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# **A discourse and practice analysis of Hungary's water diplomacy approach**

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International Relations



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Declaration I, Katalin Lasetzky, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature: *Katalin Lasetzky* .....

Date 30/06/2020

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*Any errors are mine alone.*

## **Abstract**

The global water crisis became one of the biggest challenges of our 21st century and it greatly impacts international relations. The issue of too much, too little, too polluted water encourages countries not only to conflict but also to work together. The concept of water diplomacy is relatively new to global politics. Hungary is one of the few states that has been engaged in water diplomacy due to its water vulnerability and extensive knowledge of water management. During the history water has been a strategic natural resource for the Hungarians due to its geographical features as a water rich country but 96% of it originates from outside its borders. The approach became a priority in Hungary's foreign policy since the 2010s, and political leaders make sure that the international arena recognizing Hungary's national role.

An empirical study, this thesis investigates water diplomacy as a foreign policy tool through discourse and practice analysis and aims to answer the following objectives, such as how does Hungary practice water diplomacy as a foreign policy tool; how are state identity and national role conception in relation to water constructed in the discourse of foreign policy executives.

For a small country, just like Hungary, there are great opportunities in water diplomacy. Hungary has recognised these opportunities and has been turning its disadvantaged position in to a beneficial one. The country's aim is to build a significant role as a global water expert and coordinator and by this improve its international reputation and economic growth.

**Keywords:** *water diplomacy, foreign policy, Hungary, discourse and practice analysis, national role conception*

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## 1. Introduction

*“We Hungarians think that one of the greatest issues of our common future is going to be water. Therefore, we propose to concentrate our attention and resources around it. Water is the source of life. It is like air or like freedom, which we take for granted when we have it, but die if we are deprived of it (Áder, 2012).”*

– said President of the Republic of Hungary, János Áder in his speech at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, namely the Rio+20 Conference in Brazil, 2012.

As the President’s speech demonstrates, the current global development trends and impact of climate change are driving the attention towards water as a pressing not only natural, but social, economic, and international political problem. There are three possible ways how water as a natural resource can cause a crisis: when it’s too little, too much or too polluted (Tóth, 2012). Just to mention some of the urgent issues; floods and hurricanes destroy infrastructure, people’s home, livelihood, and work. Lack of access to sanitized water supply increases diseases, leads to high infant and mother mortality. Water shortages lead to poverty; reduces capacity to grow food, raises unemployment rates which indicates riots or potential revolution, environmental migration (Connell, 2013). Outlooks are not promising, considering that only 0,5% of the Earth’s water is for human consumption, and according to the growing population rates and economic progress it is forecasted that water demand will grow with 20-30% by 2050, and at the same time there is a likelihood of 40% shortfall in water availability by 2030. These water challenges appear on the local, national, transboundary, regional, and global levels, and they hit the poorest and most vulnerable areas the most (High-Level Panel on Water, 2018). While coal was the driving force of the economic development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s development and international conflict was driven by oil, scientists and politicians predict that water has become the most strategic natural resource of our 21<sup>st</sup> century (Tóth, 2012).

From the turn of the millennium, international political talks intensified about water crisis and possibility of water wars. Ismail Serageldin, former Vice President of the World Bank stated that *“Many of the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were about oil but wars of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be about water unless we change the way in which we manage it (Connell, 2013).”* His claim is not unfounded just by looking at the current environmental catastrophes caused by water or the growing tension at certain transboundary water basins where water accessibility has become an everyday issue, such as in the Nile River Basin, Mekong, Tigris-Euphrates, the Aral Sea conflict in Central Asia, the Indian and Pakistan conflict over the Indus River, and the list is very long (Connell, 2013). However, researchers of water wars argue that, despite of the numerous conflicts, historical record shows that there are not many cases for warfare between riparian’s; transboundary issues more often encourage state cooperation than war (Connell, 2013). One of the main aims of water diplomacy - besides tackling the above-mentioned water challenges - is to promote non-violent, diplomatic solutions and encourage conflictual states to act



accordingly. Mastering adequate water management is not only significant in shared water basins but it is crucial for every country to mitigate water challenges.

Even though, the notion of water diplomacy (or hydro-diplomacy) is a relatively new concept to foreign politics, water has always been a strategic natural resource of states and played an important role in foreign policy. The significant importance of water, for instance, in agricultural, economic development or trade provides political and economic power for the country, but its absence leads to major insecurity. In the wake of climate change and its impact on evolving water crisis, some states are making significant efforts to prioritize water in their foreign policy. In this thesis, I examine the foreign policy of a country, namely Hungary, which has made serious efforts in recent years to integrate the issue of water into its foreign policy and consciously build an national role for itself to gain prestige on the international stage. Hungary has a special, dual characteristics in relation to water. While it is seemingly a water rich country with numerous surface and underground water, 96% of surface water originates from outside the country and goes through upstream states before arriving to Hungary. This geographical nature makes the country exposed and endangered to external factors in terms of water quality or quantity. Some conflictual cases over shared river with neighbour countries happened in the history such as the Hungarian-Slovak debate on Danube drainage at Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros; Rába river pollution from Austria or the cyanide pollution from Romania in the Tisza river. Due to the special terrain of the Carpathian Basin flooding is also a constant risk for Hungary which increases insecurity in agriculture and living conditions of the citizens (Tóth, 2012). These geographic characteristics made water a strategic natural resource for the state. Recently, Hungary has recognised the importance of turning its disadvantageous position into opportunities and using its experience and knowledge in water management to build international reputation. Regional and global efforts and initiatives of Hungary are promising for a significant role and influence in the decision-making processes of global water governance.

My aim in this thesis is to examine the foreign policy approach of Hungary in relation to water. To justify its self-defined role as a significant water actor, foreign policy executives have been building a discourse on the Hungarian national identity in relation to water. The starting quote refers to an important speech, the first statement that the President made on the UN international stage to position the country, promote its expertise and normative commitment towards tackling global water issues. In my research, I analyse the political discourse around the Hungarian identity and international water role nexus. According to Neumann (2002), discourses are preconditions of the social action itself. Therefore, investigating only the narrative does not provide a complete understanding of the foreign policy decision (Neumann, 2002). Hence, I look at the domestic configuration of the Hungarian water diplomacy including institutional structure and diplomatic achievement. According to the post-

structuralist perspective of IR schools of thought, discourse does not only reflect on identities and national roles or responsibilities but they construct and produce them (Eckersley, 2016).

In the light of this, I investigate the discourse and practice of the Hungarian water diplomacy approach to uncover the configuration, actor relation and diplomatic achievements behind the discourse of foreign policy executives. Through a discourse and practice analysis, the aim of this research to answer to the following main and sub-research questions:

*How does Hungary practice water diplomacy as a foreign policy tool?*

*And sub-questions:*

*a.) How are the Hungarian state identity and national role in relation to water constructed in the discourse of foreign policy executives?*

*b) How does the discourse support practice of water diplomacy?*

The objective of this thesis is not to find out why Hungary is entering international water politics or describing the domestic and international water policy in detail; rather it wishes to shed light on how the national role has been built up in the discourse to promote state identity and national role in global water and accordingly how the action itself has been configured on the national level. The analysis is supported with the theoretical concepts of discourse theory and analysis and role theory embedded in post-structuralist critical schools of thought. As it has been predicted that water is not only a natural and economic issue, but it can be a shaper of 21<sup>st</sup> century international politics, therefore, it is important that the IR literature conduct investigations in this area. Water diplomacy can be used for states to improve their international status - similar to climate change leadership. While the academic literature is rich on the climate change and foreign policy identity nexus, due to the novelty of the concept of water diplomacy it has not yet developed. This thesis is to fill the gap of both foreign policy literature with an empirical concept, water diplomacy. My aim is to expand the rather scarce academic literature on both water diplomacy and foreign policy of Hungary, and to provide a comprehensive analysis of diplomatic discourse and practice in relation to water diplomacy in the Hungarian foreign policy supported by valuable insight from domestic water diplomacy actors.

## **Thesis Outline**

This study investigates the discourse of foreign policy executives and the diplomatic practice of water diplomacy in Hungary. This thesis organised into six chapters, structured as follows: After the introduction, in the next chapter I discuss the existing literature on water diplomacy. The first part of

the chapter focuses on water diplomacy in general, explains the complexity of the concept and how it is perceived by the variety of actors. After the general introduction to the concept, I briefly review the literature on the transboundary water conflicts which is the mostly studied area in IR within the water nexus. The third part is separated into sub-chapters which explores various foreign policy perspectives of water diplomacy. Such as the concept of water diplomacy from transboundary state perspective through the example of Turkey; from great power perspective through the example of the United States; furthermore, niche diplomacy perspective for the Netherlands; and finally the opportunities in water diplomacy from small state perspective through my actual case study object, Hungary. In the next, theoretical background chapter, I introduce my theoretical framework which include concepts such as foreign policy (analysis), diplomacy, national identity, and national role conception. It is important to clarify at the beginning that through my study I define national roles as “*as a set of shared expectations relating to how a state behaves as a function of its position on the international stage* (Morin & Paquin, 2018, p. 271)”. In the fourth, methodology chapter I explain how I will use these concepts to analysis my case and also introduce the combined discourse and practice analysis methods which are my main analytical tools. Throughout my analysis, I position myself with post-structuralist IR theoretical point of view and will focus on the constructive nature of discourse. Under methodology section I explain in detail the data collection and finally critically assess my entire research process with self-reflection. Fifth chapter is where I conduct my combined discourse and practice analysis in this order. This chapter starts with a background section explaining the Hungarian foreign policy evolvement since the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is important to understand the changing attempts in the Hungarian foreign policy, first the aim to be part of the West, joining to EU and NATO and adapt Western identity, then the EU presidency brought changes in foreign policy as Hungary implemented a new ‘global opening’ policy where the importance of water appeared. In this part I also give an empirical insight of how Hungary achieved regional, trans-regional and global diplomatic successes in water diplomacy. After I conduct the discourse analysis on the foreign policy executive’s rhetoric on Hungary’s identity and national role conception in relation to water and second the practice analysis on the domestic configuration of water diplomacy, looking at the institutionalization and actors responsibilities and relation to each other. This chapter end with a discussion where I answer to the above-mentioned Research Questions and highlight the main findings. In the last chapter, I conclude the research, critically assess my approach and results and suggest further exiting areas to study.

## 2. The many faces of water diplomacy

In this chapter, I investigate a set of articles representing different perspectives and approaches of water diplomacy from researchers, foreign policy practitioners, and scholars. The literature review is divided into two parts. The first section focuses on water diplomacy in general; explaining the

multidisciplinary nature of the concept and hence the different definition has been used. The angle of my later analysis on water diplomacy is foreign policy perspective, therefore, I review carefully chosen states' foreign policy approach who are important for water diplomacy, such as Turkey who struggles with transboundary water issues by being both an upper and downstream country; from great power perspective through the example of the United States; furthermore, niche diplomacy perspective for the Netherlands; and finally the opportunities in water diplomacy from small state perspective through my actual case study object, Hungary.

### 2.1. In the intersect of science, policy, and practice

The concept of water diplomacy is complex as it deals with many different issues from different perspectives of freshwater conditions: the too much, too little, and too polluted water and the conflictual nature of shared water resources. Water diplomacy attracts variety of actors from politics, science, technical expertise to academics. At the time writing, mostly international organizations raising awareness of the global water issue, trying to make an impact on political decision makers and promote the joint action of all actors. Just to name few of the main ones: UNESCO 's International Centre for Water Cooperation (ICWC), Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), Adelphi, Geneva Water Hub etc. The literature of water diplomacy is multi-fold. There is a wide variety of reports by the above-mentioned international water organisations, educational institutions addressing the urgency of global water problems. These institutions concern questions of water governance, transboundary water conflicts, water scarcity as an emerging impacts of climate change and so on. Out of the too much, too little, or too polluted and transboundary issues the last one is the most often discussed topic by scholars especially in political science because shared rivers problems often lead to political tension. Later in this section I discuss the case of Turkey for the purpose of demonstrate the country's situation that faces challenges by being both an upper and downstream country in shared basins.

Scholars mainly focus on the lack of collaboration among science, technological solution, and political engagement. For instance, Klimes et al. (2019) elaborates the overlapping nature of science, policy and practice and argues that water diplomacy actors needs to include the scientific community more as they can contribute to a better collaboration and educate political water actors on the nature of shared water resources (Klimes, Michel, Yaari, & Restiani, 2019). Pohl (2017) highlights the lack of effective communication between water actors which largely prevent them to share data and accordingly build trust between transboundary states (Pohl & Swain, 2017).

## **Understanding of the purpose and role of water diplomacy**

Due to the novelty and the complex, multifaceted nature of it, there is not yet a commonly accepted definition for water diplomacy. To start with, the concept is called in three different ways: ‘water diplomacy’, ‘hydro diplomacy’, or less commonly ‘blue diplomacy’. In this thesis, I use ‘water diplomacy’ consistently. Likewise, ‘water cooperation’ and ‘water diplomacy’ are often used interchangeably. Definitions differ by actor groups, the role they play in water diplomacy and their motivation or purpose (Molnar, Cuppari, Schmeier, & Demuth, 2017). The purpose and the process of water diplomacy can vary between developed and a developing countries or riparian and non-riparian states, upstream, and downstream countries and so on. In the followings, I introduce few variations for definition and perspectives of water diplomacy by different scholar and organisations.

Adelphi, one of the leading think tanks and public policy consultants on climate, environment, and development in its report about the “Rise of Hydro-Diplomacy” raises awareness on strengthening foreign policy contribution in transboundary waters affairs. Adelphi reflects on water diplomacy as a key tool to prevent international conflict and promote the advantages of cooperative water management. The report suggests that foreign policy executives should use their political leverage and power to reach the highest political levels, namely the water governance level to improve transboundary governance. According to adelphi, the biggest problem of water governance is on the institutional level as it lacks of coordination and integration of foreign policy makers and technical experts (Pohl, 2014). Institutions need political leaders to promote the problem, but vice versa political leaders need institutions to conduct research, share their knowledge and data. Transboundary conflicts need intra-basin cooperation; furthermore, strengthening the institutional structures, engaging cross-sectoral integration; strengthening skills of diplomats to improve water-related conflict resolution (Pohl, 2014).

Similarly, the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) (2017) provides an overview of the variety of roles of water diplomacy such as preventing conflict and fostering cooperation. A report of SIWI - addresses the challenging future of transboundary waters - defines major drivers of water diplomacy in economic development and state security. According to the report, further purposes are conflict prevention, peace promotion, effective water management in shared basins which involves increasing dialogue and cooperation, engaging multiple stakeholders and improving foreign relations. The report identifies actor groups and their roles and motivation within the process of water diplomacy. SIWI distinguishes state actors such as governmental agencies, International Organisations and non-state actors like NGOs, academia and think tanks, river basin organisations (RBOs), and in some cases religious groups (Molnar, Cuppari, Schmeier, & Demuth, 2017).

Authors often look at water diplomacy as a process. For instance, a progression from conflict to joint water management through conflict resolution, prevention, cooperation, and conflict integration. SIWI (2019) and Klimes et al. (2019) both agree on the notion of water diplomacy as “*a dynamic*

*process that seeks to develop reasonable, sustainable and peaceful solutions to water allocation and management while promoting or influencing regional cooperation and collaboration among riparian stakeholders (www.siwi.org, n.d.) (Klimes, Michel, Yaari, & Restiani, 2019, p. 1362)”.*

In his work on water diplomacy in the Arab Region, Hefny (2011) defines water diplomacy which is utilized at bilateral and multilateral negotiations about water issues among states. Hefny emphasizes the diplomatic origins of the action and describes it as *“dialogue, negotiation and reconciling conflicting interests among riparian states [...] with the aim of concluding water agreements, within the strategy and plans of foreign policy and national security of states. (Hefny, 2011, p. 20)”*. According to him, water diplomacy serves national interest therefore it includes *“institutional capacity and power politics of states (Hefny, 2011, p. 20)”*. Hefny’s viewpoint has more emphasize on state interest and approaches water diplomacy from foreign policy standpoint. The issue of shared water causes high political tension in the Arab region. Riparian countries of River Nile Basin largely rely on freshwater source to fight everyday poverty. Water cooperation in this area supports national security, it can mean the only solution for some countries to survive. Hefny furthermore brings in the concept of the UN Development Goals to his analysis He claims that since water is the precondition for human life and involves all human’s health, sanitation, environment and industries it also intersects all UN’s Millennium Development Goals (now SDGs). Therefore, water diplomacy is a tool to promote sustainable water resource management and the prioritization of water agenda in the SDGs (Hefny, 2011).

Finally, I bring the definition for the concept of water diplomacy from the viewpoint of my research subject, Hungary. Despite of the exposed geographic situation at the moment Hungary faces less harmful impacts of global water issue than for instance countries in the Nile basin; although, the country has been largely engaged in water diplomacy. The definition below from a Hungarian lexicon of diplomatic relations demonstrates Hungary’s understanding and perspective of water diplomacy. It states:

*“all interactions related to the management of water resources aimed at establishing and maintaining peace and development in the long term between the actors involved [...] encompasses all forms and levels of stakeholder cooperation, from governments to civil society, and at the international level [...] rational management of water can lead to long-term cooperation between states. [...] crucial role of water in human life and economic dependency may arise conflicts due to difficulties in access, distribution, and management [...] The aim is to find, [...] the forms of cooperation [...] as potential in water resources for regional peace and development (Martonyi, 2018, pp. 487-488)”*.

As we can see the Hungarian understanding is similar to the above authors in terms of focusing on cooperation, regional peace and development and the integration of multiple actors on different levels. However, what is differing in Hungary’s perspective from other actors is that in the lexicon of Martonyi (2018) water diplomacy falls under the economic relation section which indicates that the

Hungarian focus is largely on economic development and cooperation, economic opportunities through water diplomacy (Martonyi, 2018).

