AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

"THE EFFECT OF ENERGY DISCOVERIES IN THE LEVANT BASIN ON THE SECURITIZED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEBANON AND ISRAEL"

By
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Title: The Effect of Energy Discoveries in the Levant Basin on the Securitized Relationship between Lebanon and Israel

Hostilities, conflicts and wars have been synonymous with the Middle East where enmity has historically prevailed between Israel and Arab states. The discovery of large hydrocarbons reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean have convoluted the already complex relationships between the countries in the region. Adopting Copenhagen School's securitization theory and its framework and analytical tools. The seecuritization theory examines how a certain matter is transformed by an actor into a matter of security in order to allow for the use of extraordinary measures, therefore, desecuritization is the process that involves the removal of securitized issues from the "security realm" back into the realm of public political discourse, where the practice of "normal" political dispute and the adherence to established rules become the norm again.

This research will explore how these newfound energy reserves are reshaping the geopolitical pivots of the region and how they are going to influence the deeply securitized Lebanese-Israeli relationship. Will the potential for economic collaboration lead to any political and/or military desecuritization and relatively curb the prevailing securitization trends between Lebanon and Israel? Or will the opposite occur, where energy discoveries would exacerbate the existing securitization trends among the two countries? Additionally, the research will analyze every aspect of the securitized relationship between Lebanon and Israel aided by an in-depth analysis of the societal,

economic, political, and military situation in both countries and by a thorough examination of the effect of the introduction of energy on the two countries. Yet, and in contrast to Copenhagen School's adoption of energy as a strictly economic referent object in securitization, this research will address energy securitization vis-à-vis the economic, political, and sectors in both countries. The analysis will highlight the significance of energy security in securitization processes due to its vital characteristics and the capacity to cause spillovers in other sectors, and the propensity to create a multiplier effect on existing securitization trends. Finally, the research has demonstrated that in countries where securitization trends are already strong, the introduction of the energy variable into the equation of relations between these states would likely aggravate the already heated and securitized relations.

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INTRODUCTION: VOLATILITY, HOSTILITY, AND NOW OIL AND GAS

On 31 January 2018, Israeli War Minister Avigdor Lieberman dubbed the Lebanese plans of oil and gas exploration in Lebanon's Block 9 – which overlaps with a part of the maritime area contested between the two countries – as "very, very challenging and provocative." Lieberman also threatened to wage a full-scale war including a ground invasion against Lebanon, where the whole country would be targeted and not just Hizbullah, if Hizbullah launches any attacks against Israel.[1] A couple of weeks later on 16 February 2018, Hizbullah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah, responding to continued Israeli threats on Lebanon's territory and territorial waters, said that "if the Lebanese Higher Defense Council decides that the operation of Israeli oil and gas rigs must be terminated, I assure you that they will stop operating within a matter of hours."[2]

A. Where Conflict is the Norm

The Eastern Mediterranean, or Levant/Mashriq region, has long been a contentious and deeply securitized geographical area, and thus of considerable interest to the major international and regional players. The seven-year-old ongoing war in Syria tragically embodies this. However, it is the Arab-Israeli conflict that has long dominated

[1] INSS Israel (Director). (31 January 2018). *Minister Mr. Avigdor Lieberman speaking with Maj. Gen. (ret.) Amos Yadlin* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmgI8mSWWJg

[2] Al Jadeed. (16 February 2018). *الكلمة الكاملة لأمين عام حزب الله السيد حسن نصرالله في ذكرى الشهداء القادة* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdtV2Ziyru4

the political landscape of the region and served as the key destabilizer.[3] After Israel's two-decade occupation of southern Lebanon ended in 2000 when Lebanon's resistance forced Israel's withdrawal, parts of southern Lebanon – the Shebaa Farms and Kfar Shouba Hills areas, and since 2006 the village of Ghajar – remained occupied. Lebanon and Israel remain officially in a state of war with their political and military relations securitized for decades.

In the summer of 2006, Israel and Hizbullah engaged in a major war that lasted 33 days. It ended on 14 August 2006 when UN Security Council Resolution 1701 came into effect and established a cessation of hostilities that continues to this day. Under the terms of this resolution, the UN peacekeepers (UNIFIL) that had been deployed in southern Lebanon since Israel's first major invasion in 1978, were beefed up and their mandate and resources greatly enhanced. More than 10,000 peacekeeping soldiers, including for the first time a large European presence, were deployed along the border area. At the request of the Lebanese Government, the UN established a Maritime Task Force (MTF), for the first time in UN history, off the coast of Lebanon in October 2006 to both end Israel's naval blockade of Lebanon and help enhance Lebanese security capabilities along its borders.[4]

All in all, the post-2006 period has been delineated by a new status-quo of power and deterrence between Lebanon and Israel, as Israel didn't manage to secure its stated goal of its 2006 offensive: the elimination of Hizbullah. Whereas Hizbullah established itself as the major Lebanese player in the conflict and a substantial force

[3] El Badawi, I. and Makdisi, S. (2011). Democracy in the Arab world: explaining the deficit (1st ed.). London: Routledge. Retrieved from: https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/books/e/9781136979620

[4]Makdisi, K., &Göksel, T. (2009). *UNIFIL II: Emerging and Evolving European Engagement in Lebanon and the Middle East* (Tech.). EuroMeSCo. Retrieved from: http://website.aub.edu.lb/ifi/Documents/images/paper76eng.pdf

against future Israeli attacks. Hizbullah has also maintained its strong political presence as part of the Lebanese state, and has worked closely with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), a key official interlocutor with UNIFIL in this conflict as per the terms of Resolution 1701.[5]

Moreover, the series of Arab revolts starting in late 2010 appeared to place the Arab-Israeli conflict – historically the center of regional agendas – on the backburner for many countries that were dealing with uprisings, civil wars and in some cases regional wars. Southern Lebanon was largely quiet during this period. However, the war in Syria has at various times ratcheted up tension between Lebanon and Israel, and arguably brought the standoff back to the brink of war. Both Hizbullah and Israel have clashed in and along the border areas, as for instance the fatal incident in Adaysseh in 2010 when the LAF engaged the Israeli army directly for the first time before UNIFIL, and other mediators, managed to defuse the situation.[6] Moreover, Israeli unilaterally proclaimed various red lines in Syria, escalating its targeting of missiles in Syria allegedly destined for Hizbullah, repeatedly targeting Hizbullah commanders and fighters operating near the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights; and more recently attacking Syrian and Iranian assets directly.[7] On the other side, Hizbullah drew its own red lines in its ongoing war of deterrence with Israel. For example, in 2015, it successfully retaliated against an Israeli attack on a Hizbullah and Iranian convoy in the occupied Golan Heights by ambushing an Israeli patrol in the heavily guarded, Israeli-occupied

