

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND WATER MANAGEMENT BETWEEN  
THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN AND THE ISLAMIC EMIRATE OF  
AFGHANISTAN**

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b> Received May 05, 2024 Revised May 10, 2024 Accepted May 25, 2024</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Relation, Qosh Tapa Canal, Balance of Power, Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism, Institutions, Threat</p>	<p>This article analyzes and predicts the relation between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan according to Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism theory. Besides, this article focuses more on the Qosh Tapa Canal and its impact on future relations between Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan</p> <p style="text-align: right;">This is an open-access article under the <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">CC-BY 4.0</a> license.</p> 

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## INTRODUCTION

The Qosh Tapa Canal is being built in northern Afghanistan to divert water from the Amu Darya. It is projected that the main canal will be 285 kilometers long, and the project will convert 550,000 hectares of desert area into agricultural land. The Qosh Tapa Canal is expected to reach Faryab after starting in Balkh Province in 2022. The canal in Central Asia will have a significant impact on the environment and society. The stability of Uzbekistan is seriously threatened by the diversion of water from the Amu Darya. Apart from the threat to the nation's water-dependent cotton industry, which has invested significant resources to reach international markets, agriculture accounts for 26% of Uzbekistan's GDP. By diverting more water from the Amu Darya, the Qosh Tapa Canal could make the situation in the Aral Sea worse. According to estimations from the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC), the Qosh Tapa canal will reduce

the Amu Darya's flow by 50%. Following the population's exposure to high pollution levels in the autonomous region, there has been a decrease in population growth, which has been linked to higher incidences of pneumonia, tuberculosis, and infant death. Turkmenistan's main water supply, the Karakum Canal, is being severely impacted by severe water shortages, according to studies released by the government this year. Turkmenistan would therefore be facing "a catastrophe" in the event that the Qosh Tepa canal poses a threat

### **Realism**

First of all, in the field of international relations, one of the most well-known and practical ideas is the realistic theory. The balance of power, national interests, and state competition are the key points of emphasis for this theory. Due to the fact that these presumptions significantly influence how states behave. Realistically, the primary actors are seen as States. As a result, states' primary objectives are to maintain their survival and security while also enhancing their power balance.

There have been unstable relations between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan due to a number of reasons, including historical hostilities, border disputes, and regional power. The Taliban considered the balance of power in the region and began attempting to change it after seizing control of Afghanistan in 2021. For instance, the Taliban leadership created a new structure today to serve their interests after learning about the effects of demands for water on Central Asian states. This canal is named as the Qosh Tepa Canal. With a length of roughly 285 km, this canal holds one-third of the Amu Darya's water in Afghanistan. It significantly affects Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. because cotton is one of the key exports from Uzbekistan, an agrarian-industrial nation. Cotton requires a lot of water. Additionally, the Qosh Tepa Canal will do significant harm to Uzbekistan's primary cotton-growing regions, particularly the Aral Sea and Kashkadarya, Surkhandarya, and Kharazm regions. The financial situation of Uzbekistan is seriously threatened by these issues. For this reason, the previous president of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr. Islam Karimov, has consistently opposed any program that has prevented the construction of such buildings. However, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, our president at the moment, supports using diplomacy, which is the liberal approach. He approved the building of the Canal because of his liberal way. In addition, he gained an agreement regarding water usage from the Taliban Government. There could also be a conflict between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. North Afghanistan and the Qosh Tepa Canal could be to blame for this. due to the Taliban government's unwillingness to give in to pressure from other nations over the use of water from the Qosh Tepa Canal. This can result in a rise in the demand for water as well as possible conflicts with

Uzbekistan. Furthermore, the majority population of North Afghanistan is Uzbek, and the Qosh Tepa Canal is situated there. Therefore, the Uzbek nationality could try to return to Uzbekistan in the future due to the unequal rights that exist today. Conflicts are growing more common in light of these considerations, particularly because of this canal. In addition to the possible dispute, we ought to take into account their existing balance of power. When it comes to the army, economy, culture, and population, Uzbekistan superiors Afghanistan. However, Uzbekistan's population of 37 million is smaller than that of Afghanistan (42 million). The armed forces of Afghanistan scored 115th out of 145 states, whereas the armed forces of Uzbekistan placed 65th out of 145 states, according to FirePower 2024. In addition, Uzbekistan ranks 73rd with a GDP of over 406 billion dollars. Afghanistan, on the other hand, has a GDP of about 68 billion dollars, placing it 124th in the world according to World Economy 2023.