Even though, there are varying understandings and perspectives of the concept water diplomacy - even different appellation - there is common agreement on some of the characteristics. Literature agrees on the complexity of the concept in the intersection of sectors and actors and the importance of integrated joint work of all sectors and actors. Furthermore, the importance of peaceful negotiation between state actors, science and technological experts and finally the support of bilateral or multilateral partnerships, basin cooperation (Hefny, 2011). The emphasis is often on peace and security and the competent use of conflict management (Molnar, Cuppari, Schmeier, & Demuth, 2017). What is different is the purpose and the standing point which is either national security, interest, peacebuilding, regional cooperation, or development. The importance of strengthening foreign policy involvement raised by some of the authors and the lack of institutional coordination on the global level. Scholars largely overlook the foreign policy potential of water diplomacy, that is why my aim is to contribute to the literature and add valuable research of water diplomacy from foreign policy perspective.

Literature of IR in water politics nexus is mostly engaged with the case of transboundary water issues as it involves power relations, state interest or cooperative and hostile state behaviour. In the next section, I briefly review the literature on transboundary water conflict conducted through IR mainstream theories.

## 2.2. Bringing IR theories into transboundary water relations

According to Williams (2011) all realist, liberalist and constructivist theories of IR can be adaptable on state behaviour in transboundary water affairs. The realist perspective in relation to state behaviour in shared water basins argues that geographically asymmetrical position of upstream and downstream riparian states creates mistrust as they cannot be certain in the other's potential hostile behaviour. Goal of upstream countries in hegemonic position is to reach its maximal interest. As Williams argues "*espousing territorial sovereignty and equitable utilization*" while "*downstreamers are advocating territorial integrity and no appreciable harm to prior uses*" (Williams, 2011, p. 197)". Cases of opposite outcome lead to conflict between riparian states.

Liberal school of thought agree with realism in the anarchical nature of the international system where states behave rationally. However, liberalists support state cooperation and the application of absolute gain over relative gain. From the liberal perspective, transboundary water states need to exist in cooperation, set agreements and treaties on fair water use, as water problems needs cooperative solutions. When it comes to cost negotiation on 'integrated development opportunities for public goods'

such flood control or hydropower it often leads to confronts between upstream and downstream countries. Initiating cooperation, however, often come from upstream countries for the purpose of economic and social security in the region, promoting a good neighbour image and preventing instability in the neighbour countries (Williams, 2011).

Constructivists disagree that state behaviours (either conflictual and cooperative) are only outcomes of material incentives, the theory implies that the social context, values and norms, actor identities influence state behaviour. States in international interaction just like in a transboundary relation are engaged in non-verbal as well as discursive actions which generates social knowledge of state interdependence. The discursive activity, constructing identities and certain roles such as enemy, rival or friend, it enhances cooperation or intensifies conflict. Constructivism focus on how state construct and re-construct their identities in relation to other states. In transboundary water dispute, external involvement can change identities, the actors' interactions, for instance a third-party diplomacy can develop win-win situation among riparian states. Further external factors can flame hostile relations, such as the international water law from 1997 UN Water Convention which lacks of providing “*practical guidelines on reconciling its competing master principles, 'equitable and reasonable utilization' (Article 5) and the 'obligation not to cause significant harm (Article 7)*” (Williams, 2011, p. 209)”. This leads to misinterpretation of the convention between affected countries. In the next section, I explain a case of an upstream state, namely Turkey, that does not consider itself as water rich. Turkey fears from future domestic water needs because of climate change, growing population and energy needs, therefore, the country is critical towards how much water to release to downstream countries. Even though Turkey has cooperative manner in both directions and has built several successful bilateral cooperation with its neighbours it struggles as an upstream country with respect to Euphrates and Tigris rivers (Williams, 2011).

Out of the three reviewed mainstream theories constructivism is the closest to the perspective of my analysis of Hungary, although my later analysis will not be engaged with the constructivist school of thought but discusses post-structuralism in which theory shares the same foundation than constructivism but it focuses on the language and its constructive nature. What is important to take into account for my later analysis is that discursive activity, constructing identities and certain roles such as enemy, rival or friend, it enhances cooperation or intensifies conflict. Hungary is a downstream country in respect to Danube or Tisza rivers, therefore, when analysing the country behaviour, the researcher needs to be aware of certain state behaviours caused by external factors such as transboundary situations, or changing environment, opportunities or security threat. In the followings, I review the literature on some of those countries where water diplomacy plays important role in foreign policy. The literature is very limited from this perspective, but I was able to review states with different attributes regarding foreign policy strategy.



### 2.3. Examining literature on water diplomacy as a foreign policy tool

Water crisis does not only affect the developing world with evolving water scarcity, it has already impacted developed countries due to environmental migration, economic and social difficulties. Since, political decision-makers have the leverage to raise awareness on the global level and among state actors on the urgency of water issue and its impact on societies and economic development, the approach of water diplomacy has recently started to emerge in foreign policy decisions. Certain forms of the water strategies have already been implemented in some countries' foreign policy agenda for multiple reasons. Perhaps countries have recognised the negative effects of climate change on water supply or many of them directly experience potential or already existing conflicts over transboundary water sources. However, there are limited states which we can find in the academic literature building an international role in water politics based on their capabilities and area of interest. As discussed earlier, the intention of water diplomacy can vary for each country, from the purpose of national security, peacebuilding, regional cooperation, or economic and environmental development. It also depends on the capabilities and the threat state faces. In this section, I bring in examples of countries that already integrate the notion of water into their foreign policy. The causes and levels are different, I investigate cases where countries either face transboundary problems, great powers, medium and finally small power states approaches.

#### 2.3.1. Water diplomacy for transboundary water issues

William (2011) brings a narrow perspective into the definition of water diplomacy by saying it “*connotes explicit and purposeful communication between representatives of different states charged with negotiating a resolution to contentious issues related to the mutual use of common rivers* (Williams, 2011, p. 197)”. Conflict over shared water resources is one of the main areas of water diplomacy. Conflicts are more intense in shared river basins of water scarce regions or those areas where the political oppositions are intense such as Middle East, South Asian or African territories. Not only riparian states are affected by it but also third-party actors such as mediator states, non-state actors or international organisations play a crucial role in the dispute (Genderen & Rood, 2011). Conflictual countries, however, do not always support third-party involvement in transboundary disputes and believes issues should be solved by the riparian states themselves as donor agencies might not consider fair river distribution and prioritise the needs of downstream countries instead (Kibaroglu, 2015). The earlier mentioned policy paper of Adelphi about the rise of the hydro-diplomacy provides comprehensive study on transboundary water issues. It enhances the role of water diplomacy to prevent conflict. As mentioned earlier Adelphi fosters the involvement of diplomats and foreign policy makers in water crisis

mitigation (Pohl, 2014). Pohl & Swain (2017) emphasize the importance of international cooperation and the role of transboundary water governance in the transboundary water problems. They argue that stakeholder interaction has not been synchronized on interstate or even on state level. The transboundary water issues need an adequate institutional support in order to transform conflicts to opportunities in state cooperation. The institutional system of transboundary governance is anarchical, there are many separate organisations working on cases even under the flag of United Nations, but the lack of synced agency which largely effects the efficiency and the prospect for early actions. To tackle this issue the UNDP has created the Shared Water Partnership (SWP) in 2010 to provide technical and financial support to diplomatic solutions and become the core of the governance (Pohl & Swain, 2017).

When it comes to transboundary water dispute, the case of Turkey well describes the challenges that states face. Turkey is a country with both upstream position with respect to Euphrates and Tigris, Corah and Aras Rivers and downstream with respect to Meric and Orontes. These geographic characteristics and neighbouring with politically unstable countries, the Middle East (Iraq, Iran, and Syria) influence Turkey's water policy. In the light of this, Kibaroglu (2015) analyses Turkey's transboundary water policy and diplomacy pursuit. The climate change causes droughts and growing instability in the Middle East; therefore, Turkey must consider the domestic economic and social challenges in its transboundary water policy. The main transboundary dispute is over the Euphrates-Tigris rivers basin where Turkey has the advantage to be upstream country. Turkey has been investing in water management since the 1970s with the purpose of minimising oil dependency and with aim to build agro-based industries which could help increasing employment. Turkey has been making effort to develop relationship, treaties, water agreements with neighbour countries, however, the Cold War and the building of large-scale dams in the Euphrates-Tigris basin did not improve Turkey's relationship with downstream countries (Kibaroglu, 2015). For this thesis perspective, Kibaroglu's article is interesting to understand how not only downstream but also upstream countries have struggles with downstream riparian countries and comply the international water frameworks at the same time. The superior position of Turkey despite of the many successful bilateral relationship also caused hostility with Iraq for instance. Turkey's water principles state that "*water is a basic human need, [...] Turkey will always intend to release water (as much as is available under the given hydrological and meteorological conditions) to meet the basic needs of the downstream riparian* (Kibaroglu, 2015, p. 158)". The principle implies to the conditional commitment. Because the country fears of future domestic water needs due to the impact of climate change and growing population the amount of water it releases for the downstream countries will depends on its own needs.

Kibaroglu's article tells us about how miscommunication, misinterpretation of the international water law leads to struggle (Kibaroglu, 2015). Argues that the international community (the UN or EU) lacks an effective dialogue with Turkey to help on water policy aligning with global norms such the 1997 UN Water Convention or the EU Water Framework Directive. As a desired candidate to the EU

Turkey has been harmonizing its domestic water policy with the EU Water Framework Directive since the 2000s with the expectation of getting closer to the “*governance regimes in international water law for the protection and management of transboundary rivers* (Kibaroglu, 2015, p. 165)”. The UN Convention does not support Turkey’s interests in the Euphrates-Tigris basin. Criticism says the convention does not cope with the consequences of climate change on water, and the case of Turkey neighbouring with some of the world’s most critical areas complicates the implementation process (Kibaroglu, 2015). The next selected country is the United States as a great power tries to take leadership role in water diplomacy. Water diplomacy has multi-fold effects in the US. While supporting America’s national security and contributing to the common good the US focuses on development aid where it can play leadership role and strengthen its soft power. I give a brief insight of EU’s position too who is a significant actor in terms of international water policy and law.

### 2.3.2. Water diplomacy for powerful states – Leadership role

The United States’ foreign policy often characterized by realist assets such as leadership, great power politics, hegemony, the biggest economy, or great military power etc. The United States (US) is known for its global influence and ability to set trends in the international arena. Climate change politics is one of the many areas in which there are high expectation towards the US to become a leader, however, the country has been acting unpredictably regarding climate treaties. The country is a major contributor to climate change, but it is also largely affected by its impact. Hurricanes often destroy water management infrastructure, responsible for the deaths of thousands and for dramatic destruction. Disasters affect the country’s domestic politics and puts water at the top of the agenda in security policy. Furthermore, impacts of climate change on global water such as environmental migration and economic disadvantage of important trading partners are a threat to the US. Water issues, therefore, became very important in strategic considerations. Water became important in the US’ international relations as well as: influencing the choice of allies and international cooperation (Tóth, 2012).

For great powers, just like the US, there are diplomatic opportunities in development aid interventions. According to King (2013), diplomatic engagement in Ethiopia represents great opportunities for leadership for the US as it can provide sufficient funding, innovative solutions, mandate, and human resources which would not be possible for a medium or small size country. King argues that besides the Nile River Basin there are further opportunities for the US to strengthen global leadership by participating and assisting at conflictual basins such as the Jordan, Indus, Mekong, Tigris-Euphrates. He believes water diplomacy is a great foreign policy tool for the US to build its soft power. At the same time expectations by the international community (from both developing and developed states) are also high for the support of international agreements, norms making, building institutions and innovative solutions in global water management (King, 2013).

Overall, water diplomacy has multi-fold effects in the US. While supporting America's national security and contributing to the common good the US develops another area where it can play an innovative leading role and strengthen its soft power. According to Werz (2012), the US alone is not enough, other powers such as Germany or Japan and also emerging states like Brazil, Turkey, India, and China should contribute productively in international discussion on global water mitigation and crisis management (Werz, 2012). There are areas where they need to improve such as

*“inclusive understanding of water security concepts and the breadth of water's impacts on various sectors”, “greater understanding of political and gender sensitivities in specific countries will enable more effective project implementation” and finally “Greater dedication to strengthening the capacity of host governments through approaches such as data sharing will increase the prospects of project sustainability (King, 2013, p. 28)”.*

According to Herrmann (2018), the EU has recently taken over the coordinator role of international water policy. Europe has the largest number of shared rivers globally, therefore, the member states have significant experience in transboundary water cooperation. With comparison to the US, EU has less of the financial contributions to global water diplomacy, but more focus on building engagement and expertise of its members. Because the member states heavily rely on waters that does not originate from inside their borders, the EU has developed the *“most extensive system of treaty coverage and transboundary governance (Herrmann, 2018, p. 82)”*. The need to establish a conceptual framework for European water diplomacy was addressed in 2012 (Tóth, 2012). Then in 2013, the EU had for the first time adopted its Council conclusions on EU Water Diplomacy where they set priority areas in global water diplomacy. The focus of the EU's diplomacy is on good water governance, strengthening institutional performance, sharing transboundary water management and cooperation expertise in conflictual basins. Areas where EU is currently engaged are Central Asia, Nile Region, Lower Mekong Region, the Sahel Region and the Middle East where it aims to strengthen its position in policy dialogues (Herrmann, 2018). In the followings, I provide an example of a country that entered the field of water diplomacy through its water expertise and as a medium size country became crucial actor of global water management.

### 2.3.3. Water diplomacy for small and middle powers– Niche diplomacy

The Netherland's foreign policy approach is a great example of a small and middle powers to achieve a significant role in water diplomacy. The Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' in cooperation with the Netherlands MFA prepared a comprehensive report and strategy plan for the purpose of the niche potential of water diplomacy for the Netherlands and advised the MFA to prioritise it in its foreign policy agenda (Genderen & Rood, 2011).

According to Genderen & Rood (2011) niche diplomacy is typical foreign policy tool for small and middle power states who does not have the capacity to be active in all sectors, but with outstanding knowledge of a specialised area, long-term investments and broad international network it can gain international influence. As stated in the report, “*water diplomacy has a great potential as a foreign policy niche for the Netherlands* (Genderen & Rood, 2011, p. 2)”. All efforts turns to opportunities only if there is an international demand for this particular knowledge and role. Genderen & Rood argues that great powers like the US or Germany can create international demand, but it is barely the case with smaller countries. The Netherlands have expertise in flood management (due to 1/3 of the country is under sea level), transboundary water conflict resolution, water pollution management, and special international recognition of their delta technology. Furthermore, drinking water and sanitation techniques, transboundary water governance and water law. The demand for this knowledge is high at vulnerable water scarce areas, countries with conflictual shared water borders or at the global governance level (Genderen & Rood, 2011).

Small and medium states often active in peacekeeping, human rights, environmental development etcetera, with other words, areas that contributes to the global public good rewarded with better seats in international institutions such NATO, Human Rights Council, or other UN institutions. The Netherlands has recognised early its way to contribute to the public good and play an active role in mainly water conflict prevention. The Netherlands’ MFA can play the role as neutral broker via IOs, a central hub for knowledge sharing, an enabler of other water actors in conflict resolution and very importantly a norm entrepreneur by its network system and contribution to the global public goods. In the absence of world freshwater court, the Netherlands is the responsible actor of transboundary water conflict arbitration through the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) and adjudication through the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (Genderen & Rood, 2011).

There have been other countries in the water diplomacy field with specialised areas for instance Bolivia pursues water rights, China focuses on hydro energy, Stockholm has been branding the World Water Week. Genderen & Rood (2011) has a new approach defining water diplomacy from foreign policy perspective and argue for the benefits associated for the country itself. These advantages are having a recognised active role in water diplomacy besides other facts it improves bilateral relations, foster a positive image of the country in the region and globally, and it increases regional and international stability (Genderen & Rood, 2011). The Netherlands’ foreign policy approach provides a great base for my analysis, niche diplomacy set a great example for Hungary to enter the global water arena. The next literature I review is about the object of my analysis, Hungary and it discusses how the small state got engaged in international negotiations of the SDG processes but it critiques the country’s attitude towards the purpose of water diplomacy and lack of support of the government.

#### 2.3.4. Water diplomacy for small power states - Branding for business

There is vast literature on small state foreign policy and their unique influence in international negotiations. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century small states often find their ‘global voice’ as a development actor, therefore, some of them intentionally strengthen foreign policy strategy in development politics. For instance, Central and Eastern European states tend to be more active in multilateral negotiations of international development than it was expected by the international community after the EU enlargement in 2004. Szentiványi et al. (2017) examines the role of Hungary as a small country and a new development actor during the process of the establishment of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since 2013, the country was co-chairing with Kenya in the UN General Assembly’s Open Working Group (OWG) during the negotiation process that led to the approval of the SDGs in 2015. Hungary’s aim was to influence the SDG process to prioritise an individual SDG dedicated to water (Szent-Iványi, Végh, & Lightfoot, 2017). The authors based on personal interviews with Hungarian diplomats and representatives of civil society organisations critically investigate Hungary’s motivation and action through negotiation process and argue that “*Hungary did not champion the cause of water management for altruistic reasons, but because it perceived the creation of an international development framework which featured water issues strongly to lead to potential business benefits for Hungarian companies in the future*” (Szent-Iványi, Végh, & Lightfoot, 2017, p. 16). Authors critique that, however, the negotiation process led to success and SDG6 for ‘Clean Water and Sanitation’ was agreed upon, the wider government seemed uninterested and should have provided a stronger support. The Hungarian active involvement must have contributed to the outcome, but it cannot be said that a similar decision would not have happened without the Hungarians contribution (Szent-Iványi, Végh, & Lightfoot, 2017).