[5] جعفر, م. (4 January 2018). هاجس حزب الله في العقل الإسرائيلي: استراتيجية إدارة القوة Retrieved from https://www.moqawama.org/essaydetails.php?eid=34728&cid=330

[6] مجلة الجيش اللبناني. (July 2014). من المالكية إلى العديسة الجيش اللبناني في مواجهة العدو الإسرائيلي. Retrieved from https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/ar/content/من-المالكية-إلى-العديسة-الجيش-اللبناني-في-مواجهة-العدو-الإسرائيلي

[7] Al Jadeed. (30 January 2015). *كلمة الأمين العام لحزب الله السيد حسن نصر الله في احتفال تكريم شهداء القنيطرة* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWCCGQuOR3o

Shebaa Farms area.[5] Hizbullah has countered bellicose Israeli threats to target Hizbullah and larger Lebanon civilian infrastructure by leaving no doubts as to its intention to retaliate with military force inside Israeli-controlled territory.[5] Today, there is much speculation about the growing possibility of regional war precipitated by an Israeli attack against Iranian or Hizbullah units in Syria. The 2017 incident that involved an Iranian-made drone cross from Syria along the Israeli lines heightened tensions considerably, as the Israelis first shot down the drone before attacking the Syrian T-4 airbase, which led to the shoot down an Israeli F-16 fighter plane over Syria for the very first time.[8]

Experts claim that these action and reaction skirmishes might well lead to an accidental escalation and full-scale military conflict between Israel and Hizbullah; and this could potentially even be played out on Syrian territory.[9]

In the midst of this conflict and tension along the Lebanese-Israeli border, a relatively new problem has emerged, namely the huge discoveries of natural gas in the Levant Basin that lies beneath the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. These discoveries are said to have altered the dynamics of the region.[10] Shared by Israel and Lebanon in addition to Syria, Palestine, Cyprus and Turkey, the Levant Basin's natural gas represents an enormous economic potential to the Eastern Mediterranean countries and to the international energy industry as well. The area is estimated to have recoverable

[8] الميادين نت. (10 Feburary2018). الدفاعات السورية تتصدى لاعتداءين إسرائيليين وتُسقط طائرة F16 إسرائيلية. Retrieved from http://www.almayadeen.net/news/politics/858176/-الدفاعات-السورية-تسقط-طائرة-تصدت-لاعتداء-إسرائيلي---إسرائيلي

[9] Berti, B. (26 April 2014). Syria alters Israel-Hezbollah dynamics. The Daily Star. Retrieved from http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Commentary/2014/Apr-26/254433-syria-alters-israel-hezbollah-dynamics.ashx

[10] Oil and Energy Trends. (2013). Mediterranean Gas: Full of Eastern Promise? *Oil and Energy Trends*,*38*(5), 3-6. Retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/oet.12061.

reserves of between 122 and 227 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of gas and oil reserves in the range of 1.7 to 3.7 billion barrels of oil (bbl).[11]

If the Eastern Mediterranean could foster the requisite cooperation among its various states that are projected to become major natural gas exporters and powerful players in the international energy arena, it could become one of the most instrumental energy hubs in the world due to the size of its hydrocarbon reserves and its key geographic location. However, Israel is at war with both Lebanon and Syria, and has laid siege to the Palestinians in Gaza living on the Mediterranean but with little access to its territorial waters. As such, instead of fostering cooperation, the natural gas discoveries are likely to lead to further confrontations and increased securitization, particularly between Israel and Lebanon.

Such potential conflict has led some to call for indirect cooperation between Lebanon and Israel in the hope of peacefully resolving the Lebanese-Israeli dispute over the maritime borders, and even usher in an era of indirect economic collaboration.[12]In a thesis paper presented by Lebanese Army Colonel George Al Darazy to the faculty of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, he speaks about the potential to mitigate the Lebanese-Israeli dispute over the maritime borders because of the mutual economic benefits that both countries would reap in a theoretical cooperative game theory scenario.[13]Al Darazy even went so far as to claim that the resolution of the maritime conflict could eventually lead to a new phase of overall conflict de-escalation culminating in a comprehensive solution to the Lebanese-Israeli conflict.[13] Al Darazy

[11] United States Geological Survey. (March 2010). Assessment of Undiscovered Oil and Gas Resources of the Levant Basin Province, Eastern Mediterranean. Retrieved from https://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2010/3014/pdf/FS10-3014.pdf

[12]Darazy, G. A. (2014). *Impact of Levant Basin oil and natural gas discoveries on Lebanese-Israeli relations* (Unpublished master's thesis). Thesis / Dissertation ETD. Retrieved from www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA613548

mentions that mutual "exploitation of resources can lead to political settlements and resolve the disputes between countries".[13] And although Colonel Al Darazy later published an article in the Lebanese Army Magazine summarizing his research findings, it is important to note that he was merely voicing his personal opinion and not that of the LAF.[13]

In reality, such mooted Israeli-Lebanese collaboration is considered by both parties to be a non-starter. Rather, confrontation and escalation seem to be more likely scenario.