### **Liberalism**

On the other hand, Liberalism is a political and moral theory founded on the following principles: individual rights, political fairness, freedom, the consent of the controlled, equality before legislation, and private property rights. Building institutions that safeguard individual freedom by restricting and checking governmental authority is liberalism's primary goal.

**Political regime of Afghanistan:** Afghanistan's unitary nation is primarily governed by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, also referred to as the Afghan administration. The supreme leader and its religious consultants, whom they refer to as the Leadership together, possess concentrated political control in the Taliban-run emirate and theocracy that rules Afghanistan. All significant policy choices are discussed in private by the nation's leadership before being carried out by the civil service and courts. Since Afghanistan is an Islamic state, Sharia law and Pashtunwali serve as the foundations of its governance. Through a thorough social and cultural program, the Taliban strongly upholds these ideals. Afghanistan has experienced multiple forms of government throughout its history, such as a monarchy, a republic, and theocracy. After twenty years of fighting, the Taliban defeated the Islamic Republic, which was supported by the West, in 2021, bringing the theocratic government that had been overthrown in 2001 to an end.

Uzbekistan's political system is a presidential constitutional republic, with the President acting as the state's head of state. In Uzbekistan, the executive power is held by the prime minister and the government. Legislative authority is exercised by the Oliy Majlis, which consists of the Senate and the Legislative Chamber. Three institutions hold the authority to exercise judicial power: the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, and the Higher Court.

## Constructivism

Last but not least, Constructivism emphasizes people as a socially produced standard rather than material features, in contrast to other theories of international relations. Constructivism holds that standards, beliefs, and viewpoints are not fixed for either states or people. Rather, it clarifies the ongoing transformation resulting from interactions and experiences with different situations and individuals. These standards, convictions, and opinions then shape the state's actions. Therefore, unlike realism, it is not something that occurs as a result of the universal human nature that connects all people under a single characteristic. It is a far more comprehensive idea that may be used to examine various governments and people via unique socially created society glasses.

Constructivism could help us examine the management of water resources between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan from a variety of perspectives. From one perspective, common norms and beliefs may facilitate negotiations and assist in reaching an agreement on water consumption between both sides. That being said, Uzbeks and Afghans are not of the same ethnic background; Uzbeks are Turkic nations, whereas Afghans are Pashtuns (Shah, 2020). Pashtuns (52%) are the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan, followed by Tajiks (27%) the Hazaras (9%), and Uzbeks (9%). That being said, it is evident that the majority of Afghan ethnic roots are Persian, setting them apart from Turks. Since Uzbekistan and Afghanistan do not have similar ethnic backgrounds or worldviews, we may conclude that there is a greater likelihood of disagreement based on this. In terms of beliefs, Uzbeks and Afghans have distinct perspectives on religion. Afghanistan, whose government is based on Islam, is not a secular state like Uzbekistan. These disparities fall the two countries apart in so many ways that, in the end, they can lead to different views about the management of water resources. The way two countries view and approach the same problems is also influenced by their divergent systems of government. Constructivism says that conventions, beliefs, and viewpoints are not set in stone, so Uzbekistan's side cannot be certain that Afghanistan won't eventually become even more radicalized in its Islamization efforts. These changes could be a major barrier to reaching an agreement and maintaining peace regarding water supplies

## CONCLUSION

Estimates of the future concerning this matter are not clear or accurate. The constructivist theory leads us to believe that our environment is rapidly

changing and that we cannot be certain that the Taliban, who control Afghanistan, won't change completely, making collaboration and teamwork challenging. At the moment, both Afghanistan and Uzbekistan are attempting to strengthen their relations through accords and cooperation. On the other hand, it is evident that the problem with the Qosh Tepa Canal has not yet been solved. However, it remains to be seen if they will reach a consensus and conclude this once and for all in spite of all of the disparities between the two states. Undoubtedly, an absolute and formal agreement about the use of shared water resources must be established. Setting clear regulations that are based on national interests and don't cross any lines that can spark hostilities is crucial. Better cooperation would follow from such an agreement since it would establish a shared norm among the two countries

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