According to Szentiványi *et al.* (2017) small states often counterbalance their structural limitation with the following strategies: bargaining, alliance building, normative suasion and reputation building or often the mix of these strategies. During the OWG negotiations, Hungary used the alliance and reputation building strategies to promote itself as water expert. There is a focus on global water reputation building in the Hungarian foreign policy since the EU Presidency 2011. The country has been determined to practice its global opening policy on water and turn its diplomatic efforts towards developing countries. Hungary’s participation in the OWG by the UN Ambassador contributes to more influence in the international water community. However, Szentiványi et al argues that normative suasion remains the problem as the government did not prepare a well-formulated proposal to present their arguments towards SDG6. Explanations to the lack of proactive performance can be found in a deeper level. The MFA had a lack of human resource engaged in water diplomacy during the negotiation process (Szent-Iványi, Végh, & Lightfoot, 2017).

The critical analysis of Szentiványi et al. (2017) is one of the very few academic discussions on the Hungarian water diplomacy approach, therefore, it is particularly interesting to my research. This work investigates how a small state, like Hungary, can gain influence in multilateral negotiations in water related issues within the UN, but claims that the motivation for international voice is less normative and more importantly for nation branding and business purposes. Szentiványi in 2017 argues that the country needs to show more commitment toward global water solutions and must strengthen its domestic capabilities meaning “*lack of capacities within the MFA and the wider Hungarian government* (Szent-Iványi, Végh, & Lightfoot, 2017, p. 12)”.

Overall, the literature on water diplomacy demonstrates the complexity of water diplomacy as a concept. As mentioned before, at the time writing there is no uniform definition for water diplomacy, due to the novelty of the approach. It is understood from slightly different perspectives, depends on the area of interest, whether the focus is on too much, too little, too polluted water or the conflicts in transboundary water basins. The literature mainly focuses on the issue of transboundary rivers, the IR literature is mildly engaged in the nexus of conflicts and cooperation in shared basins or power relations of the riparian states. I uncovered the existing literature focusing on state foreign policy behaviour and roles in water diplomacy. I reviewed countries constructing national roles in global water for the purpose to explain the several opportunities for states in water diplomacy regardless of the size of the country. The literature argues there is an urgent need for joint water actions of state and non-state actors due to the rapid effect of climate change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. States must act accordingly and adapt the global water problem in their foreign policy strategy. As the case of the Netherlands shows that it is also a great opportunity to construct an influential role in the international system regardless of the size of the country.

This chapter provided a general understanding of the concept of water diplomacy, and then cases of countries were reviewed where water diplomacy works as a foreign policy tool. Because the academic literature is very limited in the case of Hungary about the foreign policy and water diplomacy nexus, it was important to review cases of other states to take as an example and starting point to my theoretical concepts I introduce in the next chapter. The example of how the Netherlands uses water diplomacy to break into a niche diplomacy area and use the country’s expertise in water management as an opportunity provides a model for Hungary to follow. The case of US similarly gives an insight on the opportunities in water diplomacy to increase the country’s soft power and strengthen leadership roles. Hungary is of course a smaller player, however, according to the example of the Netherlands it can gain significant role in certain areas of water diplomacy. In the next chapter I introduce and discuss the theoretical framework that I will use for my analysis.

### 3. Theoretical framework

The aim of this chapter is to reveal and discuss the theoretical framework that I am engaged with throughout my analysis of Hungary's foreign policy approach. After explaining foreign policy as a theoretical approach to IR, I discuss diplomacy as the focus of the foreign policy investigation and emphasize the constitutive qualities of it as an instrument of foreign policy for states in international arena. The other perspective of my study is looking at cultural components of the Hungarian foreign policy such as state identity and nation role conception, therefore, in this chapter I discuss their presence and importance in foreign policy and introduce the concept of smallness in international relations.

#### 3.1. Foreign policy analysis and IR, the "theory without home"

Definition of foreign policy varies depending on what one's scholar considers would fall under the concept of foreign policy action. This could be from a narrower concept – such as the work of the ambassadors - to all interactions between actors of the international arena. According to Hill (2016) "*foreign policy is the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually but not exclusively a state) in international relations* (Hill, 2016, p. 4)". In other words, foreign policy "*consists in what one state does to, or with, other states, involving a mix of conflict and cooperation* (Hill, 2016, p. 1)". Hill furthermore refers to foreign policy activities as practices, statements, and values in relation to reach of the desired goals. Foreign policy can occur on bilateral, multilateral, or global (transnational) levels (Hill, 2016).

According to Hill (2016) IR scholars tend to prioritise the study of the dynamics of international systems and neglect the concept of individual states' decision making. Therefore, instead of IR scholars, often 'public intellectuals' investigate foreign policy processes with lack of IR theoretical approaches (Hill, 2016). Academics debate whether the study of foreign policy fits within the field of IR. For instance, Houghton (2007) calls the concept: "theory without home" or "theory without chapter in IR textbook" as it has not taken a fix place yet in IR books. In some cases, FPA approach can be found under liberalism or realism theories. There are differences between some mainstream IR theories and FPA in terms of subject of analysis. At realist or neorealist perspectives, the primary actors - rational decision makers - are the states and decisions driven by the interest of maximizing national interest/security. In contrast, FPA concerns foreign policy elites as units of analysis. Individuals' (or groups') interactions are less static, the decision-making process combined with individual perspectives and the interest of the state they represent (Houghton, 2007). Unlike the sceptics, Hudson (2005) believes that "*FPA offers significant contributions to IR - theoretical, substantive, and methodological - and is situated at the intersection of all social science and policy fields as they relate to international*



*affairs* (Hudson, 2005, p. 1)”. Hudson explains this as the ‘ground’ of all social sciences are understood by how humans perceive, react, shape and being shaped by the world. Even though IR gives the impression on that the ‘ground’ of IR is at state level - how states act and interact - in reality state interactions shaped by human perception and decision-making (acting alone or in groups). This ‘ground’ way of thinking enables FPA to have a place at the intersection of all social sciences, thus within the field of IR (Hudson, 2005).

### 3.2. Diplomacy as foreign policy instrument

Academics of IR study diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument. Some treats the word ‘diplomacy’ as a synonym of negotiating, a tool for states to distribute and achieve their interest through communicative channels. Even though, critics question the effectiveness of diplomatic practice in world politics and argue that diplomatic ”cheap talk”, embassies, ceremonies or protocol does not make world politics, scholars generally agrees in the “*potential for communicative processes among states to transform identity and interests and to produce consensual outcomes* (Mitzen, 2015, p. 114)”.

Hill (2016) defines diplomacy as “*the human face of protecting interests in international politics, as well as a crucial instrument for building international stability* (Hill, 2016, p. 158)”. He argues that weak states rely on the competent use of diplomacy to engage foreign counterparts due to the limited resources they have. Hill differentiates four functions of modern diplomacy, these are communication, negotiation, participation in multilateral institutions and the promotion of economic goods. For my analysis of investigating the diplomatic practice of Hungary, the participation in multilateral institutions and economic diplomacy are the prioritised activities concerning water diplomatic practice. Parts of the former are coalition-building and fostering solidarity among like-minded states. Diplomatic goals under this activity are both supporting national interest but with the main purposes of achieving collective goals (Hill, 2016, p. 161). The latter, economic diplomacy is also important to discuss as mentioned in chapter two that in the Hungarian lexicon of diplomacy, water diplomacy falls under the economic section, and accordingly one of the main purpose of the Hungarian initiative is to develop business opportunities and economic development through this activity. In general, the goal of economic diplomacy is to strengthen national wealth, promote export and the domestic businesses export opportunities which not only create new jobs but promote the states reputation in that particular sector. Diplomacy is essential to support businesses from political engagement (Hill, 2016).

Mitzen (2015) looks at diplomacy from the perspectives of representation and governing. According to her, diplomacy as representation in the IR literature both means that diplomats representing the beliefs and preferences of their own state on the global stage, and also the

representation enables the “*state to appear to others as a social actor pursuing interests and capable of negotiating* (Mitzen, 2015, pp. 112-3)”. Diplomacy is a communicative process. One of the characteristics of diplomatic rhetoric is the use of ‘we’ and ‘our’ pronouns. ‘We’ as a collective identity term implies to two things. In one hand it refers to the country of which the diplomat represents and implies to the country’s interest. The other meaning falls under diplomacy as governing and it refers to “us humans” who share the same interest and “*work together to solve problems* (Mitzen, 2015, p. 120)”. In this form the use of ‘we’ deepens the collective intentionality among states and calls for joint action (Mitzen, 2015). Thus, the other potential outcome of diplomacy according to Mitzen (2015) happens on the governance level by addressing common problems and coordinate joint actions to tackle global issues. The prevention of climate change and the global water crisis serves individual interest of the states, but the problem cannot be solved alone. It requires individual choices, therefore, decision makers - on behalf of their state - make commitments towards common goals in governance with others. The collective intentionality for the joint action not only enables states for authoritative decisions but formulates new agencies (Mitzen, 2015). Other scholars focus on the constitutive effect of diplomacy on world politics as constantly new actors, new state collaborations emerge, this change effects on the configuration of global governance (Sending, Pouliot, & Neumann, 2015). External changes in global environment, such as the climate change and its impact on global water scarcity, largely influence the global order in a way that countries with rich water accessibility (riparian, upstream countries) becoming more powerful than others, which condition generates new diplomatic practices. From this thesis perspective, I consider the constitutive effect of diplomacy not only on world politics but on the domestic level. The configuration of domestic actors’ changes as states enter new diplomatic areas. Through an empirical analysis, this thesis examines the domestic configuration of water diplomacy in Hungary. This area of diplomacy has evolved due to the impact of external factors and resulted in new actors, new diplomatic practices, reformed relations with each other and of the responsibilities of already existing actors of foreign policy.

### 3.3. Cultural components of Foreign Policy – Identity through post-structuralism

FPA investigates the cultural dimensions of foreign policy as well. In the last two decades scholars are particularly interested to explore the role of identities, discourses, norms, and cultural practices in foreign policy. They look at the cultural components and foreign policy nexus from different perspectives with various methodologies to uncover how for instance identity shapes foreign policy decision making and vice versa, how norms, international institutions, or the external environment shape state identities or how states construct their national roles etc. As we can see the purpose of this kind of research is not to focus on the reasons and drivers of foreign policy, but by including the cultural context to understand the insight of certain act or behaviour. These research questions answer to ‘how’

questions. (Hill, 2016). There are different understandings among scholars on the relationship of identity and foreign policy. Some scholars reject the direct interrelation between the concepts. They believe identity shapes state interest which will determine the foreign policy action (Ashizawa, 2008). Others claim that „*identity serves as a major source in determining foreign policy* (Ashizawa, 2008, p. 594)”. Scholars generally agree that identity is a fundamental source of an actor’s behaviour, therefore, an investigation of the relation between identity and state behaviour is necessary. According to Ashizawa (2008) state identity “*refers to the image of individuality and distinctiveness held and projected by the state within particular international contexts [...] connotes a conception of what the country is and what it represents* (Ashizawa, 2008, p. 575)”. Morin & Paquin (2018) states „*national identity is a socially constructed image that a political community uses to portray itself. It is made up of a set of elements, including constitutive norms, comparative categories, collective aspirations and cognitive references* (Morin & Paquin, 2018, p. 261)”. Therefore, state identities often represent the political leaders’ individual perception of their own state.

Even though the study of identity, norms and roles are mostly identified with constructivist theory, my research is engaged with the post-structuralist school of thoughts which shares similar theoretical base with constructivism, but post-structuralism focuses on the constitution of identity through language and the discourse itself. While constructivist scholars argue that “*identity provides a stable pre-existing foundation for building foreign policy goal* (Morin & Paquin, 2018, p. 267), post-structuralists go beyond and believe that “*identity is not simply a guide of foreign policy, but also its ultimate goal* (Morin & Paquin, 2018, p. 267)”. According to the post-structuralist way of thinking, identity is discursive, relational, political, and social (Tulmets, 2014). As Hansen (2006) implies: “*to poststructuralism, language is ontologically significant: it is only through the construction in language that ‘things’—objects, subjects, states, living beings, and material structures—are given meaning and endowed with a particular identity* (Hansen, 2006, p. 16)”. Furthermore, the post-structuralists way of thinking also articulates the notion of ‘*self and other*’ in foreign policy discourse. According to this understanding identity is relational and it is defined as the construction of the ‘*self*’ in relation and exclusive to the ‘*other*’, the way how others are portrayed (Tulmets, 2014, p. 112) (Neumann, 1996). Meaning that in foreign policy analysis the state self-image should be understood in relation to the others. The attributes of the ‘*self*’ and ‘*other*’ therefore differ. Although, national identities do not necessarily exclude ‘*all others*’ because alliances as well can construct identity, in this case, collective identity. The collective identity formed by states is called supranational identities. Supranational identities do not replace national ones as just as individuals, states can create multiple identities. Supranational identity goes beyond state borders and governments. For instance, the national identities of Easter European countries are very strong, but they have built new, collective identities when joining to EU or NATO after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The concept of supranational identities are essential for my research when later I examine the identity construction of Hungary. States must

maintain their identity over time. Tools of reproducing identity can be political discourse, speeches, media, education, national days and so. To remain stable, it must be institutionalized and strengthened through these tools. In order to appear legitimate, most of the time new identities are built on historic roots, created from former ones and emerge with political cultures (Morin & Paquin, 2018).

#### 3.4. Cultural components of Foreign policy - National role conception

National identity and national role are often used interchangeably in the literature, and scholars rarely define the relation and difference between the two concepts. I believe that roles are more interconnected with other actors and dependent on the perception and acceptance of the international arena. Roles, such as identity are relational, meaning they “*only exist in interaction with a distinct otherness* (Morin & Paquin, 2018, p. 271)”, although, while identity does not necessarily have to be acknowledged by other actors, national roles must be in order to have authority over certain actions in an international arena. Accordingly, roles involve expectations on how states are supposed to behave to fulfil its position in global politics. Scholars define national roles as “*set of shared expectations relating to how a state behaves as a function of its position on the international stage* (Morin & Paquin, 2018, p. 271)” or “*set of norms expressing expected foreign policy behaviour and action orientation* (Tulmets, 2014, p. 7)”. According to this we can differentiate expected roles for example leadership role of the in global climate governance by the US and self-defined roles which interpreted when for instance a small country wants to enter international politics. Roles are for foreign policy decision makers as guidelines for political judgments (Tulmets, 2014). The most often aimed state roles in international politics are leader, mediator, or innovator etc. (Morin & Paquin, 2018).

Role theory is a valuable approach to FPA. It is not an individual theory but a collective name for theories focus on the function of roles. It first emerged as an approach to the study of foreign policy with the pioneering work of Holsti (1970), who argued that the conception of policymakers about the role of their own state influences foreign policy behaviour (Holsti, 1970). There are different ways to investigate roles. For instance, role theory can examine how state leaders hold a variety of beliefs or images about the identity of their state. This called the national role conception which shapes state behaviour in international system. As Tulmets defines: “*national role conceptions are understood as a domestically shared views and understandings regarding the proper role and purpose of one’s own state as a social collectivity in the international arena* (Tulmets, 2014, p. 7)”. According to Thies (2017) there are multiple roles assigned to each actor (actors could be states or individuals on behalf of the state for instance). An interesting study by Holsti (1970) shows that 17 key roles revealed by states between the period of 1965 and 1967 such as regional leader, regional protector, liberation supporter, mediator-integrator etc where the average number of roles in each state were 4.6. Between this period

the United States expressed 8 roles just itself (Holsti, 1970). Multiple roles make the state more resistant in crisis, but it can also be challenging to fulfil obligations related to all roles (Thies, 2017).

Morin & Paquin (2018) differentiate geographic, political and social roles, as they call them 'specific positions'. Thus, national roles exist "*in space, on a scale of power or within a group* (Morin & Paquin, 2018, p. 271)". They further emphasize that national roles are largely constructed by the perception of foreign policy decision makers including rules, commitments, actions etc. In other words, foreign policy executives who define the national role of their state are influenced by their own cultural background. New roles will therefore depend on how these individuals see the external environment, what they perceive as threat or opportunity. Roles are strategic to foreign policy making, in case it does not receive the international recognition and support it needs to be reevaluated and redefined which often happens in practice (Morin & Paquin, 2018).

Finally, for the study of Hungarian foreign policy it is important to uncover the national role conception of small states in international politics. Herbut (2017) argues that "smallness" indeed is a limitation in terms of material, human or geographical attributes. Unlike great power they do not have the capabilities to set trends and they are also more exposed to external threats or changes in the environmental. However, empirical knowledge shows that when small states use their capabilities and resources wisely, they can reach their foreign policy objectives. The national role of small states in international arena often determined by this act, small states need to adopt smart strategies and find niche areas. He furthermore highlights some of the roles from Holsti (1970) study which often adopted by small states. Such as 'mediator-integrator' when a country is engaged with mediating at state conflicts as third party to help them find peaceful solutions. 'Developer' is also an opportunity for small states. As smallness is relational, there will be always countries who needs help to develop. Small country can improve its international reputation by contributing to very poor areas. And the third role I would like to highlight is the 'example' which role conception aims to set example for other countries through "*emphasizes the importance of promoting prestige and gaining influence in the international system by pursuing certain domestic policies* (Holsti, 1970, p. 174)" (Herbut, 2017).

#### 4. Methodology

In this chapter I outline the methodological aspects of my research by explaining the chosen approaches and data collection I conducted for the analysis. I also provide a reflection of my individual position in relation to the research objectives and process.

#### 4.1. Research design

In brief, this thesis aims to conduct a foreign policy analysis, using discourse and practice analysis on a particular diplomatic case, investigating the Hungarian water diplomacy. This thesis uncovers the discursive diplomatic practices which enables Hungary to claim a significant role in global water diplomacy. My analysis consists of a discourse analysis of carefully selected speeches of foreign policy executives (mainly presidential) and a practice analysis of the configuration of water diplomacy of Hungary.