B. The Maritime Border Dispute

The Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon in 2000 was unilateral, and Lebanon and Israel are still considered to be in a state of war. No bilateral border demarcation has ever taken place between Lebanon and Israel. However, an old colonial border between French-controlled Lebanon and British-controlled Palestine was delineated in 1923, namely the Franco-British Paulet-Newcombe agreement. In 1949, this same border also served as the armistice line following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Various Israeli plans to control, or even annex, significant portions of southern Lebanon (including the Litani and Hasbani rivers) particularly following two decades of occupation during the 1980s and 1990s ultimately failed.[14] In the absence of formal borders, when Israel finally withdrew from occupied Lebanese territory in 2000 the UN based its certification on a line of withdrawal it called the "Blue Line", in reference to

[13] Al Darazy, G., Colonel. (October 2016). The impact of Oil and Natural Gas Discoveries on the Lebanese-Israeli Conflict. Lebanese Army National Defense Magazine. Retrieved from https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/impact-oil-and-natural-gas-discoveries-lebanese-israeli-conflict

[14] Alami, S. (May 2009). *Water and Strategy in the Jordan River Basin* (Tech.). Retrieved http://website.aub.edu.lb/ifi/ifi_saj/Documents/saj2009/water_and_strategy_jordan_river_basin_alami.pdf

the blue boundary markers placed by UNIFIL along the armistice line. Nevertheless, Lebanon insists that the Blue Line differs from the 1949 armistice line in 13 different locations.[15] One of these contested points is located at Ras Al-Naqoura and is the last point of the land border and the point from which the maritime border originates.[16]

Both countries have sent a series of points that comprise their maritime borders as a formal letter to the United Nations Secretary General, declaring their respective demarcations. Naturally, these demarcations have to be compliant with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which Lebanon is a signatory to while Israel is not, and which states that all the points that comprise the maritime border have to be equidistant from the coastlines of two states that share this border.[17] Eventually, applying the UNCLOS provisions enables a country to determine its territorial waters which extend no more than 12 nautical miles from its baselines (generally, the baseline is the low-water line along the coast) and its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which extends no more than 200 nautical miles from its baseline. However, the Lebanese and Israeli results from applying the UNCLOS provisions have been significantly different, since the first point of the baseline reference (at Ras Al-Naqoura) that each country is adopting is different. The result is two diverging maritime border lines extending to the Cypriot maritime border and constituting the 860 km^2 disputed maritime area (Figure 1).

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[15]Middle East Eye. (5 February 2018). Lebanon rejects Israeli border wall that 'violates its territory at 13 different points'. Retrieved from http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/lebanon-says-it-rejects-israeli-border-wall-779351792

[16] جابر, م, دكتور. (January 2001). من خط الهدنة إلى الخط الأزرق: معضلة الحدود اللبنانية مع فلسطين المحتلة. *مجلة الدفاع الوطني*. Retrieved from https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/ar/content/من-خط-الهدنة-إلى-الخط-الأزرق-معضلة-الحدود-اللبنانية-مع-فلسطين-المحتلة

[17] United Nations. (1982). Article 30, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). p. 30. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf

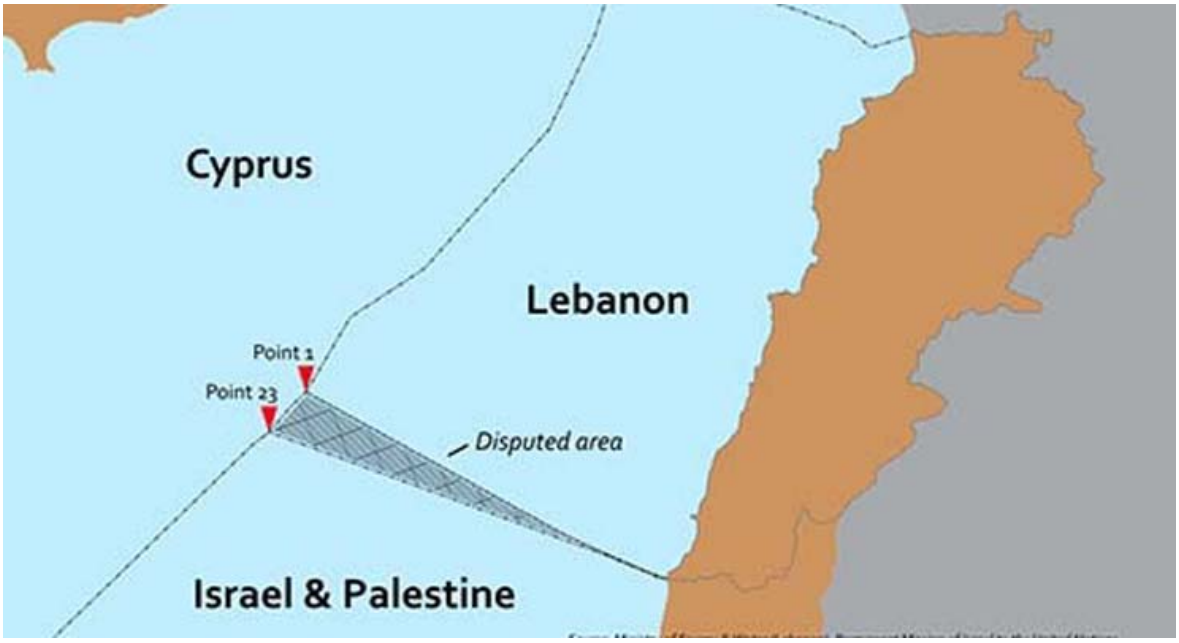

Figure 1. Alieh, Y. (22 March 2017). The Disputed Maritime Area Between Lebanon and Israel [Map]. In *Business News LB*. Retrieved from: http://www.businessnews.com.lb/cms/Story/StoryDetails.aspx?ItemID=5964

Lebanon, for its part, claims that point 31 at Ras Al-Naqoura, which Israel claims to be the point where the land border ends and the maritime border originates, clearly violates the principles of the UNCLOS.[18] In 2011, Lebanon sent an official letter of denunciation of the Israeli demarcation to the United Nations General Secretary. The Letter claims that "point 31 flagrantly violates the principles and rules of international law and constitutes an assault on Lebanese sovereignty" since it clearly lies to the north of the UN-delineated B1 point of the 2000 Blue Line.[19]

[18]Mansour, A., Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants. (3 September 2011). A letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations concerning the geographical coordinates of the northern limit of the territorial sea and the exclusive economic zone transmitted by Israel. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/communications/lbn_re_isr__listofcoordinates_e.pdf

On the other hand, Israel, insists that point 31 at Ras Al-Naqoura is indeed the last point of the land border and thus the first point of the maritime border.[19] Moreover, in 2017, Israel also sent an official letter of protest to the United Nations General Secretary where it claimed that Lebanon is violating Israel's sovereignty and jurisdiction and warned that Israel "will not allow any non-consensual, unauthorized, economic activity in its maritime area" and that it "is committed to pursuing available and relevant options to protect its sovereign rights."[20]

