuals are the objects of development projects and practices, and the political and economic status of these target populations is often precarious. It therefore matters how those communities and individuals are included in the donor projects which attempt to change their lives for the better. It is the task of development brokers to negotiate this inclusion in a way that attempts to go beyond cursory participatory practices of information dissemination.

Appendix 1. List of interviews and meetings

Location	Role	Date
Baku, Azerbaijan	NGO founder	June 16, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Diplomat	June 19, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Diplomatic corps	June 19, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	NGO representative/development bank employee	June 20, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Bilateral development organization	June 24, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Academic	June 26, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	June 30, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	July 2, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	July 4, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	July 4, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	July 5, 2015
Gabala, Azerbaijan	Local stakeholders	July 5, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	July 6, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	July 7, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	July 7, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Consultant to development organization	July 7, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	July 7, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	International Organization representative	July 8, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Development bank representative	July 8, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Development bank representative	July 8, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	July 8, 2015

Baku, Azerbaijan	Development bank representative	July 8, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	International Organization representative	July 8, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	International Organization representative	July 8, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Government employees	July 14, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Academic	July 14, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Development bank representative	July 14, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Development bank representative	July 14, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Government employee	July 14, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Development bank representative	July 15, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Bilateral development organization representative	July 15, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Bilateral development organization representative	July 15, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Bilateral development organization representative	July 15, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Bilateral development organization representative	July 15, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Bilateral development organization representative	July 15, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Bilateral development organization representative	July 15, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Government employee	July 15, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Government employee	July 15, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Government employee	July 15, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	International Organization representative	July 17, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	International Organization representative	July 17, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Government employee	July 17, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Government employee	July 17, 2015
Tbilisi, Georgia	Government employee	July 17, 2015

Baku, Azerbaijan	NGO representative	August 1, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Consultant to development organization	August 5, 2015
Gabala, Azerbaijan	Consultant to development organization	August 5, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Academic	August 17, 2015
Stockholm, Sweden	Government employee	August 24, 2015
Stockholm, Sweden	Government employee	August 24, 2015
Stockholm, Sweden	International Organization representative	August 25, 2015
Colombo, Sri Lanka	International Organization representative	August 25, 2015
Stockholm, Sweden	International Organization representative	August 26, 2015
Stockholm, Sweden	International Organization representative	August 26, 2015
Stockholm, Sweden	Academic	August 26, 2015
Stockholm, Sweden	International consultant	August 27, 2015
Stockholm, Sweden	International consultant	August 27, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Academic	September 28, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Academic	October 15, 2015
Stockholm, Sweden	Government employee	October 16, 2015
Stockholm, Sweden	Development bank representative	October 16, 2015
Stockholm, Sweden	Development bank representative	October 16, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Meeting of various state-level actors (10 people)	October 23, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	NGO representative	November 3, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	NGO representative	November 4, 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	NGO representative	November 5, 2015
Istanbul, Turkey	Academic	March 5, 2016

Istanbul, Turkey	Development professional	March 28, 2016
Istanbul, Turkey	Development professional	March 28, 2016
Tbilisi, Georgia	International Organization representative	April 4, 2016
Tbilisi, Georgia	NGO founder	April 4, 2016
Tbilisi, Georgia	NGO representative	April 5, 2016
Tbilisi, Georgia	NGO representative	April 5, 2016
Tbilisi, Georgia	International Organization representative	April 5, 2016
Tbilisi, Georgia	Government employee	April 6, 2016
Tbilisi, Georgia	Government employee	April 6, 2016
Tbilisi, Georgia	NGO representative	April 8, 2016
Tbilisi, Georgia	Government employee	April 8, 2016
Tbilisi, Georgia	Government employee	April 8, 2016
Tbilisi, Georgia	NGO leader	April 23, 2016
Colombo, Sri Lanka	Development professional	May 3, 2016
Colombo, Sri Lanka	Development professional	May 3, 2016
Colombo, Sri Lanka	International consultant	May 5, 2016
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	July 6, 2016
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	July 6, 2016
Baku, Azerbaijan	Government employee	July 6, 2016
Istanbul, Turkey	Former diplomat	May 24, 2017
Baku, Azerbaijan	Academic	June-October 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Academic	June-October 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Development professional	June-October 2015

Baku, Azerbaijan	Development professional	June-October 2015
Baku, Azerbaijan	Development professional	June-October 2015

Appendix 2.

Data Instrument 1: General questionnaire for semi-structured interviews

1. Title/nature of professional background, previous positions
2. What is the mission/vision of organization you represent?
    a. Relationship to water management issues?
3. Brief history of organization: how did your organization come about? ex. offshoot of another organization/ministry, new creation (if so, why)
    a. Does your organization collaborate with local civil society organizations or other ministries/organizations in fulfilling mission (yes/no – detail asked for later)
    b. How are partners sought? (Application process, personal contacts, etc.)
    c. What are your sources of funding? (Government, private donors, development organizations, etc.)
        i. Describe relationship with these funders/partners
        ii. Amounts of funding (if available)
    d. Types of collaborative projects?
        i. Reports on results/progress?
        ii. Quantitative measurements/qualitative descriptions of change/improvement brought about by projects?
    e. Staff
        i. Numbers
        ii. Composition (local, international; bureaucrat/civil servant, etc.)
        iii. Expertise (technical, social sciences, etc.)
    f. Membership
        i. Numbers
        ii. Composition (local, country-wide, regional, international; students, farmers, professionals, etc?)
4. What is the value, if any, of civil society organizations participating in water/flood management? How does this help or hinder efforts for water management in the Kura basin?
5. Is your organization's voice represented at the transnational level? Why or why not? If so, in what way?
6. What sort of information can you share on local water management and flood prevention measures – program descriptions, data on effectiveness, levels of funding?
    a. How would you describe the effectiveness of your programs?
    b. How would you describe the effectiveness of other programs that you are familiar with, within the Kura basin or elsewhere?
7. What data can you provide on historic water level fluctuations in your area of interest/influence?
8. What data can you provide on economic growth and losses due to water management in your area of interest/influence?

9. What data can you provide on disaster risk management measures in general in your area of interest/influence?
10. How would you describe your relationship with development agencies/government ministries?
11. How would you describe the cooperation between public officials, non-governmental organizations, and development organizations in your area of interest/influence?
12. Is there a power balance or imbalance among the different actors? Please describe why you think this.
    a. What is the evidence of this balance/imbalance? The effects of this balance/imbalance?
    b. How do development organizations (UN, World Bank) alter this balance/imbalance?
13. How do other actors (ministries, development organizations, local organizations) contribute to improved flood management? How might they improve?
14. How might your own organization improve? (more resources, stronger institutions, etc.)
15. What are the impediments to progress on achieving your organization's objectives?
16. What are the impediments to your organization's voice and input being represented at the transnational level?

Appendix 3.

Data Instrument 2: General data collection form for public meeting observation

Date of meeting:

Title of meeting:

Number of participants and organizations represented, if relevant:

Types of organizations (local, transnational, hybrid) and justification for categorizing organizations as such:

List of participants, if available:

Agenda topics:

General description of venue, seating arrangements:

General notes on discussion/questions asked:

Indicators of relationships/power relationships among actors, e.g. seating arrangements:

General impressions on disposition of participants (agitated, congenial, reserved, effusive) and explanation:

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