According to Morin & Paquin (2018) FPA “*focuses on the continuous interaction between actors and their environment* (Morin & Paquin, 2018, p. 1)”. Explanations for state foreign behaviour can be found from the conduction of the social structure to analysis individual leader’s behaviour. FPA is multi-fold, there is a wide range of methodologies developed over time, however, approaches can explain only limited amount of decisions or just one part of the decision-making process. To provide a comprehensive analysis, researchers often combine FPA approaches with theories and by this develop their own construction of the study (Morin & Paquin, 2018, p. 8). FPA allows flexibility to the researcher in terms of combination of approaches and theoretical concepts. Hill (2016) also suggests seeking to pluralism in the FPA process. The investigation should involve, first, diverse actors (as foreign policy includes internal, external, state and non-state actors as well), second, variety of theories and methodologies, as the nature of FPA enables the researcher to integrate analysis on different levels (Hill, 2016) (Morin & Paquin, 2018).

Taking advice from these scholars, I integrate discourse and practice analyses in order to uncover foreign policy behaviour and implementation. Furthermore, in the discourse analysis I focus on the notions of national identity and international role conception. Discourse analysis became popular in FPA because it is not only a research method but also “*a theoretical rallying point common to several approaches* (Morin & Paquin, 2018, p. 289)”, for instance post-structuralism or role theory (Morin & Paquin, 2018). Discourse analysis is a main method to conduct the construction of foreign policy roles by looking at how decision makers perceive, communicate, or perhaps change the role of the state which they represent (Tulmets, 2014). National role conception is one of the core concepts of my analysis as roles indicate the way states behave in the international system in relation to others. Therefore, in my discourse analysis I focus on national role conception of Hungary and examine how state leaders hold a variety of beliefs or images about the identity of Hungary in relation to water and being an international water actor.

## Combined discourse and practice analysis

Discourse analysis can be explained as the investigation of language in use. The method looks into answers on how and why certain things appear the way they do and the possibility of these social certain actions (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 4). In my research I examine a political discourse by the President of Hungary and the Foreign Ministry between the period of 2012 and 2020 on the political narrative of the Hungarian state identity and national role conception in relation to the concept of global water. I look at how the national identity and role have been built up and strengthened in the international political narrative within the chosen time frame. I focus on the *continuity* in the analysis and examine the building of national identity through political narrative. In my analysis I look for and code regularities that appear in the speeches, then I define these as ‘representations’ for instance ‘national identity’, ‘relation to water’, ‘national role conception’. In foreign policy discourse investigating national identity and role it is important to examine both international-facing and domestic-facing speeches as political leaders can change the discourse depending on the audience, and the desired outcomes of the speech (Eckersley, 2016).

Scholars who explore linguistic approaches generally agree on the fact that discourses are social practices, they give meaning to statements, objects (Morin & Paquin, 2018). Neumann’s (2002) ideology of discourse analysis goes further and claims that discourses are preconditions for social action. He argues, looking at only the textual approach does not enable researchers to understand social life entirely. Therefore researchers need to complete the discourse “*with a turn towards practices* (Neumann, 2002, p. 627)” and study the social action itself as well. It helps to understand how political narratives impact politics itself, shows how foreign policy occurs in practice. Accordingly, discourse should not be studied without practice and vice-versa because practice as well cannot be investigated outside of discourse. These two are strongly intertwined. Thus, I complete my above explained discourse analysis with interview-based practice analysis to show a picture of not only how the Hungarian water notion appears in the political rhetoric but how it is exercised in practice. I examine the practical imposition of discourse and the configuration of water diplomacy in Hungary.

This combined discourse and practice analysis enables me to answer to my first research questions on

*How does Hungary practice water diplomacy as a foreign policy tool?*

*And sub-questions:*

*a.) How are the Hungarian state identity and national role in relation to water constructed in the discourse of foreign policy executives?*

*b.) How does the discourse support practice of water diplomacy?*

To combine these two methodologies; the study of meaning and the study of doing (practice), I borrow the concept of Neumann (2002) and “*place culture at the centre of the analysis and to conceptualise it as a dynamic interplay between discourse and practice* (Neumann, 2002, p. 630). Since practices are socially recognised forms of action and discourse is the precondition of the social action then according to Neumann “*both should add up to the concept of culture* (Neumann, 2002, p. 631)”. Neumann illustrates this triangulation of discourse, practice, and culture with the below figure.



*Figure 1 Dynamic interplay between discourse and practice*

### **Agency-structure approach**

FP analysts often use ‘levels of analysis’ which is a methodology that investigates foreign policy on the individual, state, and the international system level. However, there is a lot of criticism arguing that levels of analysis does not provide explanation of the outcomes especially when the investigation includes only one level. Hill (2016) therefore supports the agency-structure analysis and claims that researchers should look into sources of political phenomenon such as the structure and interactions between actors (Hill, 2016, p. 49). According to his understanding, structures are “*sets of factors which make up the multiple environments in which agents operate, and they shape the nature of choices, by setting limits to the possible but also, [...] determining the nature of the problems* (Hill, 2016, p. 47).” Meanwhile, “*agents are entities capable of decisions and actions in any given context* (Hill, 2016, p. 48)”. Agents can be individual or collective. (In my analysis I use the word actors.) The big debate between scholars is whether agents are shaped by structures or the other way around (Hill, 2016). I understand that agency and structure are largely interrelated and even if I focus more on agency, I argue that they mutually affected by each other in both directions. Based on this criticism, in my analysis instead of the levels of analysis methodology I conduct the agency-structure approach with focus on looking at how the agency (water actors) establishes certain configurations within the structure. Structure is an elusive concept and it exists at all levels therefore it is important to define what I mean by it.

The understanding of structure in my analysis is multi-fold. First, I consider structure as the external (both political and natural) environment of which was shaped by the global water crisis. It has resulted in international political tension toward future accessibility of water and at the same time



willingness of states to cooperate towards common goals. This international political structure influences state behaviour such as of Hungary's that based on its geological circumstances in terms of water accessibility must act upon strengthening its international influence. Furthermore, in my analysis of the Hungarian water diplomacy configuration I consider the role of domestic structure of water actors, the institutional aspects of government, with ministries engaged in water policy. I agree with the constructivist perspective that in foreign policy "*agents and structures co-constitute and co-determine each other*", international system set the structure or agents - foreign policy decision makers - to operate and reproduce the structure through discourse and practice (Morin & Paquin, 2018, p. 326). Foreign policy is a combined interaction of many actors under which both agency and structure constitutes each other (Hill, 2016).

#### 4.2. Data collection

This thesis consists of multiple data collection. First, as secondary data search, I have collected existing literature about water diplomacy with focus on the definition of the concept used by different actors. The IR academic literature on water diplomacy is very limited, however, I was able to review literature in the foreign policy and water diplomacy nexus. Also, I would add here the secondary sources such as policy reviews, strategy papers and academic literature that I use to introduce Hungary's foreign policy approach regarding the global opening since the 1990s in which development is important to understand the foreign policy path towards water diplomacy. The main analysis of my thesis is built up on primary sources that I would like to explain in more detail.

The primary research of my analysis consists of three types of qualitative data collection. By the nature of the qualitative research, in contrast to quantitative, it investigates words and meaning instead of quantification of data. In terms of relationship of theory, it is inductive, meaning it generates theory instead of testing it. Additionally, qualitative research focuses on how individuals interpret the social world (Bryman, 2012, p. 36). First, I conducted discourse analysis, which is a language-based, interpretive approach, "*the collection and qualitative analysis of text and documents* (Bryman, 2012, p. 383). For my discourse analysis I reviewed 26 carefully selected speeches of the President of the Republic and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trade between the time period of 2012 and 2020. I adjust the time period to the presidential term of current president János Áder, since the political narrative around water and role in water diplomacy has started with his presidency. He is often called the chief patron of the engagement of the country in climate politics with special focus on water. The theme of the speeches in general were related to and acted upon for the purpose of climate change and global water crisis. I included New Year's Eve speeches as it is often the case that the president mentions the importance of nature conservation, draws attention to the dangers of climate and water and also - as explained before - speeches often have different message for domestic audience. The majority of

speeches are text format in Hungarian and are available on the website of the President's office ([www.keh.hu](http://www.keh.hu)). Another important source was the website of the Budapest Water Summit event where the opening and closing speeches are available for the public. As the Summit is the biggest diplomatic event of Hungary with thousands of international water actors and diplomats including high-level politicians, it is a great opportunity to strengthen the discourse around the Hungarian role and identity and to promote the country's competency.

As mentioned earlier my thesis includes both discourse and practice analysis. For the latter, to analyse the diplomatic practice - the configuration of water diplomacy - I was applying multiple sources. First, to gain an insight of both international and domestic practice of the water diplomacy initiative, last year (October 2019) I travelled to Hungary to participate on the above-mentioned three days long Budapest Water Summit. The Summit became the most important diplomatic event for the country. The summit is organised by the Hungarian Government; for the preparation work and side events the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary is responsible in cooperation with almost all core water actors. The event was opened by the President of the Republic and the Minister of MFAT held the closing remarks. Therefore, for two of the reviewed speeches in my discourse analysis I had the opportunity to listen in live. Additionally, I participated in almost all plenary sessions and side events and talked to the exhibitors/water companies at the expo for the purpose of gathering background knowledge and requesting interviews. Participation on the Summit gave me a comprehensive insight of the global water crisis and the Hungarian efforts. After deciding on my topic, I was reading a lot about water diplomacy and it was very interesting and exciting to see the authors of the literature and core high-level diplomats of global water governance in person. The personal experience brought my research subject closer to me and provided a good starting point on the discussion with my interviewees a few months later. I felt part of a diplomatic action where the global water crisis is being addressed and important decisions are being made.

To gather more information on the water diplomacy configuration, at the beginning of 2020, I travelled to Budapest again. During the visit I conducted five semi-structured interviews with carefully selected representatives of the core water actors. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions provide flexibility to the interviewee in terms of depth and length of the answers. The interviewer can obtain more insight and personal interpretation than with close-ended or structured interviews (Bryman, 2012). My interviewees included a senior diplomat of MFAT and Ministry of Innovations and Technology, diplomats, international water experts, water management experts, researcher/professor and a managing director of a non-profit organisation. The various professions of interviewees represents the field of water diplomacy. The selection of my interviewees demonstrates the earlier mentioned nature of water diplomacy that the initiative brings together many professions from politics to business. The sampling method for the interviews was purposive, opportunistic approach. Purposive sampling is a non-probability form of sampling and it is very common to qualitative research method. It does not

happen on a random basis, with other words, I selected my interviewees “*in terms of a criteria that will allow the research questions to be answered* (Bryman, 2012, p. 418)”. Furthermore, I conducted opportunistic sampling as I looked for individuals who I assumed based on their knowledge and experience can provide relevant answers to my questions. During my sampling process, I came to the recognition that actors of water diplomacy in Hungary belong to a relatively new, and therefore small, intimate community where most of the actors know each other. To start with, I emailed the Hungarian University where the new water diplomacy course will be launched (I will discuss the importance of this institute later) and received a very helpful answer from a senior diplomat and expert who shared materials with me and was open for interview. The rest of the sampling method occurred with snowballing technique as they recruited other participants. Because of the internal nature of the agency of water diplomacy, snowballing technique was the only possible way. It is difficult for an outsider to know who the actors are and how to reach them. My sampling approach confirms what Bryman argues that purposive sampling often involves more than one approaches, especially as snowballing is often the outcome of another technique (Bryman, 2012, p. 427). Interviews were around 45 mins long, in person, in Hungarian. After asking permission, I recorded and stored them on my personal device (mobile phone). I did not transcribe the entire interviews but summarised them and noted down important quotes and findings which I translated. The interviews allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the institutional structure of the Hungarian water diplomacy, the stakeholder’s responsibilities, what they do and their relation to each other which is core to my analysis. For this practice analysis, additional to the interviews, I reviewed the governmental website, ROO’s of the ministries engaged in water diplomacy, strategy documents and policy papers.

#### 4.3. Reflexivity

As a researcher it is not possible to investigate objects with complete neutrality. First of all, the status of the observer will affect the interaction with interviewees during the research. For instance, physical appearance, social status, language, or gestures all impact the interviewees’ attitude towards the researcher and some ways influence the answers. On the other hand, personal perspective of the researched topic and objectives can lead to bias results which the researcher must be aware of and reflect on it during the research process. It is important that the researcher locates her/himself in relation to the researched area, the objectives and look at motivations, opportunities or even limitation to the study. Observer can limit own bias but cannot eliminate it (Leander, 2008).

I am Hungarian, I am a student, I speak Hungarian and I work in the Hungarian Embassy in Norway. As a researcher I must be aware of that all these personal attributes influence my research in many ways. My status provides both opportunities and limitations at the same time. I had the motivation

to study a relatively new diplomatic approach of my own country and because I am personally attached to the research subject it can lead to bias interpretation. However, I found my cultural competency an advantage. Neumann (2016) discusses the importance of cultural competency for researchers when conducting discourse analysis (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). I speak the language which enables me to easily read documents, understand the general social and political setting of Hungary and the culture behind the political discourse. Cultural competency allows the researcher in discourse analysis to demonstrate variations in meaning and representations. Neumann believes that the more general knowledge you have about the researched culture, the easier the interpretation (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, pp. 83-84). I conducted my discourse analysis and interviews on the mother language of the interviewees. However, during translation important information may get lost and sometimes cultural aspects are difficult to translate, especially in the topic of identity and roles as these are often personal interpretations. In contrast, however, cultural competency and to understand the language contribute largely to the understanding of identity behind the discourse. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to access diplomatic actors of the Hungarian water diplomacy through the MFAT which is a great advantage in this study. Although during the interview process I was facing challenges with my double status: 'a colleague' which allows them to consider me as an insider, they trust me, therefore they can be more open, but at the same time I am a 'student' who inquires information for her thesis. The student position works opposite as they might focus more on educational information which would be interesting for the research project instead of deeper thoughts, their actual perception. Wamba (2017) has an interesting discussion of the multiple identities that researchers face. During his positionality he reflects to multiple "I's" namely "I that is seen by me", "I" which looks, and the "I" which is seen. Wamba argues that positionality is necessary for a researcher as it "*helps to reflect on trustworthiness, research ethics, solidarity around issues, and motivation into action*" (Wamba, 2017, p. 616)". Negligible criticism was revealed as during the interview they were representing the Hungarian state itself. Interviews took place in a work environment which did not help in this situation. Being an insider also prevented me to look at things from outside the box. Overall, I try to position myself in the middle, use the advantage to access information and understand the culture but critically investigate the case, from an outsider perspective.

## 5. Foreign policy analysis of Hungary's water diplomacy approach

This chapter includes the main analysis of the thesis. Before jumping into the discourse and practice analysis, it is important to look at the relatively recent involvement of the foreign policy direction. I chose to review the Hungarian foreign policy since the end of the Cold War because after the collapse of the Soviet Union Hungary's main purpose was to build its independent foreign policy. It is important to understand the development of foreign policy decision and the 'global opening' policy

which is already including elements of water policy. After the background sub-chapter, the main combined discourse and practice analysis comes in the way it was introduced in the previous methodology chapter.

### 5.1. Hungary's foreign policy evolvement since the 1990s

This sub-chapter is built up as follows: I start with explaining the Hungarian foreign policy direction after the collapse of the Soviet Union. When analysing foreign policy, a historical review is very important as it explains state identity formation and behaviours on the international stage. Furthermore, there is a strong impact of the geographical attributes and earlier experiences of Hungary's foreign policy behaviour in terms of water policy. In this section I discuss the impacts of the EU presidency on foreign policy direction with focus on the new 'global opening' policy which I consider as the precondition for water diplomacy discourse and action. In this chapter I further discuss how Hungary built its regional, trans-regional and then global appearance which enabled the country to make an impact on global governance decision making on the individual SDG dedicated to water.

Through history, Hungary's foreign policy behaviour was mainly determined by powerful empires such as the Ottoman, the Habsburg, and the Russian empires, until regaining its sovereignty in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union<sup>1</sup>. The lack of independence in foreign policy attempts between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century made it difficult for the country to act according to its own will in the international arena and it also left its marks on today's foreign policy strategy (Jeszenkszky, 2007). After 1920, the political hostility with neighbouring countries intensified when via the Peace Treaty of World War I. huge territories of the country including nearly three million Hungarian people were detached to neighbour countries and felt mistreated as national minorities. With the end of the communism (1989-91) a renewal of a very old political and cultural alliance (four Central European countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – the Visegrád Group) conducted a new cooperative and peaceful behaviour in the region which activated Hungary's foreign policy again (Jeszenkszky, 2007). After the regime change, the main political focus of the new democratic Hungary was to restore sovereignty; transatlantic orientation (building relationship and trust with Western democratic states); build regional stability through the Visegrád Group; and to support Hungarians left outside the border (Paragi, 2010). These years were strongly determined by the intention to join NATO and European Union. The country needed to adapt western values and interest in order to get acceptance.

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<sup>1</sup> "Attempts by powerful empires (the German, the Habsburg, the Ottoman and the Russian empires) to dominate the country led to loss of independence from the 16th to the 20th century, and full sovereignty has been regained only in 1991 with the seizure of the Soviet occupation (Jeszenkszky, 2007, p. 43)".

The so-called the ‘New Europe’<sup>2</sup> and Hungary as part of it concentrated on political, economic, environmental and cultural recovery after the repressions (Jeszenkszky, 2007).

### **Foreign policy changes after the EU Presidency – The ‘global opening’ policy**

Hungary has joined to global international organisations in the following years: in 1982 to the IMF and the World Bank, in 1994 to the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe), in 1955 to the United Nations, in 1999 to NATO and in 2004 to the European Union together with other former communist states forming the Central and Eastern Europe region (CEE) (Jeszenkszky, 2007). Joining to the NATO and EU symbolized new positioning in international politics within Europe and the transatlantic community for Hungary. The aim was to change the political and public opinion of the country, gain international reputation, and prove they are not different from the ‘old Europe’ countries. As a small state with lack of military and economic power, together with other CEE countries exercised the soft bandwagonism and demonstrated willingness to support the US in the Iraq intervention. Furthermore, with the Visegrád Group cooperation they made sure to strengthen the regional stability and well-being (Ociepka, 2013).