International efforts to solve the EEZ dispute have been led by the United States. The U.S. mediation proposal of 2012, known as the "Hof Line", in reference to American mediator Frederic Hof who was leading attempts to resolve the conflict. Hof drew a line in the disputed area that would grant Lebanon roughly 58% of the disputed waters while the remaining 42% would be subject to negotiations. However, this proposal was rejected in Lebanon out of hand. After several years of no progress on the issue, this American intervention came back into the picture whenthen-U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson discussed the EEZ dispute with Lebanese President Michel Aoun during a visit to Beirut in February 2018. It was clear that the United States sought to revive the "Hof line" proposal. Although this course of action is viewed by some in Lebanon as a pragmatic option that would allow Lebanon to open diplomatic channels of engagement with the US in order to eventually restore Lebanon's right to the whole area, Lebanon's official stance remained steadfast in rejecting the American offer. The

[19] Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations. (12 July 2011). List of Geographical Coordinates for the delimitation of the Northern Limit of the Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone of the State of Israel in WGS84. Retrieved from: http://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/isr_eez_northernlimit2011.pdf

[20]Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations. (21 December 2017). A letter from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Retrieved from: http://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/communications/2017_12_21_isr_nv.pdf

country's leaders expressed their resoluteness in claiming that the totality of the contested maritime area is Lebanese and that Lebanon is not open for negotiations on this matter.[21]

While the U.S. acts as the main third-party arbitrator in the ongoing EEZ dispute, there are other regional and international actors who currently are, or could play a role in the development of the oil and gas sector in both Lebanon and Israel going forward. It is important to understand how relations or tensions with these players may contribute to strategic thinking regarding the hydrocarbon reserves in both countries, and how this in turn could lead to the securitization of the issue.

C. Outside Players in Lebanon's and Israel's Oil and Gas Development

Among the actors who could contribute positively or negatively to the development of the East Mediterranean oil and gas sector, some of these players are regional states that have a portion of the Levant Basin hydrocarbon reserves falling in their EEZs, such as Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Cyprus. These represent both possible allies and potential rivals for Lebanon and Israel in the quest to develop their sectors. Moreover, there are other regional states that do not hold any hydrocarbon reserves but are still considered to be important players, such as Greece and Turkey. This is mainly due to their geographical location that allows them to act as hubs of transportation or to channel the producers' pipelines into crucial markets like the European Union. Therefore the producers' export strategies often rely on striking a deal with these countries to secure a steady and reliable oil or gas flow to their destination markets. International powers, such as the United States, can also influence the Eastern

[21]Dakroub, H. (17 February 2018). Berri nixes U.S. proposal on maritime border dispute. The Daily Star. Retrieved from http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2018/Feb-17/438335-berri-nixes-new-us-proposal-on-maritime-border-dispute.ashx

Mediterranean energy exploitation. Moreover, non-state actors, most notably Hizbullah, are also considered to be important players regarding the political and security aspects of the Eastern Mediterranean. Hizbullah is considered to be an important actor in the Lebanese-Israeli conflict, and is expected to play a major role in any future dispute between the two countries, whether over hydrocarbons or otherwise.

To start, let's consider Syria, a country that is eager to emerge from a brutal civil war that has ravaged everything from human lives and infrastructure to the national economy. Syria is looking very keen to exploit its Eastern Mediterranean hydrocarbon reserves in rebuilding the widely devastated infrastructure whether by using the extracted energy supplies to fuel the unprecedented rebuilding endeavor or by exporting them in order to capitalize on monetary income for financing the rebuilding process. Nevertheless, the establishment of Syria as gas trading hub is hindered by various constraints and problems that would not permit this in the foreseeable future.[22]

Next on the list is Palestine, a nation that has been stripped of its land, people, and resources. It would be extremely unorthodox to place any hope on a noteworthy Palestinian capitalization of the hydrocarbon reserves that lie off of the Gaza Strip in its EEZ. Although the exploitation of these resources is a Palestinian right, yet Israel has been blockading Gaza from reaching the outside world by sea. And to make the point clear, if Israel has not allowed Palestinian fishermen to venture out more than 9 nautical miles from the shore, it is undoubtedly going to seek to prevent any Palestinian efforts to exploit their underwater hydrocarbon reserves, at least in the foreseeable future.

[22]Ellinas, C., Roberts, J., Tzimitras, H., &Koranyi, D. (August 2016). *Hydrocarbon Developments in the Eastern Mediterranean The Case for Pragmatism* (Rep.). Retrieved from http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Hydrocarbon_Developments_in_the_Eastern_Mediterranean_web_0801.pdf

As for Egypt, all forecasts predicted that it would become a major player in the Eastern Mediterranean energy arena. And indeed, in 2015 international oil company (IOC) Eni discovered the Zohr gas field, which turned out to have the greatest gas known reserves in all of the Mediterranean, estimated alone at 30 tcf. Moreover, Egypt can be considered as strong candidate for the establishment of a gas-trading hub in the foreseeable future.[13]

In the center of the Eastern Mediterranean lies the island–nation of Cyprus. This strategic geographical location is promising for Cyprus since vast amounts of hydrocarbon reserves have been predicted to fall in its EEZ. Nevertheless, Cyprus has also gained a significant advantage from its central location; it has the potential to become a major transportation hub of hydrocarbons exported by the Eastern Mediterranean countries to Europe, the latter being constituting a lucrative market that everybody wants to tap into. Other than reducing the overall costs of energy exploitation infrastructure by dividing it between Cyprus and Israel, another Cypriot motif centers around gaining a strong political and military ally in the region that would back Cyprus up in its persistent dispute with Turkey over their contentious issues. And since Israel also has its own motifs for joining forces with Cyprus in this realm, Israel and Cyprus have essentially allied together in the hydrocarbon exploitation and exportation game, where this alliance has led to a major deal that will be later explained. Moreover, Cyprus, as in the case of Egypt, can be considered as strong candidate for the establishment of a gas-trading hub in the foreseeable future.[13]

Another player in this mesh is Greece. Although Greece has no hydrocarbon reserves or prospects lying in its EEZ, it is still considered to be an important player by virtue of its geographical location as the main gateway into Europe. Israel, Cyprus, and

Greece have been trilaterally cooperating in the past years. This has led, in December 2017, to a major agreement between the three as well as Italy.[23] In conclusion, Greece has been playing its cards in the right way, centering itself as a prime transit state and developing its regional cooperation mechanism with producer states, Cyprus and Israel.

Similarly, Turkey is another player that also doesn't possess any hydrocarbon reserves in its EEZ. However, it can still play an important role due to its geographical location that could connect the Eastern Mediterranean gas pipelines with Europe. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Israeli-Turkish cooperation in constructing a pipeline that passes through Turkey to reach Europe could be hindered, since this pipeline would have to pass through Cypriot waters, where Cyprus could veto such an attempt due to the strong securitization trends that govern the Turkish-Cypriot relationship. The relationship between the Turkey and Cyprus has been marked by extreme political and military tensions since 1974, when Cyprus was divided into a Greek-Cypriot south where the internationally recognized government is seated, and a Turkish-Cypriot north, which only Turkey recognizes. For that reason, the two countries have no diplomatic relations, preventing any fruitful negotiations and eroding any possible cooperation. This renders any Cypriot-Turkish gas endeavors virtually impossible. On the contrary, tension and distrust between the two countries have increased and the previous political and diplomatic disputes have exacerbated given the new gas reserve discoveries.[24] Nevertheless, if economic considerations would prove successful in desecuritizing the Turkish-Cypriot relationship, we might see Turkey

[23] Reuters. (5 December 2017). Greece, Italy, Israel and Cyprus back natgas pipeline to Europe. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/article/energy-mediterranean-natgas/greece-italy-israel-and-cyprus-back-natgas-pipeline-to-europe-idUSL8N1O537F

[24] Gürel, A., & Mullen, F. (March 2014). *Can Eastern Mediterranean Gas Discoveries Have a Positive Impact on Turkey-EU Relations?* (Publication). Retrieved from http://ipc.sabanciuniv.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/GTE_PB_12.pdf

transpose into a major trading hub that connects producer states with the large European consumer market.

As for its prospects vis-à-vis Syrian and Egyptian gas supplies traversing its waters and/or land, hampering securitization trends are observed between Turkey and both Egypt and Syria. Currently, both Syria and Egypt's political relations with Turkey have been strained severely due to conflicting political viewpoints that materialized during the so called "Arab Spring". Egypt's current regime, led by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, accuses Turkey of supporting the purged Muslim Brotherhood organization in Egypt. Similarly, Syria's current regime, led by President Bashar al-Assad, accuses Turkey of being a major supporter of various Syrian opposition groups and radical organizations, such as Al-Nusra Front and ISIS. Therefore, it is also highly unlikely that Turkey would succeed in securing a cooperative energy partner in the Eastern Mediterranean in the form of either Syria or Egypt, unless economic considerations outweigh the heavily securitized relations between Turkey and both Syria and Egypt in the future.

Although not situated in the Eastern Mediterranean and lying many thousands of miles away, the United States has been a major player in the Eastern Mediterranean hydrocarbon game. The United States itself has been eager to invest in Eastern Mediterranean gas, through its IOCs, particularly in the Israeli resources. And indeed, Noble Energy, a US oil and gas company was the one who discovered the Leviathan gas field, which is the second biggest in the Mediterranean, and is the principal stakeholder (at 36%) in the Tamar gas field, the third largest in the Mediterranean. Keen on expanding its energy investment in Israel, the United States has created the U.S.-Israel Energy Center, which was included in the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014

(P.L. 113-296).[25] Section 12 of this law encourages close ties in the energy sectors of the two countries. Additionally, in 2016, the US House of Representatives unveiled H.R. 5066 bill titled "United States-Israel Maritime Security Partnership Act of 2016." This bill authorized the U.S. President to provide security assistance to Israel in order to protect its offshore natural gas fields, while the bill's third section was titled "SEC. 3. Authorization of United States Assistance to Israel to Protect the Coastline of Israel and Natural Gas Fields Located in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Israel."[26]

The last key player in this mesh of actors that influence the Eastern Mediterranean hydrocarbon energy exploitation is the Lebanese resistance movement Hizbullah. The "Party of God" has issued multiple warnings to the Israeli policy makers cautioning them from infringing on the disputed maritime area between Lebanon and Israel.[27]

Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah has issued numerous threats to Israel regarding this matter.[28] Additionally, the ever persistent specter of the looming war between Israel and Hizbullah, with its destructive consequences on offshore Israeli gas operations and on various inland targets acting as a deterrent, has compelled Israel to refrain from drilling operations in the contested maritime area and even in areas that are contiguous to the Lebanese EEZ. Israeli Energy and Water Resources Minister Yuval Steinitz said that there is "no possibility for license holders to undertake drilling" in the

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[25] United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014, Pub. L. No. 113-296, §§ 4075-4081, 160 Gpo.gov (US Government Publishing Office 2014).

[26] United States-Israel Maritime Security Partnership Act of 2016, H.R. 5066, §§ 1-4, Congress.gov (Congress 2016).

[27] الاعلام الحربي المركزي (Director). (6 February 2018). *فلاش .. أيها الصهاينة ستمس منشآتكم* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJGPEqrKNP4

[28] Moqawama.org. (26 July 2011). *كلمة السيد نصر الله في الذكرى الخامسة للانتصار* [Video file]. Retrieved from https://video.moqawama.org/details.php?cid=1&linkid=586

Alon D area, which is contiguous to Lebanese waters, due to security issues.[29] Therefore, we can conclude that Hizbullah has indeed been playing a successful defensive role in response to the Israeli threat of unilaterally seizing the contested maritime area, has hampered Israel from operating freely in its own EEZ without regard to security considerations, and has even been successful in eliminating drilling opportunities in blocks that are adjacent to Lebanese waters.

Consequently, and as a possible plan to bypass the Hizbullah threat of targeting Israeli offshore infrastructure should an escalation happen in the region, Israel has forged an alliance with Cyprus in the energy sector, granting itself the possibility of merging the Israeli and Cypriot gas infrastructure and situating them on the Cypriot Island. This is considered to be a preemptive move against the possibility of Israeli offshore energy infrastructure being targeted by Hizbullah, or by the Gaza-based militant group Hamas, in any future war.