2011 was an important year for the new members of the EU as both Hungary and Poland served the 6-month presidency of the Council. The presidency provides many advantages for a county such as setting the agenda of the Council, initiating new foreign policy goals, and as a newcomer promote the country in the international arena. The presidency for Hungary resulted in new dimensions in foreign policy, most importantly the new ‘global opening’ policy and the endorsement of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) (Ociepka, 2013). The ‘global opening’ initiative demonstrates the country’s foreign policy priorities. It states the national and foreign policy values, re-positions the country in the international field, establishes diplomatic interests such as economic development, strengthening security, agriculture interest, public diplomacy, and the promotion of sustainable development. The policy defines a new, value-based foreign policy which values coincide with the global governance, the UN Charter. “[...] *peace, security, the respect of international law, democracy, human rights, personal freedoms [...] social responsibility, market economy, sustainable development, freedom of self-expression, freedom of the press, and the respect of cultural diversity* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2011, p. 4)” says the Hungarian Constitution since 2011. The re-positioning includes the aim of increased representation of the national interest in the EU and NATO and a comprehensive global policy approach to tie its diplomatic relations with developing states, “*increase its role in shaping the global agenda and strengthening our activism in meeting global*

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<sup>2</sup> Before joinign to EU the former communist applicant countries were called ‘the New Europe’ by US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld as they were all willing to support the US in the Iraq intervention (Ociepka, 2013)

*challenges* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2011, p. 9)". At the same time, Hungary faces foreign policy challenges such as increasing multipolarity due to emerging economies, growing demand of natural resources and shifting world security relations. It admits that the weakened economy after 2008 crises makes significant impact on the country's position and the internationally criticised domestic political initiatives effected reputation which restrained economic development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2011).

The 'global opening' concerns new areas to build diplomatic relations and implement foreign policy practice. The purpose of repositioning presence in these areas is to raise international reputation, strengthen external economy, and diplomatic matters as main national interests. Out of these regions it is important to highlight 'East policy' and 'Africa policy' because they are the main determinants of the new foreign policy identity and emphasis on the role of water. The 'East policy', raised concerns whether the country's turning its back to the EU and rebuilding foreign policy relations with the 'old enemy', Russia and the alarming human rights practitioner, China. Hungary expects exports and investments with China as many other CEE countries and is dependent on the energy supply from Russia. Russia even after the disintegration of the Soviet Union remained an influential actor in the Hungarian foreign policy due to the high dependence of energy. The new political rhetoric differs from the early 2000s European accession and adaption to EU or NATO values in regards to the 'East policy' which seeks further economic and security opportunities beyond the EU (Tarrósy & Zoltán , 2014). Critiques argue that under the 'East policy' diplomatic missions turned to seeking economic opportunities only, national reputation has fallen since the frequent arguments with the EU and the uncomfortably tight relations with Russia, thus this effects on the investor sentiment and economic opportunities (Mészáros, 2014). Within 'Africa policy' the aim is to the strengthen foreign relations with the African continent as part of development policy. Since the 1960s Hungary has had diplomatic relations with Africa, building wide personal networks through exchange studies in Hungary in engineering or water management fields. Motivation to support developing and least developed countries is multifaceted. On one hand, accession to West required to re-valuate humanitarian values, however, according to Paragi (2010) there are 'rational choice' reasons behind the practice which such as adjustment to the international environment; moral obligations; broader foreign and national security policy concerns, economic considerations (Paragi, 2010, p. 199)". In the new 'Africa policy' the focus is on "*to closely follow humanitarian issues, including food aid, along with agricultural, environmental, water-management and health issues* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2011, p. 49)".

What we can see is that the focus on global environment issues and the promotion of water-management expertise have appeared in the 'global opening' policy with varying emphasize but in all regions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2011). Hill (2016) argues, the main drivers of foreign policy are '*projecting identity abroad*' and '*protecting the global commons*'. These aims are intertwined

in the new global opening policy of Hungary after the EU presidency as Hungary has started to adapt the latter for the purpose of the former (Hill, 2016). ‘*Protecting the global common*’, became very important in the Hungarian foreign policy from the 1990s for multiple reasons. By supporting global goals, states protect their own interests but at the same time it gains visibility, strengthen status and reputation, and enables states to form allies with likeminded states.

### **Regional cooperation and evolving water roles**

Hungary’s Constitution since 2011 contains ‘contribution to global sustainable development’ as one of the key priorities of foreign policy. Hungary is part of many environmental treaties such UNFCCC, Kyoto and Paris Agreements are some of the biggest by the UN, the European Landscape Convention, and further water based treaties such as the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes by the UNECE and the EU’s largest multilateral cooperation, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR.org, 2020). Throughout the EU environmental policies, agriculture and water management became one of the main areas to focus and raise international attention to it, to address global challenges, especially in water management, crop production, livestock farming or soil protection. These areas where the country has demonstrated expertise throughout the history. The MFAT strengthened eco- and environmental diplomatic activity in “*cooperation with the relevant ministries* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2011, p. 16)”.

To mention some of the biggest achievement of the Hungarian water expertise, for instance the implementation of irrigation systems in Ethiopia, a rehabilitation centre in Kenya, water management projects in Mongolia, technological assistance, exchange student programmes with developing countries to train foreign experts in Hungary. Although water-related measures have only emerged in a new foreign policy direction during the EU Presidency as a conscious foreign policy tool. As briefly mentioned above, one of the important diplomatic successes of the presidency was to initiate and implement the EUSDR. The coalition was adopted by the European Commission in 2010 and gained recognition by the European Council during the presidency. It provides a framework for cooperation among states along the Danube in order to create synergies in water management, eliminate duplications and promote projects for taking full advantage of the existing opportunities (Tóth, 2012). There are 9 EU and 5 non-EU member countries in the regional strategy, maintaining 11 areas of water development, therefrom Hungary undertakes coordinator role in 3 areas: promoting sustainable energy, conserving water quality and the field of environmental risk management. The coordination is in cooperation with Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania which helps Hungary to build strong cooperation and building diplomatic ties in the region through water (Joó, 2017). By doing this the country tries to prevent conflict from transboundary water sources that happened before such as the



Hungarian-Slovak debate on Danube drainage at Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros (which even reached International Court of Justice (ICJ) and international media); Rába river pollution from Austria or the cyanide pollution from Romania in the Tisza river (Tóth, 2012). Hungary has been building bilateral and regional cooperation and on the expert level maintains good relationship with the upstream countries (INT#1). Finally, the country membership in ICPDR shows commitment to protect and safeguard the sustainable use of the surface and groundwater of Danube river basin (ICPDR.org, 2020).

### **Trans-regional collaboration - EU-ASEM**

Active participation in both joint commitments, the ICPDR or EUSDR, enables the country to gain expertise in the practice of regional cooperation over transboundary water issues and also be able to share it with other regions facing similar issues. Based on this idea, another important diplomatic achievement through the EU presidency is the Danube-Mekong cooperation initiative. The idea was proposed in 2011 on the Asia–Europe Meeting (ASEM) Foreign Minister’s conference in Hungary and was officially adopted few month later in the next ASEM Summit in Laos (Fidesz.hu, 2013). The Mekong and Danube are large rivers and have common characteristics in regards transboundary nature, possible impacts of climate change in which Hungary can offer its knowledge in “*flood control and flood risk mapping, water quantity and quality monitoring, wetland and water related habitat conservation, urban drinking and wastewater supply planning and managing, integrated river basin management planning, and other transboundary water issues* (ASEM Meeting, 2011, p. 9)”. The initiative served the interests of the earlier discussed ‘East policy’ of Hungary and strengthened diplomatic relations with Asia (Fidesz.hu, 2013).

The ASEM cooperation fulfils the purpose of fostering dialogue of common interest in political, economic, social, cultural, and educational issues between Asia and Europe. The objective of the Foreign Minister’s meeting was to address non-traditional security challenges, besides others the impact of climate change on global security. The statement declared: “*Environmental degradation, climate change, loss of biological diversity, over-exploitation of natural resources and other human pressures on the natural environment are underlying causes for many emerging security threats* (ASEM Meeting, 2011, p. 2)”. On this conference the ministers agreed on the importance of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) next year, recognized the water crisis’ comprehensive nature concerning economic, social and environmental features and, therefore, distinguished the importance of sustainable water resources management in international development cooperation (ASEM Meeting, 2011).

June 20-22, 2012 were special days for the Hungarian water diplomacy. Hungary hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEM Sustainable Development Dialogue in Budapest for the purpose of on trans-regional level discussing the role of water in Sustainable Regional Development Strategies. The aim of the meeting

was to lay the foundations for the international efforts of water in the sustainable development agenda and to establish the diplomatic cooperation between the Danube Region Strategy and the Greater Mekong Subregion. On this meeting Hungary has stated its concern towards global water issues and the importance of water within the sustainable development goals. As the statement claims:

*“Hungary believes that [...] water as an overarching issue through several different areas of interregional cooperation from regional connectivity, economic integration, through disaster preparedness and management, climate change and environment, water management and food security including the accessibility of drinking water, to even poverty reduction (ASEM Meeting, 2012)”. Therefore, “Sustainable development will not be achieved without a water secure world integrating water resources management across all sectors (ASEM Meeting, 2012)”.*

The ASEM cooperation and meetings provided great platform for Hungary to raise awareness on the importance of global water crisis and at the same time to start a trans-regional discourse on the dedication, ‘readiness’ and ‘expertise’ of the country in water. Hungary's open political discourse in front of the international podium took place during the same days on the Rio+20 Summit as President Áder in his speech ensured the global arena for Hungary's support to establish the SDGs. Áder announced that Hungary would play host to a UN summit on water in 2013 (Budapest Water Summit) for the aim to provide a physical platform for global governance and for all water actors to establish an individual SDG dedicated to water. The Hungarian national interest was to convince the international arena for a need of a water SDG (Kormany.hu, 2010).

### **Hungary's role in the formation of SDG6 – “Clean Water & Sanitation”**

The changing foreign policy towards sustainable development, with special attention to global water issue is part of ‘global opening’ strategy. Hungary has recognised the opportunities that lie in taking an important role addressing the water issue and promoting global collaboration. Hungary took significant roles covering two areas during the SDG negotiation process up to 2015. These roles are member of the Steering Committee of the Group of Friends of Water and elected co-chair with Kenya during the negotiation process of the Open Working Group (OWG). The Group of Friends of Water established in 2010 and contrary to its original purpose it became a strong promoter of the UN water agenda. Two years later, the Steering Committee was established with Finland, Tajikistan, Thailand for the purpose of working out recommendations for the UN water agenda up to the Rio+20 conference and leading the discussions on water issues. Hungary's responsibility within the board was to organise the discussion on “Water related risk management – the impact of human intervention on water” and “Water in MDG's”, in collaboration with Finland (un.org/waterforlifedecade, 2012). The recommendations on water SDG were finalized during the Budapest Water Summit in 2013.

The OWG was established after the Rio+20 Summit, and its task was to prepare SDG proposals. In the first session, Hungary as being a co-chair of the discussion played an important negotiator role (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2013). The cooperation and support of the Hungarian government during the OWG process raised strong criticism according to which they did not show strong commitment to SDGs, did not submit their own statement or recommendation but *“rather used the forum to brand itself as an expert on water issues, with the hope of future business benefits* (Szent-Iványi, Végh, & Lightfoot, 2017, p. 1). According to former Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations, Csaba Kőrösi, who represented the country in the OWG said that, Hungary had a neutral role as a negotiator during the OWG, it did not determine how countries’ interests would be reconciled (Kormany.hu, 2014). Kőrösi emphasized on a press conference that the elaboration of the UN 2030 SDGs is a major diplomatic success of Hungary. Every SDG means a new market opportunity; therefore, water is particularly important for Hungary for economic reasons (Kormany.hu, 2014).

Csaba Kőrösi the co-chair of the UN OWG in an interview on the role of Hungary in the OWG he stated:

*“I think the Hungarian government, civil society, academia, and the Hungarian president himself made their name understood and known in this arena. Hungary has made a sort of branding but most importantly there is a strong conviction in this country [...] successful adaptation to sustainable development. And I see very strong determination among different actors. [...] Hungary [...] play a role and do advance the course of sustainable development in terms of environmental, in terms of economic and in terms of social advancement. I expect Hungary to play a role in the rest of the negotiations and in the rest of the implementations both in the country, in the region and in global international terms. Of course, taking into consideration the capabilities of the country (Kőrösi, 2014)”*.

To summarize, this chapter demonstrated how the Hungarian foreign policy changed and opened up to the global arena after the regime change. Hungarian politicians consider the EU presidency as a major breakdown for regional and global opening. Hungary recognised relatively early the importance of water politics and started to create a regional and global role in relation to water issues. In strong collaboration with the UN-Water as a Committee member, being close to global decision-makers helped Hungary to achieve its national interests in strengthening reputation, contributing to formation and implementation of SDG6 for the purpose of economic development. The diplomatic practice of achieving Hungary’s desired outcome can be explained by Mitzen’s (2015) notion according to which there is great potential in transnational communicative processes for *“states to transform identity and interests and to produce consensual outcomes* (Mitzen, 2015, p. 114)” Hungary has recognised potential partner states to cooperate with, transnational, regional and global platforms to express its interest which both serve the global common good but also the national interest too. In case of global water initiatives there must be mutual understanding and cooperation among states to achieve this particular type of foreign policy (Mitzen, 2015).

Diplomatic negotiations, arguments, speeches are all discursive practices presented by individual diplomats or foreign policy executives but on behalf of their state's self-interest. They are the "mouthpieces" of states, during a diplomatic process they are the state itself as a social actor. Therefore, the competent work of a diplomat to successfully represent the state are crucial for foreign policy making. The Hungarian diplomatic achievement on the formulation of SDG6 proves the notion that diplomats see international stage is constructed by social action where diplomatic practice has a significant role (Mitzen, 2015). As mentioned that despite of the success, the government did not provide enough support to the diplomats during the OWG which could be explained with the lack of human and knowledge capacities in the MFAT and the wider government, the area of development issues are relatively new to foreign politics, there was not a strong institutional support for the representatives.

FPA scholars often analyse how "*discursive practices communicate and secure the state's self-interest*" (Mitzen, 2015, p. 115). Therefore, in the next section, I analyse the discursive practice of the Hungarian foreign policy executives to understand how the Hungarian state identity and national role in relation to water are constructed in the discourse. Discourse analysis will contribute towards the answer my following sub-research questions:

- a.) *How are the Hungarian state identity and national role in relation to water constructed in the discourse of foreign policy executives?*
- b.) *How does the discourse support practice of water diplomacy?*

## 5.2. Discourse analysis of foreign policy executives of Hungary in relation to water

As uncovered in the previous section, Hungarian diplomacy is developing an increasingly active role in raising and resolving global problems related to water management and the key figure and patron of the water diplomacy initiative is the current President of the Republic János Áder. Top priority concerns in his presidential agenda are the awareness of the social, economic and political context of the challenges posed by water and climate change, to encourage climate-friendly technological solutions and by this protect future generations (kormany.hu, 2017). This phenomenon demonstrates that states' behaviour is not only shaped by cultural, political values or for the interest of economic development, but it is also the leaders' perception that influence foreign policy decisions (Morin & Paquin, 2018). Therefore, Hungary's foreign policy approach requires an investigation from the agency perspective to look at how state identity and national role in relation to water are constructed in the discourse of political executives. As introduced in chapter four, I examine political speeches of the

President of Hungary and the Foreign Minister between the period of 2012 and 2020. 26 speeches were investigated, those are held at international climate events and domestic public presidential speeches such as New Year's Eve speeches. Additionally, I include one particular speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Péter Szijjártó at the closing session of the Budapest Water Summit in 2019. I examine both international-facing and domestic-facing speeches as political leaders can change the discourse depending on the audience, and the desired outcomes of the speech (Eckersley, 2016). I look at how the national identity and role have been constructed and strengthened in the international political narrative within the chosen timeframe.

Despite the study of discourse in political sciences being very popular - especially by post-structuralist, social constructivist or feminist scholars - there are still no common understanding of what constitutes a discourse, what the best way is to study discourse (Milliken, 1999). Therefore I follow the criteria of Eckersley (2016), in my analysis, I study speech act where I identify discourse as regularities in the written and oral narrative that represents certain issues, “*categories, form of knowledge, ideas, values, beliefs, social identities and roles and responsibilities* (Eckersley, 2016, p. 183).”

### **Discourse analysis of President János Áder speeches between the period of 2012-2020**

My discourse analysis starts where I left the ‘story’ in the previous sub-chapter, when in parallel to the EU-ASEM event the President at the Rio+20 Summit in his speech expressed the Hungarian interest and engagement in global water issues and proposed to host the next UN Conference on Water in the Hungarian capital, to provide a platform for discussing sustainable development in relation to water. In his speech the President claimed that:

“[...] *we Hungarians, together with Central European neighbours live in the Carpathian-basin with their Central-European neighbours only play a lesser role in shaping the process, that they are significantly threatened by global climate change. [...] (Hungary) has unique water management culture [...] ready to add our knowledge to contribute and share our advanced experiences in water management culture with others. I therefore propose to host a UN Conference on global water crisis in 2013 in Hungary* (Áder, Speech by President János Áder at the Rio+20 conference, 2012)”.

His speech is structured to address the urgency of global water crisis “*the biggest challenge of the future of humanity* (Áder, 2012)” and to promote the competency of Hungarians to contribute to the global common good. The aim of the political narrative is to identify and place the Hungarian nation on the global map and introduce the national perspectives on climate issues with particular focus on water. A very similar structure can be observed in the rhetoric since the speech of the Rio+20 Summit with regular focus on state identity, interest, and the promotion of the country as an innovative water actor.

Soon after his election, in an interview Mr. Áder declared that the issue of water is becoming an important strategic question of the EU but for Hungarians it is top priority. He stated:

*“we Hungarians have a particular interest in paying attention to this area [...] as a downstream country, we are very exposed in the Carpathian Basin, the protection of our drinking water resources is our national interest (Áder, President of the Republic of Hungary, 2012)”*

In this interview, Mr. Áder further emphasized the importance of national and transnational cooperation and agreements of domestic parties in hosting the UN Water Conference in 2013 as a joint initiative. In agreement with the EU's Water Framework Directive he said *"water is not a commercial product but a heritage that must be protected and managed accordingly"* therefore, Hungary's interest is not to compete with big businesses of global water utility but to protect our heritage (Áder, President of the Republic of Hungary, 2012).

Since the Rio speech the President took several opportunities to express the country's commitment to global water crisis and by this strengthen the country's national role in the global arena.

Four key elements regarding the nexus of state identity, national role repeatedly appear in the reviewed speeches. I categorize these elements and call them *representations* after Dunn & Neumann (2016). These representations are ‘relation to water’, ‘national identity’, ‘supranational identity’, and finally ‘national role conception’. In discourse analysis it is also interesting to look at how the language transforms overtime, however, due to the short timeframe of this research and the early stage of the water role discourse I investigate the *continuity* of the representations to look at how identity and national role constructed, rather than investigating the change of the language. In political speeches by declaring something for instance a role, the leader does not simply describe the role but transforms to reality, by saying he/she constructs the reality and secure the object.

## **Representations**

### *1. “Relation to water”*

The value and importance of water for Hungary and the urgency for an international joint action has been emphasized many times in presidential speeches since 2012. The discourse is inspired by the Hungarian Contestation which states: *“Natural resources, in particular arable land and drinking water resources [...] as common heritage of the nation and it is the duty of the state and everyone else to preserve them for future generations (Office of Parliament, 2011, p. 5)”*. Accordingly, presidential speeches include metaphors that implies to value of water on the highest level and also what water means for Hungary. Turns such as *water is source of life; guarantee of our security; connects us (nations); key to development; biggest issues of the 21st century; most endangered resource today; the*

*common destiny; determinant of life*. In domestic public speeches the President often quotes from Hungarian poems, using metaphors when lyrically referring to the idolized Hungarian rivers and lakes. The Danube often called the Majestic Danube River. The personification and glorification of water sources, and feature of Hungarian literature are adding further value to the natural resource and at the same time links it to the Hungarian identity. Furthermore, discourse calls for the common responsibility to protect water as “*our national heritage*”.

## 2. ‘National identity’

Speeches are regularly structured in a way that after establishing what water means to Hungary, the President turns to identifying Hungary, placing it on the international map. Therefore, I categorize this representation as ‘*national identity*’ and look at how the discourse constructs it. I argue that identity construction is intertwined but in some extent precondition of national role conception. In order to construct national role, the strengthening of the national identity is crucial. As discussed, earlier head of states often describe their country in relation to others when they place it in the global system. Hungary is not an exemption; the President and the Foreign Minister in the investigated speeches define Hungarian national identity in relation to other countries. “*Hungary is a small country in the heart of Europe*” is an often-recurrent term in political speeches. Referring to Hungary as: *small country; small economy; we are only 10 million; therefore cannot achieve global changes on its own; somewhat shaper but greatly sufferer of global changes etc.* demonstrates the small-power self-perception, how the country sees itself (through their national leaders) in relation to others in the international arena. The choice of wording expresses the country’s (limited) capabilities in global climate actions in contrast to great-power states.

Identifying the *self* as small country implies to several relational perception. To adapt it to climate change politics, ‘smallness’ in the Hungarian discourse implies to that contributions to climate activism should be expected based on the country’s capabilities, the country cannot act alone but can be a great contributor compared to its capabilities. Hungary is proud of its compliance in climate change prevention, its results provide a good basis for presenting itself in a good light compared to other countries. Political leaders in climate change negotiation often exercise the naming and shaming tactic and by this differentiate themselves from the ‘great emitters’. This is where Hungary defines the ‘*self*’ but differentiates it from the ‘*others*’. The ‘*others*’ in this case are the big countries, the rich countries, the big emitters and who do not contribute. As the President said on a Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco

[...] *emissions, Hungary is [...] not comparable to either the United States or China. Yet Hungary is one of the 21 countries in the world where GDP has grown by 50% since 1990, while [...] greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 32% (Áder, 2018)*”.

Or in another speech President commented:

*„In relation to others, we are one of the countries in the world that has been able to increase its GDP since 1990 while reducing CO2 emissions. If we look at the emission per capita, Hungary is the sixth in the European Union. The emissions in Germany is one and a half times, in the Netherlands are almost twice [...] the United States has three and a half times more [...] (Áder, 2018)“.*

In this thesis, I do not intend to analyse the actual results achieved in climate change activism, instead I look at how self-perception appears in the rhetoric. Global climate events are convenient opportunities to promote the country's achievements and to gain international acknowledgment and support on the desired national role.

### 3. “*Collective identity - supranational identity*”

As introduced in chapter three, national identities not necessarily exclude ‘all others, states adopt collective identities with others in allies or who share similar identities, norms or interest. The literature calls this phenomenon supranational identity, but it does not replace national ones. Supranational identity goes outside of borders and governments. When President Áder uses the diplomatic “we” in speeches it implies both to representing his own country's identity and also the collective ‘we’ as states who should act together to tackle climate change and water crisis. The promotion of international cooperation on global water issues is another frequently recurring call in the discourse. The need for a *strong water cooperation; joint and several liability; work(ing) together; something we either win together or lose together* emphasized in many ways especially within the process of campaigning for an individual SDG dedicated to water. With this intention Hungary not only commits itself but commit with others to contribute to common goods. Hungary adapts the collective intentionality of the international community and ensure its commitment to joint action.

### 4. ‘*National role conception*’

National roles build on state identity. As earlier discussed at the small state concept that in most cases, great powers have advantage to influence others or set agenda for ‘the rest of the world’, however, in environmental or human rights issues small and medium size states tend to gain significant roles. Accordingly, in the political discourse Hungary is strengthening its role as a small power but capable to act big in specialised areas as a water expert. Role conception is affected by the political executives’ individual perception about the external environment, what they perceive as threats or opportunities and how they want to see their country. Foreign Minister stated



“a small country, a small economy, therefore, we have to be focused. Water management is an area where our capacities, our past, our specificities are proved to be successful enough [...] to offer innovative technologies, know-hows, expertise, best-practises all over the world” in 2019 at the closing ceremony of the third Budapest Water Summit then added “Hungary tries to lead the pack” (Szijjártó, 2019).

Leaders often support roles and identities with historical/cultural foundations. The national role conception as a water actor is therefore not new to Hungary’s interest but its new to its foreign policy narrative. Hungary has been building its diplomatic relations through water for many years. However, it appears to be a break for some years and a revival with the duty of the new President. Since then the national role has been consciously constructed and addressed to the international arena. Such as

*“Unique water management culture; centuries-old water culture explained by the “first king issued a decree on water more than 900 years ago” and the “country [...] started training water engineers at the end of the 18th century”; in the 16th century waterworks, canals and irrigation systems were built; and Hungarian water science has a great past and excellent results; the innovative approach of Hungarian experts (Áder, 2019)”.*

It is important to promote the competency of the state for the desired role as roles can only be activated in case of acceptance by others, in this case the international system. Roles are strategic to foreign policy making, in case it does not receive international recognition and support it needs to be reevaluated and redefined which often happens in practice (Morin & Paquin, 2018).

As mentioned earlier, scholars commonly agree on the productive nature of discourse. Milliken (1999) defines discourse productivity in her article as “discourses are being productive of things defined by the discourse (Milliken, 1999, p. 229)”. Following her ideology after the discourse analysis we understand how the Hungarian discourse of foreign policy executives operationalize the so-called “regime of truth” and creates reality by excluding other potential ways of identity and action. The discourse empowers the President and the Foreign Minister to speak and act on behalf of Hungary and define Hungary’s state identity, and behaviour on international stage in relation to other actors/states, this produces coordination between state elites. According to Milliken discourse therefore produces knowledge, agents, places, and groups (Milliken, 1999).

The aim of the discourse analysis was to uncover how Hungary’s identity and national role are constructed in the discourse of foreign policy executives. On the question regarding how discourse support the practice, I will be able to answer after the practice analysis where I study the operationalisation and implementation of the discourse.

### **Diplomatic practice through relational analytical tool**

Neumann (2002) argues that discourses are preconditions of practice, the social action. He suggests a combination of both discourse and practice analysis to provide a complete picture of the investigated foreign policy decision (Neumann, 2002). Therefore, after analysing the discourse built up by the head of states on defining Hungary's international role on water, in this section, I empirically assess the diplomatic practice itself.

Neumann (2015) defines practices as “*socially recognized forms of activity, done on the basis of what members learn from others, and capable of being done well or badly, correctly or incorrectly* (Neumann, 2015, p. 160)”. In the case of Hungarian foreign policy on water diplomacy, the focus of my analysis is diplomacy itself, as socially recognised activity, and durable practice indicates the competency of the country. Sending et al. claims three main aspects of diplomacy: “*a process (of claiming authority and jurisdiction); relational (it operates at the interface between one's polity and that of others); political (involving both representation and governing)* (Sending, Pouliot, & Neumann, 2015, p. 6)”. With acknowledging all aspects, in my analysis, I focus on the relational perspective and look at diplomacy through two analytical lenses: *configuration and authority* within diplomatic practice. Following Sending et al.'s (2015) notion the relational nature of diplomacy can be explained in many ways. It is often the case that the word diplomacy is preceded with a prefix. For instance, by adding “water” to “diplomacy” implies the relationship to and differentiation from “diplomacy” itself. Furthermore, “diplomacy” and “diplomatic relations” are mostly interchangeable, which again brings the emphasize on the relational nature of the social practice. Our entire social world is built on the connection and interaction of agents, objects, and structures, therefore analysts looking at processes of diplomatic practices to illuminate how these are socially recognized, or investigating diplomatic actors to see how they perform competent diplomatic practice, and creating global politics by the competent practice (Sending, Pouliot, & Neumann, 2015). In the next section, through this relational perspective, I investigate the *configuration* and *authority* aspects of water diplomacy of Hungary.

### **Configuration**

Empirically assessing diplomatic practice first and foremost includes the investigation of the core actors and the work they do. However, the written sources about the practice of water diplomacy in Hungary are relatively limited. Public information is found mainly on the governmental website about the functions and responsibilities of the political actors of water diplomacy under the Organisation and Operational Rules (OOR), also the same website publishes news and changes in the policy or in the institution, but there is no information on how these actors work together in practice, the relationship

of diplomatic and non-diplomatic actors and overall the complete configuration of water diplomacy (kormany.hu). The National Water Strategy<sup>3</sup> (Kvassay Jenő Terv) from 2017 provides information on the future goals and potentials in water diplomacy (hydro-diplomacy) but surprisingly a very minor part of the Strategy discusses international outlooks or the configuration of the domestic interactions of water diplomacy (kormany.hu, 2017). According to the above Strategy and the OOR of MFAT, a National Strategy on Water Diplomacy and Water Sector Exports will be prepared to provide Hungary's international framework of diplomatic attempts with respect to water SDG. In order to overcome the above limitations, personal semi-structured interviews were carried out with representatives of the core actors. My interviews enabled me to explore the relationship of the actors, relations between diplomats and non-diplomatic actors engaged in practices and their various responsibilities. As Sending et al. (2015) argues "*an actor's identity is defined by its relationship with others* (Sending, Pouliot, & Neumann, p. 6)". Implementing sustainable development with focus on water in both domestic and foreign policy, impacted the roles of actors, created new tasks and positions, and formed relationships accordingly. A small network of diplomat and non-diplomat actors has been formulated and been engaged in both domestic and international interactions in Hungary. Not many Hungarian diplomats working in the global water field, although, as one interviewee claimed, "*It is Hungary's national interest to build its national role in water diplomacy and be a global actor – we do not need lots of diplomats to do so, but those few we have, must be in the front line with leading ideas* (INT#01)". There are relatively few countries specialised to water diplomacy yet, the global arena is not fully exploited which give a better potential for a small country to act. According to experts, Hungary has recognised its opportunities early enough and entered to the level of global water governance (INT#01). Water diplomats became members of the UN and other water associated international organisations such as the 2030 Water Research Group (World Bank Group Water) or the UNESCO-IHE and other agencies which enables them to represent Hungary in global negotiations.

Based on the personal perceptions of the interviewees I was able to map the evolving configuration of water diplomacy. I have learnt that it is a small internal community; their work is largely interconnected. *Figure 1* demonstrates the core domestic actors engaged in water diplomacy. It is important to mention that this is not an official illustration of the institutionalisation, but it illustrates how the actors see their roles and responsibilities in relation to other actors, which I figured through my personal interviews. The concept of Hungarian water diplomacy has not developed into an organization yet, but it has a central authority, the President personally. The core executers are the three ministries' sub-departments: the office of the Deputy Secretary for Public Employment and Water at Ministry of Interior; division for Water Diplomacy and Export at MFAT and the Ministry of Innovation and

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<sup>3</sup> Framework strategy of Hungarian water management until 2030 and the medium-term action plan until 2020.

Technology. Additional and equally important non-traditional actors are experts, NGOs, export agencies, research institute etc (INT#02).

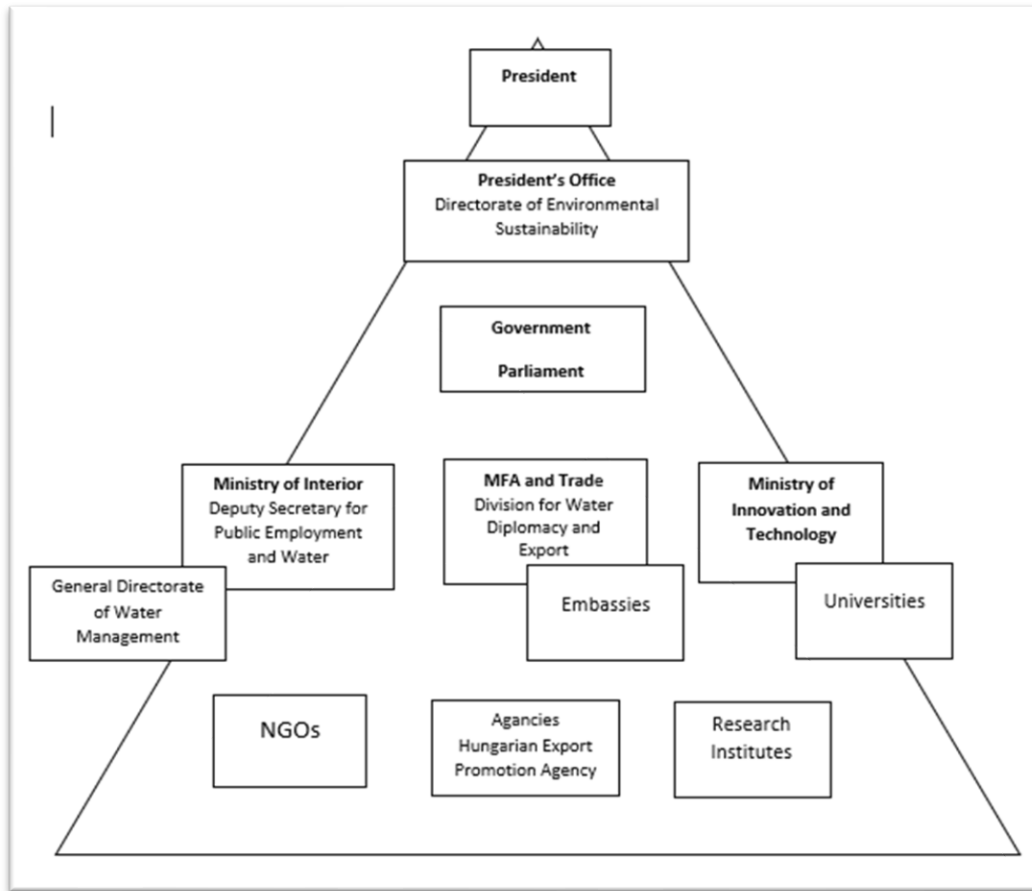


Figure 2: Core actor's configuration of the Hungarian water diplomacy

I investigated the relational aspects between actors/stakeholders of water diplomacy. As said by a senior diplomat “actors complement each other, there is not hierarchy as they have different areas for responsibility, but the President is on the top (INT#02)”. The Ministry of Interior is mainly responsible for domestic water issues and in cooperation with the MFA deals with bilateral diplomatic relations. There is a lot joint work with the MFA, which department is mainly responsible for export, multilateral cooperation and maintaining the earlier explained Danube Region Strategy co-operation.

The Department for Water Diplomacy and Danube Region Strategy is a new sub-division under the direct supervision of the Deputy Secretary of State Export Development since 2017. According to the OOR of MFAT, it is functionalised to support the Deputy Secretary in areas concerning the coordination and promotion of the Hungarian companies, innovative organisations involvement in international water management projects, and, it also supervises the coordination of the Danube Region Strategy. Some of the additional responsibilities are the followings: (1) to prepare and supervise the

implementation of the national hydro-diplomatic<sup>4</sup> and water-industry export plan with the involvement of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Finance; (2) in co-operation with the Ministry of the Interior to develop Hungary's water diplomatic standpoint and ensure its representation in bilateral and multilateral negotiations; (3) to establish diplomatic relations and communicate with international organisations, financial institutions (4) to assist the domestic implementation of global water actions in which platforms Hungary is a member (such as UNESCO International Hydrological Program, Global High Level Panel on Water and Peace or the Water Board of Presidents). In relation to the Danube Region Strategy the department largely responsible for coordination tasks while ensuring the national interests. Further organizational tasks related to Hungary's participation in various treaties (Danube Region Strategy, Danube Transnational Program, the Cross-Border Co-operation Programs and other domestic and international European Union programs) occurs in co-operation with the Ministry of the Interior, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Innovation and Technology and responsible for alignment of the (MFAT of Hungary, 2019)

As we can see export development, concerning regional and global diplomatic interactions falls under the MFAT's responsibilities but as the OOR states and the 'unwritten' practice shows there are numerous co-ordinational work with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. Even though, the Ministry of Interior accountable for domestic water issues such as national flood protection, water quality, remediation, water management, provides professional supervision over water-sector companies, bilateral and multilateral issues related to water management (INT#02). (Ministry of Interior of Hungary, 2018). Furthermore, performs professional tasks arising from bilateral and multilateral international conventions, treaties, co-operations and also contributes to the implementation of Danube river basin management plans and transboundary conventions. General Directorate of Water Management which on a domestic level coordinates 12 river basin directorates but it also provides professional guidance to the Ministry of Interior in bilateral agreements and develops frameworks for transboundary water conventions (INT#03).