D. Research Question

This research is mainly concerned with the relationship between the new discoveries of hydrocarbon energy deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean on the interrelationships between the countries of the region, and chiefly between Lebanon and Israel. Therefore, the research question that I shall be raising is the following: Driven by the mesh of interrelated security issues among the Eastern Mediterranean states and by the boom in hydrocarbon energy extraction and exportation in the Levant Basin, would the securitization trends between Lebanon and Israel get exacerbated and elevate the overall levels of tension in the region?

[29] Gorodeisky, S. (21 August 2017). Steinitz extends Delek, Noble's Alon D License - Globes English. Retrieved from http://www.globes.co.il/en/article-steinitz-extends-delek-nobles-alon-d-license-1001202138

The research is supported by the framework and methods of the securitization model. This model was presented in the works of Copenhagen School scholars such as Barry Buzan, Jaap de Wilde and Ole Wæver, who first coined the term in 1995.

Thomas Homer-Dixon suggests that "general structural theories, which are often applied to interstate war, propose that external constraints – such as power imbalances in the international system – can encourage or even compel countries to go to war." [30]The international system consists of states, which interact together constructively or destructively and produce an entangled global web of security interdependence. Yet, since military and political threats are emphasized between states of geographical proximity and do not generally travel easily over long distances, insecurity issues are often associated with proximity between states. Concerning security, states generally hold apprehensions to – or cooperate with – their neighbors within the same region. Therefore, we often find intense security interdependence among countries within the same region, where these regionally-based clusters are labeled as RSCs (regional security complexes).

E. Methodology and Framework

In order to tackle any research, one cannot suffice with existing documentation and evidence. New information had to be provided to take the research one step further and to grant it competence and significance. Nevertheless, no research can start from scratch, and neglect the valuable works of previous researchers that attempted to tackle the same topic or the topics that revolve within the same scope of the issue that I'm examining. Therefore, and from the beginning of my investigation, I will be keen on

[30] Homer-Dixon, T. (1999). Chapter 7 - Violence. In T. Homer-Dixon (Author), *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* (pp. 133-176). New Jersey, United States: Princeton University Press. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7pgg0

extracting all the information that would strengthen the material and hypotheses presented in my research from the different sources of information. My focus in the collection of information is to adopt a comprehensive approach of gathering material from the whole spectrum of available resources.

This research will employ the Copenhagen School securitization theory as a framework. This framework comprises four elements: a securitizing actor/agent, a referent object, an existential threat, and an audience. Securitization is essentially a speech act performed by the securitizatizing actor. This speech act is directed towards an audience, which the securitizing actor tries to convince that there exists an existential threat to a referent object that is considered to be of paramount importance to the target audience. An unsuccessful securitization process is called a securitization move. On the other hand, a successful securitization warrants the securitizing actor the legitimacy to employ extraordinary measures above and beyond the practice of "normal" politics.[31]

The securitization theory examines how a certain matter is transformed by an actor into a matter of security in order to allow for the use of extraordinary measures. Yet, for the securitization act to be successful, it must be accepted by an audience regardless of the subject matter constituting a real threat or not.[32]

The Copenhagen School draws a line of separation between securitization theory and what Waever refers to as the Classical traditions of approaching security issues. He explains that while Classical traditions and realism are confined to the survival of the state, and more generally to the state-centric approach to security and

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[31] Buzan, B., &Wæver, O. (2003). *Regions and powers: The Structure of International Security* (Vol. 91). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511491252

[32]Balzacq, T. (2005). The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context. *European Journal of International Relations*,*11*(2), 171-201. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1354066105052960

politics of emergency, securitization theory provides a broadened logic of security that can be applied to a wide range of referent objects. For Waever, any issue within any sector could be securitized and thus become the primary focus of security if a certain securitizing actor successfully persuaded the relevant audience to adopt the rhetoric of threat and vulnerability and succeeded in legitimizing the use of extraordinary emergency measures, the suspension of the practice of normal everyday politics, and the adherence to established rules.

Waever provides yet another key difference between securitization theory and the Schmittian understanding of security analysis. According to Schmitt, security is confined to state-centric concepts of military security that involves territorial protection of the state and political security that guarantees governmental legitimacy and autonomy. Yet, according to Waever, Schmitt never presented any rationale concerning the concept of societal security. In contrast, securitization theory drew attention to the concept of societal security and emphasized the important role that the "we-ness" identity plays in the security of the society, which is similar to the sovereignty criterion in state security.[33] It is important to note that both societal identity and state sovereignty can be securitized if need be, since a state that loses its sovereignty cannot survive as a state, and similarly, a society that loses its identity will not be able to live as itself. When a group of people sharing a strong "we-ness" identity labels another identity group as "the others" and considers them to be outsiders, exemplified by Israel's ethnocentric Jewish identity in its conflict with Arab neighbors, securitization trends can often be derived. Consequently, societal borders between the two groups are

[33]Waever, O. (2003). Securitisation taking stock of a research programme in security studies. p. 17. Research Group Climate Change and Security (CLISEC). Retrieved from https://www.clisec.uni-hamburg.de/en/pdf/data/waever-2003-securitisation-taking-stock-of-a-research-programme-in-security-studies.pdf

accentuated and identity-driven antagonism against "the other" is constructed where this "other" would be seen as an existential threat through potential securitizations. The resultant of this constructed and accentuated identity strife would undoubtedly be the increase of violence between the two identity groups, who can be two ethnic, religious, or sectarian groups.[34]

The Copenhagen school committed securitization theory to be focused on existential threats to referent objects and this is echoed in Carl Schmitt's view of politics which is based on exclusion and enmity. Furthermore, a resounding similarity is found between Schmitt's "politics of emergency" and securitization theory's extraordinary measures "beyond normal politics".

Furthermore, the Copenhagen school seeks to avoid Schmittian elements correlated with securitization theory and the radical realpolitik advocated by classical realism. To exemplify, Schmitt mythologizes war and enmity as necessary tools that need to be employed in order to produce successful politics. In opposition to this view, the Copenhagen school treats securitization as a process to be avoided in most cases. Rather, desecuritization and asecurity are integral aspects of securitization theory which the Copenhagen School advocates and emphasizes their importance.