The third ministry actively engaged in water diplomacy is the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. Just by looking at the OOR, the responsibilities assigned to the Ministry in regard to water diplomacy is not completely clear for an outsider, but an interview with a water expert and senior diplomat employee enabled me to gain a deeper understanding on how the ministry belongs to the core configuration. One of the most important tasks that the Ministry is engaged with is educating and ensuring the future generation of water experts. At the time writing the Ministry will shortly launch the International Water Governance and Water Diplomacy Master Programme in Hungary. This university programme offers practice-oriented and comprehensive education which covers various topics such as water resource management, hydrology, water governance and conflict management, international

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<sup>4</sup> Note: This is how its written in the ROO.

water law with special focus on EU's water law, and very importantly diplomacy (waterdiplo, 2020). There are very few institutions globally that provides high education in water diplomacy. To mention some of them: the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education in the Netherlands, or Geneva Water Hub in Switzerland or the Tufts University in Massachusetts. These are more specialised to humanitarian issues and conflict resolution (INT#01). The EU specific syllabus indicate two findings: (1) albeit, Hungary has recently started to focus on global diplomatic efforts, the biggest interest of the country is still to ensure its transboundary water situation within the region and (2) EU transboundary water law has limitation and none of the other water diplomatic institutions pay attention to it, therefore this specialization provides advantage for the country. Because Hungary claims the role of the water expert and coordinator it is high priority to educate a new generation but with a complex knowledge of technicalities, diplomatic and legal matters. According to a Hungarian water diplomat, water management knowledge is constantly changing, engineer is necessary but water is also a social issue therefore diplomats need to know how to lead negotiations and manage the change: "*fixing the pipe is not enough anymore* (Szöllösi-Nagy, 2014)". The university leadership believes that, the solution for limited availability of global water is largely in international policy, laws and financial decisions (waterdiplo, 2020), therefore there is a large demand for skilled future generations.

During my research I had the chance to conduct an interview with a very important non-traditional domestic actor. Their achievement is a good example of how a small volunteer organisation can gain support from ministries and the head of states and reach global repute. Plastic Cup (PET Kupa), the environmental initiative for clean waters has recently became one of the core actors of the Hungarian water efforts. The non-profit, non-governmental body organises waste picking events and campaign for volunteers on the largely polluted Tisza river (PET Kupa, 2020). This inspirational initiative has reached the international media and receives domestic support from Ministry of Interior, Office of the President of the Republic or the Ministry for Innovation and Technology (INT#04). According to my interviewee, the initiative receives great international interest and domestic support for innovative solutions such as the most recent 50 thousands EUR financial support from the International Investment Bank for accurate mapping of the waste situation along the river or the over 1 billion HUF worth Hungarian technology, waste collecting machines which are placed at the Upper Tisza area both in Hungary and Ukraine (PET Kupa, 2020). The Plastic Cup initiative is a great example for a small non-profit organisation raising attention to a great domestic cause and becoming one of the core water actors by receiving support from the government. The Clean Tisza is an international outreach project as the river flows through Ukraine and Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and finally Serbia where it flows into the Danube. Huge waste comes from the upstream countries to which the Hungarian initiative provides short-term mitigation, although only Romania and Ukraine are able to provide long-term prevention. Plastic Cup invites volunteers across borders to their cleaning projects and step by step there is hope that the message will also reach the riparian governments too and the help comes from above level. The

river pollution could end up with deeper political conflict, where the transboundary countries need to find peaceful solutions.

## **Authority**

As we can see not all water actors are diplomats. Sending's et al. (2015) argue that the so-called new diplomacy in the globalized world includes not only traditional actors such as politicians and diplomats but many non-traditional ones (Sending, Pouliot, & Neumann, 2015). Diplomats are not necessarily water experts, therefore, due to the complex multi-profession-based nature of water diplomacy there is a large need for non-diplomat actors from different areas such as hydrology, economics, scientists, technical and law experts, researchers, businesses and NGOs, social scientists etc. Sending et al. further argues that “the *relational view treats the identity and attendant resources of actors as inhering in the relations that they have with others – a process in which authority claims play a prominent role* (Sending, Pouliot, & Neumann, 2015, p. 12)”. Accordingly, all traditional and non-traditional actors of water diplomacy can gain authority over the represented knowledge, although, authority depends on the relationship that actors establish between themselves and actors of other representations. The above discussed relational cases between the Ministries shows that certain authorities over responsibilities need to be accepted by other actors, (“*the market over which they claim jurisdiction*”) (Sending, Pouliot, & Neumann, 2015, p. 12). Non-traditional actors such as the Plastic Cup or the General Directorate of Water Management, the sub-governmental directing institute for water management supporting the Ministry of Interior in bilateral projects, have gained respective authority and are being recognised by traditional actors. Some of the core water diplomats of Hungary are also experts of for instance water engineering, hydrology, or international water law, on behalf of the country, they have been maintaining their respective authority in international water related organisations. The relationships between domestic diplomatic and non-diplomatic actors implies how authority is produced and maintained internally in the country (Sending, Pouliot, & Neumann, 2015). Moving on to international perspectives, I discover the respected authority of President Áder in climate change negotiation on both internal and global level.

It is crucial to examine President Áder's central authority among all traditional and non-traditional actors of the Hungarian water diplomacy structure. According to Hill (2016) analysts need to pay attention to the dimensions of personalities of top-level decision makers (Hill, 2016). As discussed in the section of discourse analysis, President Áder has been extremely dedicated to sustainable development, the fight against climate change and water crisis since his election. Both personal and presidential commitments demonstrate on national and international level. He previously fulfilled a role as vice-chair of the European Parliament Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety representing the Hungarian interest. Still today, at the implementation phase, he is the

patronage of environmental affairs. According to the core water actors, he has a well-respected central authority over both domestic and foreign policy pursuit on sustainability, especially in water affairs. As one of the interviewees stated: *“In the time of the global awakening, the President saw a great potential of the country to renew its historical water expertise and by this strengthen the national interest (INT#01)”*. When discussing the authority of the president we must define Hungary’s constitutional system to clarify certain power relations among political executives. According to the Hungarian constitutional system, the President of the republic is the head of state but with largely ceremonial role and does not exercise decision-making and executive powers independently but in agreement with the Parliament. The President however has veto legislation to the Constitutional Court. He/she has an independent balancing role between the Parliament and the Government. On legal level, the presidential role is a neutral power, although, in practice the neutrality is questionable as he/she is elected by the Parliament consequently often their political, ideological values are well-known. The President’s decisions must be countersigned by the Prime Minister. Furthermore, the President suggests the Prime Minister for election, appoints the ministers, the state secretaries (Temesi & Linder, 2018). Since Hungary has been engaged in sustainable development and form its foreign policy accordingly, President Áder has arranged two major institutional changes. First in 2015, the establishment of the Environmental Sustainability Directorate under the Office of the President whose body is responsible for long-term sustainability issues, and two years later in 2017 the earlier discussed Department for Water Diplomacy and the Danube Region Strategy (sustainabledevelopment.un.org, 2018).

The role of President Áder is significant on the international level as well which contributes to the country’s promotion as water actor in the field. What proves international acknowledgement of his presence and efforts is his invitation to serve as a member in the UN and World Bank Group assembled High-Level Panel on Water between 2016 and 2018 by the Secretary-General UN and President of World Bank (Ki-moon, 2016)<sup>5</sup>. The Panel members are responsible for raising awareness of the value of water, changing the society’s attitude and inspire technological developments and investments for the modernization of water management (kormany.hu, 2017). Further high-level international involvements of the President personally or water diplomats are in Friends of Water; the Water Governance Initiative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; the 2030 Water Resources Group; the World Water Council; the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace; and the International Hydrological Programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. His high international presence in the UN is strengthening the country’s competency, international reputation and international opportunities of the domestic water actors (sustainabledevelopment.un.org, 2018)

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<sup>5</sup> . The High-Panel committee fights the challenges of global water crisis and supported the implementation of SDG6



Overall, claiming Hungarian authority in global water negotiations is supported by the domestic and international configuration of diplomatic practices. According to the above analysed practices we can state that Hungary makes effort to maintain wide international relationships. Participation in global processes where water policy negotiations take place contributes to the desired position of the country. In multinational networks discussions on behalf of the country take place therefore it is necessary that traditional diplomats with great support of non-traditional actors such as experts or NGOs represents the country. One of the core actions that strengthens Hungary's competency for claiming the desired international role(s) is the Budapest Water Summit which I analyse from a diplomatic practice perspective in the next section where I focus on the constitutive impact of diplomacy on global politics.

### **Competent practice of water diplomacy - Budapest Water Summits discussed**

Practices are socially constructed. Scholars, Adler and Pouliot (2011) refer: "*practice is classes of action, [...] situated in a social context* (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 5)". They consider international practices as socially organised activities which related to global politics, through five characteristics. In this section, I apply these methodologies and through these characteristics I investigate the 3<sup>rd</sup> times organised Budapest Water Summit, the biggest representation of the Hungarian international diplomatic practice.

According to Adler & Pouliot (2011), the five analytical aspects of diplomatic practice are the followings. First, practice is a performance. A process of doing something which is reviewed by a certain audience. Practice expresses beliefs and represents a discourse or institutions. Practice is a patterned social action which "*exhibits certain regularities over time* (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 6)". It rests on practical, action-oriented background knowledge. And finally, it is discursive. It brings together the discourse and the material world. Agreeing with Foucault: "*Not only is language the conduit of meaning, which turns practices into the location and engine of social action, but it is itself an enactment or doing in the form of 'discursive practices* (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 7)".

Deputy State Secretary of Export Development stated on a domestic water conference after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Budapest Water Summit (BWS) that "*Hungary is the centre of global water politics*". The statement is further explained by the facts "*in 2019 attendees represented from 118 countries: more than 2,000 guests, 28 ministers, 57 high-level delegations and UN specialized agencies* (National University of Public Services, 2019, p. 32)". The organizers consider the event as a great diplomatic success where Hungary was again able to prove the development and innovative capabilities of its water industry. Over 700 business negotiations occurred, a hundred bilateral consultation and also business agreements were signed. BWS became the biggest diplomatic practice and the interconnection of all domestic actors engaged in water diplomacy. It is a coordinated action of the MFAT and Ministry of Innovation, the

Office of the President of the Republic, water diplomats. Additionally, an important part of this event is the Expo side event during the conference which is organised by the Hungarian Export Promotion Agency. The purpose of the Expo to enables business to meet with international high-level decision makers and promote their ideas. The BWS brings together not only domestic actors, but international diplomats, high-level participants, experts end so on. The participants enter in patterned relation through the negotiations, panel discussions and create an outcome together. The main organiser is the Deputy State Secretary for Export Development at the MFAT but they share coordination responsibilities with the Ministry of Interior and Office of the President of the Republic (BWS, 2019) The BWS by today became a regular meeting of distinguished state officials, high-level participants from UN and other international agencies – the world decision makers.

To follow Adler & Pouliot's (2011) study of diplomatic practice I consider the Summit as a competent performance because first it is an event where Hungary's competency in water diplomacy is assessed by a global high-level audience and on the other hand because of the many social actions and processes within the three day conference such as welcoming ceremonies, various speeches and roundtable negotiations, forums, side-events, evening entertainments and the Water and Sanitation Expo (Budapest Water Summit, 2013). As Adler & Pouliot (2011) states, "*performance rests on a form of background knowledge that is bound up in practices* (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 7)". These performances are patterned each time; however, discussion topics and performers vary depending on the current issue: in 2013, after the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development the main theme was the role of water and sanitation in the global sustainable development agenda with focus on creating an individual SDG dedicated to water. The conference in 2016 focused on the implementation of SDG6, water goal and all related targets on water and sanitation (World Water Council , 2016), while the latest in 2019 ran under the motto of "Preventing water crisis" and participants were discussing the "*costs of a potential crisis, the background of mass migration due to water-related problems, the opportunities for increasing investments in the water industry and technological innovations* (Budapest Water Summit, 2019). Yet topics are different, there are regularities in terms of presentation and formalities, there is a similar set of agendas. Competency is not the only focus from a state perspective to prove its potential to the international water community, but the performance of each participants and negotiator on the event can be varying in depending on the knowledge they represent. As Adler & Pouliot (2011) argues, international practice is "*an aggregate of several competent performances* (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 8)" which implies to socially constructed actions on global conference such as bilateral negotiations, press conference, exclusive dining. Last but not least, the Budapest Water Summits are both ideational and material, attendees use material tools such as conference rooms and necessary equipment, Internet, exhibition stands etc to publicly or privately discuss their preferences, ideas and policies (Adler & Pouliot, 2011).

#### 5.4. Discussion, answering to Research Questions

The aim of this section is to discuss the main findings and summarize my research and by this answering the research questions. I start the discussion with the main research question and move to the sub-questions after that. As the questions are intertwined, I could not answer one without the other, answers are connected.

The overall goal of this thesis was to provide a comprehensive empirical insight of how does Hungary practice water diplomacy as a foreign policy tool. As we can see through the combined discourse and practice analysis that Hungary practices this particular diplomacy on multiple platforms. The Hungarian diplomatic achievement proves Mitzen's (2015) statement that diplomacy has “*potential for communicative processes among states to transform identity and interests and to produce consensual outcomes* (Mitzen, 2015, p. 114)”. The foreign policy executives, but mainly the President of the Republic, has built a strong discourse on the international stage identifying Hungary as a significant water actor, promoting the country’s potential and capabilities to contributing to the common good, tackling the global water crisis. While this action contributes to the positive perception of Hungary, it improves its international status, and at the same time it serves national security and economic interests. This thesis explained how the importance of water and water management has appeared in the ‘global opening’ policy as a new foreign policy approach after the EU presidency and since then it has been developed through diplomatic practices, institutionalization, involvement in global water governance, organising global events etc..

This research gave an empirical understanding on the complex nature of water diplomacy practice in Hungary's foreign policy. First and foremost, due to the geographical attributes Hungary tries to fulfil its security interest on the regional level, which entails strengthening regional cooperation and good neighbouring. Therefore, Hungary participates in various treaties such as Danube Region Strategy, Danube Transnational Program, the Cross-Border Co-operation Programs and other domestic and international European Union programs and undertakes coordinator role in 3 areas: promoting sustainable energy, conserving water quality and the field of environmental risk management. Second driver of water diplomacy originates from the same geographical attribute. Hungary has recognised the importance to turn its disadvantage into opportunities and by offering its historical expertise in water management and transboundary river basin cooperation can strengthen its international status, become more influential on international arena and at the same time gain economic growth. On the global level the diplomatic practice consists of promoting the Hungarian potential and national role through discursive practice (speeches of foreign policy executives on international climate events), by diplomats or the President actively participating in the global governance processes. This contributes to the outcome (such as OWG) and memberships in high level water associated international organisations such as Friends of Water; Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace; Water Governance Initiative

of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; the 2030 Water Resources Group; the World Water Council. Hungary demonstrates small state strategy in international relations when choosing the high-level activity in regional and local affairs, being present at multiple platforms to increase its relational power; supporting the development of international water law (especially EU transboundary water law to take better account of downstream countries such as Hungary. Hungary aim to appear in international water projects based on its capabilities, thus focusing on the Danube region mostly and partaking in international water projects in “less popular” areas where the Hungarian contribution has visibility (Herbut, 2017). I believe that besides the ‘coordinator’ within the region Hungary represents each of the small state roles studied by Holsti (1970) and Herbut (2017); ‘mediator-integrator’ through the OWG and BWS, ‘developer’ implementing water projects in countries in need and finally the ‘example’ which we called the ‘expert’ through my research.

According to empirical knowledges, specialization is key to small states foreign policy and water diplomacy in Hungary provides a great example to prove that despite of the limitations, if a small state uses its resources wisely it can gain international influence. While great powers are able to set trends in international politics, small states need to adapt their foreign policy according to their limited resources and capabilities. Hungary has recognised that water diplomacy is an ‘untapped area’ of global politics, therefore, there is potential to build significant role in it. As a small state it can adapt easier to the changing environment and increase negotiation capacity during the SDG negotiation process (Herbut, 2017). We saw a similar example, the Netherlands who targeted a niche diplomatic area by adopting a water expert role, so it raises the question whether this area is ‘occupied’ by them. Genderen & Rood argues that „*niche diplomacy is not necessarily done by one state [...]it requires coordinated and coherent effort to involve other states, IOs and non-state actors* (Genderen & Rood, 2011, p. 33), therefore Hungary can take the Netherlands’s approach as best practice to follow. Furthermore, water management is a wide area with a different specialization, meaning Hungary can be an expert of another sub-area, also because Hungary has great innovative solutions but financial and human resource limitations it aims to be a think tank and target areas based on its capabilities.