Jef Huysmans describes securitization theory, which has been developed into a comprehensive and valuable research framework in security studies, as being "possibly the most thorough and continuous exploration of the significance and implications of a widening security agenda for security studies."[35]

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[34] Pia, E., & Diez, T. (2007). *Conflict and Human Rights: A Theoretical Framework.* (SHUR WP 1/07).
[35] Huysmans, J. (1998). Revisiting Copenhagen: Or, On the Creative Development of a Security Studies Agenda in Europe. *European Journal of International Relations,4*(4), p. 480. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1354066198004004004

To give the reader a grasp of the concepts that are advocated by the Copenhagen School, I will define the concepts of a security and desecuritization. Asecurity denotes a situation in which relations are so firmly politicized that there is little chance of them becoming securitized. Waever denotes Nordic countries as an example of an asecurity community, since the relations among those countries are firmly politicized.

Desecuritization is the process that involves the removal of securitized issues from the "security realm", which legitimizes the use of extraordinary emergency measures by focusing on the threat and vulnerability rhetoric. Moreover, the process of desecuritization is completed by positioning those securitized issues back into the realm of public political discourse, where the practice of "normal" political dispute and the adherence to established rules become the norm again.

Therefore, one can conclude that the avoidance of the threat and vulnerability rhetoric, the reversion of securitized issues back into the realm of normative politics under conventional rules, and the model of the asecurity community are concepts that the Copenhagen School endorses and it therefore generally stands in direct opposition to "security politics" and securitization trends.[36]

We can conclude that the concept of asecurity clearly cannot be applied to the relationship between Lebanon and Israel. Furthermore, desecuritization trends I argue are not to be expected to develop between the two countries, and this will be extensively elaborated upon later in this research.

As a researcher utilizing securitization theory framework in my quest to uncover the impact of energy discoveries on the securitization/desecuritization trends

[36] Williams, M. (2003). Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics (p.523)

between Lebanon and Israel and in the Eastern Mediterranean, I should ask and answer questions such as: Who are the securitizing actors? Which issues are being securitized? Which existential threats do securitizing actors point to? Who is the audience that must be persuaded to accept the issue as a security threat?

In this research, I will evaluate the political, military, and economic capacities within the Lebanon and Israel, in an attempt to give the reader an understanding of how these sectors interact to produce the convoluted securitized relationship between the two countries. Furthermore, I will address the securitization trends resulting from energy discoveries by assessing the influence of energy as an independent entity. Additionally, I will be assessing how energy interacts with political, military, and economic sectors, how it influences them, and how energy securitization considerations can often be a deciding factor in decision making, due to the various spillovers that energy can create from one sector to another.

In addressing the effect of the latest offshore energy discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean, I will attempt to accurately assess the potential for escalation or de-escalation. Escalation would be result of securitization trends that are stimulated by political and military considerations trumping economic collaboration benefits, whereas de-escalation would be the result of prevailing desecuritization trends in favor of cooperation and economic benefits. Consequently, assessing the above possibilities would result in a clear and thorough answer to the research question that I posed: Driven by the mesh of interrelated security issues among the Eastern Mediterranean states and by the boom in hydrocarbon energy extraction and exportation in the Levant Basin, would the securitization trends between Lebanon and Israel get exacerbated and elevate the overall levels of tension in the region?

After Chapter 1 laid out a general overview of the topic and my research question, Chapter 2 will examine the political economy of energy in Lebanon as well as the Lebanese efforts in exploiting potential hydrocarbon reserves, including possible pipeline routes and export markets in addition to reporting the effect of planned energy exploitation on Lebanon. Chapter 3 will discuss the political economy of energy in Israel as well as the Israeli efforts in exploiting the hydrocarbon reserves, including significant milestones that Israel has achieved thus far in efforts to export and capitalize on their newfound resource wealth. Chapter 4 is probably the most important chapter in the whole research, since it lays out the most important analyses and observations. This chapter will scrutinize the securitization processes at play between Lebanon and Israel in addition to investigating the role that energy will play vis-à-vis this securitized relationship. This chapter will also address the spillover effect that energy has on a multitude of other sectors. Furthermore, this chapter will investigate how energy can play a factor in instigating war. Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter in which key findings are discussed and where the research culminates in a definite answer to the research question. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the added value of this research as well as the future research prospects that could benefit from this research and possibly build upon it.

CHAPTER II

LEBANON AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN HYDROCARBONS

To answer my research question, the first step should be studying both subject countries, including getting familiar with the main players involved, the decision makers, and the issues at stake.

In this Chapter, I will examine the political economy of energy in Lebanon and the Lebanese efforts in exploiting the hydrocarbon reserves. Additionally, I will present the Lebanese potential pipeline routes and export markets, as well as reporting the effect of energy exploitation on Lebanon. Comparing the current developments related to the oil and gas industry in Lebanon, along with the comparable situation in Israel in the next chapter, will help identify the main strategic priorities of each country and how these contribute to the securitization of the Eastern Mediterranean energy sector.

A. Political Economy of Energy in Lebanon

By virtue of its geographical location, Lebanon is considered to be potentially one of the main players when it comes to Eastern Mediterranean energy. Nearly all of its EEZ lies in the hydrocarbon-rich Levant Basin. But until the day comes when Lebanon is prospering from its immense hydrocarbon-based revenues and investments, a less prosperous picture of the Lebanese economy is expected to linger. Consequently, it is only natural to assume that Lebanon would be extremely eager to start exploiting the underwater hydrocarbon reserves in an effort to curb the adverse effects of the

deteriorating Lebanese macroeconomics. Many policy makers have argued that Lebanon's hydrocarbon reserves represent the best means to save the country economic catastrophe.[37] It is forecasted that the struggling Lebanese economy would be given a boost to possibly overcome the economic balance deficit in addition to curtailing the national debt that Lebanon owes to a number of creditors.