To understand foreign policy approach in practice, it is crucial to look at the domestic institutional configuration which has been developing as a reaction to external circumstances and under the influence of Hungarian foreign policy engagement. The President has a central role in building Hungary’s competency in a way to transform the domestic institutional structure and allocate resources serving the new foreign policy direction. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the domestic configuration of water diplomacy and ‘map out’ the agency, the core actors. According to Herbut (2017) “*foreign policy is and extension of domestic policy, attention should be directed towards the harmonization of both domains* (Herbut, 2017, p. 161)”. Water policy is especially an area with both domestic and international projections, therefore, harmonization is essential. My analysis shows that new foreign policy actors rely on the knowledge of domestic policy actors and they mostly work in co-operation,

responsibilities are highly interrelated. Water is important for Hungary's domestic policy and is also projected into foreign policy. As institutionalization is still at an early stage, from an outsider it is challenging to separate the roles and identify the actors, but I've learned from the interviews that actors work in harmony, not only governmental but non-governmental actors complement each other. However, both non-governmental and governmental actors need more support from the government both administrative and financial. From an economic point of view there are great innovative business opportunities, but they struggle to sell their ideas, and the financial and human resource shortages causes challenges. The Budapest Water Summits are crucial to both discourse and diplomatic practice, it enables the country to prove its competency and authority over global water issues. The practice of water diplomacy in Hungary represents all four functions of modern diplomacy which are communication, negotiation, participation in multilateral institutions and the promotion of economic goods (Hill, 2016).

FPA concerns foreign policy elites as units of analysis according to which view decision making processes are the combination of individual perspectives and the interest of the state they represent (Houghton, 2007). As discussed, the agency of the President has the most significant importance in the foundation and implementation of water diplomacy in Hungary. He has been largely contributing to the discourse on forming and promoting the country's identity and national role in relation to water on the global stage. Because the discursive practice is crucial to the Hungarian foreign policy approach, in my research I investigated presidential speeches to uncover how the Hungarian state identity and national role in relation to water are constructed in the discourse. From the post-structuralist point of view analysis of speech act is critical to the investigation of state identity as *"is discursive it is only through the construction in language that 'things'—objects, subjects, states, living beings, and material structures—are given meaning and endowed with a particular identity* (Hansen, 2006, p. 16)". The discourse of the foreign policy executives uncovers the identity perception of Hungary. The way how the country leaders describe the state identity is the way how they see it and foreign policy behaviour will be according to this perception. As discussed, identity is relational. In climate change politics based on the discourse and the practice Hungary identifies itself as a small country with limited economic capacity, a country that is largely affected by the impacts of climate change. Hungary is proud of what they achieved in terms of climate mitigation, and with knowing its capabilities towards the common good it offers its water management expertise. The Hungarian identity and national role originate from historical roots and it shapes the country's foreign policy behaviour accordingly. Water has been always central to the state due to its geographical characteristics as water rich but at the same time endangered from the impact of climate change and upstream neighbours. This phenomenon also provides an example that external factors can influence a state's identity as it was strengthened and now plays a significant role in Hungarian foreign policy. Tulmets defines: *"national role conceptions are understood as a domestically shared views and understandings regarding the proper role and purpose*

*of one's own state as a social collectivity in the international arena* (Tulmets, 2014, p. 7)". The discourse analysis showed that national role conception is built on the Hungarian identity, as a small state Hungary uses its capabilities, expertise as water expert, coordinator and mediator. Holsti (1970) argues that states can have multiple roles, meaning the role of Hungary in relation to water only serves state interest regarding to water. Through the case of Hungary I believe states can even maintain multiple roles within one area of interest see expert, coordinator or mediator (Holsti, 1970).

To answer to the last Research Question about how the discourse supports practice of water diplomacy we need to go back to Dunn & Neumann's (2016) and Hansen (2006) discussed ideology of discourse and the post-structuralist perspective. Post-structuralist scholars put language in the middle of analysis and believe in its constructive ability that "*language does not explain the world as much as it produces it* (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 2)" furthermore it "*generates meaning through simultaneous construction of identity and difference* (Hansen, 2006, p. 17)". According to this ideology discourse (speech act in case of my analysis) claims the truth, it constructs the reality itself. When the President represents his country in front of the global arena and declares Hungary's identity and national role conception, by this discursive act he constructs the reality. Reality of how Hungary sees itself, therefore how it will practice its foreign policy and very importantly how the international stage will see Hungary as an international actor. As we have learnt that identity and role perception is often influenced by how the state's elite sees their own country which impacts the state behaviour too. Along with Dunn & Neumann's notion, discourse cannot be examined as a "group of signs" but truth claims that make certain act possible. My analysis proves the productive attributes of discourse that discourse of the Hungarian identity and role conception in relation to water constructs the reality of its subjects, by endowing Hungary with certain competencies, it gives authority to the actors to act upon this identity and role. What strongly contributes Hungary to act upon its self-defined role are the circumstances of the speech act, as the President is a respected member of the high-level global water community, chose the right place (global climate events) and the right audience (global high-level political arena). Another way of defining discourse is claiming that discourse is the precondition of action. We have seen through the case of Hungary how the presidential speech at the Rio+20 and at the same time statement on the EU-ASEM conference supported the Hungarian practice to contribute to water governance processes (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). Finally, when investigating both discourse and practice of the Hungarian foreign policy approach we shall include the concept of culture which is the dynamic interplay between the two. If discourse is the system of formation of statements (in our case the speeches of foreign policy executives) and practice considered as water diplomacy in action, the work and configuration of the governmental and non-governmental actors which are "*socially recognized forms of activity, done on the basis of what members learn from others, and capable of being done well or badly, correctly or incorrectly* (Dunn & Neumann, 2016, p. 62)" then the concept of culture must be in the middle which connects these two.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to provide an empirical insight about the Hungarian water diplomacy approach from foreign policy perspective and by conducting discourse and practice analysis answer questions on how Hungary practices water diplomacy; how is the related state identity and national role conception constructed by the discourse of foreign policy executives; and finally how this discourse supports the diplomatic practice, the action itself. For the discourse analysis I investigated speeches of the President of Republic of Hungary and Foreign Minister held at global climate events. For uncovering diplomatic practice, the configuration of domestic water actors and the relation between them, first, I conducted semi-structured personal interviews with representatives of the core actors in Hungary and second investigated governmental websites, water policy papers and strategy papers. I supported my analysis with the concept of state identity and national role conception (role theory) embedded in the post-structuralist perspective of IR schools of thought.

The thesis was structured into six main chapters (excluding bibliography and appendix). In the first chapter, I introduced the relevance of water diplomacy in today's international politics by discussing how the political tension is growing between water rich and scarce countries as a result of climate change impact on water accessibility. It possibly impacts the politics and international order of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Hungary has recognised the importance of gaining a significant role in water politics. In the second chapter, I introduced the concept of water diplomacy used by different actors and reviewed the literature of carefully selected countries that prioritise water diplomacy in their foreign policy which helped me to base my own research on existing examples. As the case of the Netherlands shows that water diplomacy a great, niche opportunity to construct influential role in the international system regardless of the size of the country. In the third chapter, I introduced the theoretical framework for my own research. This chapter consists of the explanation of FPA approach with focus on diplomacy as FP instrument. Furthermore, as I support my analysis with cultural elements of foreign policy such as identity and national role conception under the theoretical framework, I discussed them in detail and explained the relevance to my empirical study of Hungary. Methodology chapter where I further discussed how I am going to conduct the combined discourse and practice analysis and explained my data collection procedure. The fifth chapter includes the analysis itself divided in four sub-chapters. First, a background section explaining the Hungarian foreign policy evolvement since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This was crucial to understand the evolution of Hungarian foreign policy, first the aim to be part of the West and adapt the Western identity, then the EU presidency brought changes in foreign policy as Hungary implemented a new 'global opening' policy where the importance of water appeared. Then I explained how Hungary achieved regional, trans-regional and global diplomatic successes in water diplomacy. In this chapter, I conducted the discourse analysis on the presidential rhetoric on Hungary's identity and national role conception in relation to water and second the practice

analysis on the domestic configuration of water diplomacy, looking at the institutionalization and actors' responsibilities and relation to each other. In the final sub-chapter, I highlighted my main findings through answering the Research questions.

This thesis contributes to multiple areas of academic literature. First and foremost, the limited academic literature of water diplomacy and more specifically water diplomacy as a foreign policy tool. It furthermore contributes to the literature (especially the English language literature) about Hungary's foreign policy approaches, or Hungary's role in the international arena regarding environmental affairs, and last but not least the literature which conducts not only discourse analysis but supports it with investigating the action itself. During my research process, I had many thoughts on what more could have been covered in this research. Because I am only looking at the identity and national role perception from Hungary's perspective, I might get bias results. Therefore, a future investigation on how the Hungarian foreign policy approach is conceived by the international arena, how they see the Hungarian competency as an international actor in environmental politics would be interesting to complete the picture. My original plan was to do interviews at the BWS with international diplomats to ask them about the Hungarian roles and competency, but it was not possible due to their busy schedule and accessibility. Furthermore, I was only investigating the discourse of the current President and Foreign Minister and with the relatively short timeframe since the water diplomacy appeared in the country's foreign policy. Scholars often investigate changes in foreign policy discourse. Because water diplomacy is an approach that the current government prioritize, especially personally by the President, it might disappear from the discourse when a new president decides to adopt different foreign policy strategy. In this case, examining how the change of Hungarian leadership would alter the discourse on state identity and national role conception would be an interesting research topic.

Overall, this thesis provides a great insight and comprehensive understanding of the implementation and execution of water diplomacy in Hungarian foreign policy. It helps to illuminate the constructive nature of discourse on diplomatic action and illustrates the strong intertwined nature of discourse and practice. I believe results would give a slightly different picture if the research would be conducted by an 'outsider' as being Hungarian and investigating my country's foreign policy approach possibly reduced on my critical interpretation.



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## 8. Appendix

### List of interviewees

- INT#01 Senior water diplomat from Ministry of Innovation and Technology, conducted 5th February 2020, Budapest
- INT#02: Senior water diplomat from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, conducted: 5th February 2020, Budapest.
- INT#03 Senior officer from General Directorate of Water Management, conducted :7th February 2020, Budapest
- INT#04 Managing director from non-governmental initiative, conducted: 6th February 2020, Budapest
- INT#05 Researcher/university professor, conducted: 6th February 2020, Budapest

### Semi-structured interview focusing on the following topics:

1. For diplomats, employees of the involved ministries
  - What is the purpose of Hungarian water diplomacy? (on regional and global level)?
  - Discuss the strategy on the regional and global level
  - Who are the players of the Hungarian water diplomacy? How do they cooperate/interact with each other? Different responsibilities, about the institutional structure
  - What are the challenges, difficulties, and opportunities of water diplomacy in Hungary?
  - At what level is Hungary present in international water governance?
  - International impact of the Budapest Water Summit and further water activities?
  - In what countries does Hungary provide water support/has water cooperation or project with
  - What international media and other communicational tools does Hungary use to promote water diplomacy?
  - How to improve, future desires
2. For researcher
  - How does the African and other water projects relate to Hungarian foreign policy?
  - Asking about the projects itself (Nile, Uganda). What researchers do exactly?
  - Are there enough human resources and finance for these projects?
  - How does the government decide where to provide support/ Asking about support on research projects from the government?
3. For organisation employee
  - What does your organisation do?
  - What project your organisation work at the moment?



- Which other water actors do you cooperate with? How much support do you receive from the government and ministries? What kind of support?
- What are the biggest challenges and opportunities?
- Do you promote your activity internationally?
- Discuss participation on the Budapest Water Summit and the opportunities it offer
- Discuss achievement

### Links to speeches investigates in the discourse analysis

1. <https://www.keh.hu/index.php?submenu=articles&cat=36&mcat=1&details=1&id=1607&pnr=2>  
Speech by President János Áder at the Rio + 20 conference 2012. június 20.
2. <https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/1793-Ader-Janos-koztarsasagi-elnok-megnyito-beszede-a-Budapesti-Viz-Vilagtalalkozasra>  
Opening speech by President János Áder at the Budapest World Water Meeting 2013. október 08
3. <https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/1830-Ujevi-koszonto&pnr=1> 2014. január 01 New Year's greeting
4. <https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/1917-Ader-Janos-koztarsasagi-elnok-beszede-New-Yorkban-az-ENSZ-szekhazaban-rendezett-nemzetkozi-klimacsucson&pnr=1> Speech by President János Áder at the International Climate Summit at the UN Headquarters in New York 2014. szeptember 23.
5. <https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/1918-Ader-Janos-koztarsasagi-elnok-beszede-az-ENSZ-Kozgyulesen&pnr=1> Speech by President János Áder at the UN General Assembly Speech by President János Áder at the UN General Assembly 2014. szeptember 25.
6. <https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/1950-Ujevi-koszonto&pnr=1> 2015. január 01 New Year's greeting
7. <https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/1975-Ader-Janos-koztarsasagi-elnok-beszede-a-Budapesti-Viz-Konferencia-megnyitojan&pnr=2> Speech by President János Áder at the opening of the Budapest Water Conference 2015 march
8. <https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/1993-Ader-Janos-koztarsasagi-elnok-megnyito-beszede-a-del-koreai-Teguban-rendezett-7.-Viz-Vilagforumon&pnr=2> Opening speech by President János Áder at the 7th World Water Forum in Tegu, South Korea 2015 april
9. <https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2021-Ader-Janos-koztarsasagi-elnok-beszede-a-Duna-projekt-beruhazas-atadasi-unnepsegen&pnr=2>  
Speech by President János Áder at the handover ceremony of the Danube project investment 2015 may
10. <https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2142-Ader-Janos-koztarsasagi-elnok-beszede-a-Financial-Times-vizugyi-konferenciajan-Londonban&pnr=1> Speech by President János Áder at the Financial Times Water Conference in London 2016 october 12
11. <https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/1993-Ader-Janos-koztarsasagi-elnok-megnyito-beszede-a-del-koreai-Teguban-rendezett-7.-Viz-Vilagforumon&pnr=1>
12. <https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2021-Ader-Janos-koztarsasagi-elnok-beszede-a-Duna-projekt-beruhazas-atadasi-unnepsegen&pnr=1>

2015 június 23 Speech by President János Áder at the handover ceremony of the Danube project investment

13. [https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2056-Ader\\_Janos\\_koztarsasagi\\_elnok\\_uzenete\\_az\\_ENSZ\\_Europai\\_Gazdasagi\\_Bizottsaga\\_Hatarokat\\_atlepo\\_vizfolyasok\\_es\\_nemzetkozi\\_tavak\\_vedelmerol\\_szolo\\_egyezmey\\_reszes\\_feleinek\\_Budapesten\\_rendezett\\_hetedik\\_talalkozojara&pnr=1](https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2056-Ader_Janos_koztarsasagi_elnok_uzenete_az_ENSZ_Europai_Gazdasagi_Bizottsaga_Hatarokat_atlepo_vizfolyasok_es_nemzetkozi_tavak_vedelmerol_szolo_egyezmey_reszes_feleinek_Budapesten_rendezett_hetedik_talalkozojara&pnr=1) Message from President János Áder to the Seventh Meeting of the Parties to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on the Protection of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, held in Budapest 2015 november 17
14. [https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2091-Ader\\_Janos\\_koztarsasagi\\_elnok\\_beszede\\_az\\_ENSZ\\_szekhazaban\\_a\\_fenntarthato\\_fejlodesi\\_celok\\_veg\\_rehajtasarol\\_rendezett\\_konferencian&pnr=1](https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2091-Ader_Janos_koztarsasagi_elnok_beszede_az_ENSZ_szekhazaban_a_fenntarthato_fejlodesi_celok_veg_rehajtasarol_rendezett_konferencian&pnr=1) Speech by President János Áder at the UN Headquarters Conference on the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 2016 april
15. [https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2097-Ader\\_Janos\\_koztarsasagi\\_elnok\\_beszede\\_A\\_magyar\\_viztudomany\\_es\\_intezmenyrendszerenek\\_fejlesztese\\_%E2%80%93\\_a\\_fenntarthato\\_vizgazdalkodas\\_es\\_a\\_versenykepes\\_Magyarorszag\\_erdekeben\\_cimu\\_konferencia\\_megnyitojan\\_a\\_Magyar\\_Tudomanyos\\_Akademian&pnr=1](https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2097-Ader_Janos_koztarsasagi_elnok_beszede_A_magyar_viztudomany_es_intezmenyrendszerenek_fejlesztese_%E2%80%93_a_fenntarthato_vizgazdalkodas_es_a_versenykepes_Magyarorszag_erdekeben_cimu_konferencia_megnyitojan_a_Magyar_Tudomanyos_Akademian&pnr=1) At the opening of the conference entitled Hungarian Water Science and the Development of its Institutional System - for Sustainable Water Management and a Competitive Hungary at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences 2016 may
16. [https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2159-Ader\\_Janos\\_koztarsasagi\\_elnok\\_beszede\\_a\\_Budapesti\\_Viz\\_Vilagtalalkozo\\_nyito\\_rendezvenyen&pnr=1](https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2159-Ader_Janos_koztarsasagi_elnok_beszede_a_Budapesti_Viz_Vilagtalalkozo_nyito_rendezvenyen&pnr=1) Speech by President János Áder at the opening event of the Budapest World Water Meeting 2016 november 28
17. [https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2565-Ader\\_Janos\\_koztarsasagi\\_elnok\\_beszede\\_a\\_Global\\_Climate\\_Action\\_Summit\\_nemzetkozi\\_klimacsuczaro\\_plenaris\\_ulesen\\_a\\_San\\_Francisco\\_i\\_Moscone\\_Center\\_kongresszusi\\_kozpontban&pnr=1](https://www.keh.hu/beszedek/2565-Ader_Janos_koztarsasagi_elnok_beszede_a_Global_Climate_Action_Summit_nemzetkozi_klimacsuczaro_plenaris_ulesen_a_San_Francisco_i_Moscone_Center_kongresszusi_kozpontban&pnr=1) Speech by President János Áder at the closing plenary session of the Global Climate Action Summit at the Moscone Center in San Francisco 2018. szeptember 14.
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