After a period of two and a half years of presidential vacancy and political and internal security turmoil, the election of President Michel Aoun in 2016 and the formation of a unity government have revived the fragile Lebanese economy. Nevertheless, the protracted effect of the conflict in neighboring Syria on the overstretched Lebanese economy has curbed its potential growth and continues to strain it even further. The huge influx of Syrian refugees has placed additional pressure on various Lebanese sectors. For example, education and health services deteriorated since the country could not cope well with the sudden increase in demand on these services. Furthermore, Lebanon witnessed an increase in the cost of living such as the surge in the cost of buying or renting houses. Additionally, this huge influx has been exacerbating the developmental favoritisms that are a product of geographically-based inequalities in areas such as the Beqaa and Akkar Governorates.[38]

Since the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011, Lebanese exports dropped by more than 30% in value. This is mainly attributable to the fact that Syria has always

[37]Hamdar, B. & Hejase, H. & Akar, W. & Hassouna, S. (2016). The economic impacts of the oil and gas resources in Lebanon. International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management. Volume 4. Page 518-533.

[38]World Bank. (27 May 2017). *Priority Reforms for the Government of Lebanon* (Rep.). Retrieved from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/438461495869364907/pdf/P163010-05-27-2017-1495869360288.pdf

been Lebanon's main gate of export to the Arab World.[39] Ever since the start of the Syrian refugee crisis, Lebanon has been the largest host of Syrian refugees per capita in the world, all while receiving inadequate international aid. Additionally, Lebanon is a country that is plagued with an enormous debt to GDP ratio that reached 146% in 2016, ranking as the third worst country worldwide in this regard.[40]The International Monetary Fund (IMF) warns that this figure could escalate to reach 180% by 2023 if the government doesn't address its fiscal deficits and rethink its economic-related policies and practices.[41]

Moreover, the oil dependence ratio of Lebanon reached 20.8 liters / $100 of real GDP. The oil dependence ratio measures how much a country needs in liters of oil to generate $100 worth of commodities or services that comprise the country's GDP. Furthermore, Lebanon is characterized as a net importer and currently imports all of its hydrocarbon energy sources for power generation purposes. These imports have firmly held their spot as the chief imported commodity for years. For example, these imports set Lebanon back $2.73B in 2016 and remained the largest imported commodity at 16% of the total imports.[42]

But it's not only oil that the Lebanese exclusively obtain through importation. Lebanon's trade balance has been consistently negative for decades on end. In 2015, Lebanon has paid $16.7B in exports while only getting back a mere $2.44B in return for

[39]Bankmed - Market & Economic Research Division. (September 2016). *Analysis of Lebanon's External Sector* (Rep.). Retrieved from https://www.bankmed.com.lb/BOMedia/subservices/categories/News/20160929145416092.pdf

[40]Saadi, D. (13 February 2018). Lebanon's debt-to-GDP could balloon to 180% by 2023, IMF warns. Retrieved from https://www.thenational.ae/business/economy/lebanon-s-debt-to-gdp-could-balloon-to-180-by-2023-imf-warns-1.704229

[41]Saadi, D. (February 13 2018). Lebanon's debt-to-GDP could balloon to 180% by 2023, IMF warns.

[42]Bankmed - Market & Economic Research Division. (September 2016). *Analysis of Lebanon's External Sector*.

imports, resulting in a trade deficit of $14.26B. This has been the trend for decades by now, where the Lebanese public debt that is needed to cover the persisting budget deficits has been steadily climbing to surpass $77B in August of 2017, with no sign of deceleration.[43]

From 2005 till 2016, the Lebanese public debt increased by an enormous $35B, where the money that was credited to Lebanon was not expended to develop sustainable investments – whether in infrastructure or human resources – but was exclusively depleted to pay public wages and to cover various other budgetary deficits throughout these years. In the years 2015 and 2016, the public wage expenses in Lebanon reached a staggering 49% of the total revenue of the Lebanese government. Amidst the continual rise in the Lebanese public debt and the inability of the Lebanese government to counteract its adverse effects by generating adequate revenues to cover the deficits, concerns that Lebanon might be heading towards bankruptcy are starting to surface. And indeed if bankruptcy occurs in Lebanon, the country would face the fate of Greece and Argentina, where governments defaulted on its public debt payments, leading to a disastrous economic situation that would shake the country to its very core.[44]

Ever since the assassination of the late Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri in 2005, the Lebanese political landscape has been defined by the strife between the "March 8" bloc, which comprises primarily Hizbullah, the Free Patriotic Movement, the Amal Movement, the Progressive Socialist Party; and the "March 14" bloc, which includes the Future Movement and the Lebanese Forces and others. The main points of contention in Lebanese politics revolve around the alignment of these two rival blocs

[43]Ajaka, J. (21 August 2017). كيف سيتطوّر الدين العام في الأعوام المقبلة؟. *Annahar*. Retrieved from https://www.annahar.com/author/12174-البروفسور-جاسم-عجاقة-خبير-اقتصادي-واستراتيجي

[44]Almanar TV. (15 October 2017). ما هي اسباب ارتفاع الدين العام الى ارقام قياسية؟. Retrieved from http://www.almanar.com.lb/2759260

with regional coalitions that engage in conflict through proxy wars. March 8's political locus pivots on allying with Syria and Iran in addition to supporting Hizbullah's "resistance" against Israel and the need for the group to bear arms outside the control of the central government for this purpose. On the opposite end of the political spectrum, the March 14 bloc supports the United States and Saudi Arabia's regional policies and firmly stands in opposition to those of Syria, Iran and Hizbullah. The March 14 bloc has adopted a severely condemnatory rhetoric of Hizbullah's regional alliances, its intervention in the Syrian conflict and its possession of arms outside state control. The role of Hizbullah's arms is the central point of division within the Lebanese political spectrum. While March 14 argues that Hizbullah should not have the right to make decisions of war and peace with Israel independent of the state, as they claimed occurred in 2006 during the July War. Meanwhile, Hizbullah and its March 8 allies counter that the party's arms are necessary to defend Lebanon's sovereignty, given the inability of the Lebanese Armed Forces to counter Israeli aggression, and that this fact has been enshrined in multiple Council of Ministers policy statements legitimizing the right of Lebanon to liberate occupied territories via the "Army, People, and the Resistance."[45]

However, while the two blocs diverge greatly on the issue of Hizbullah's arms and its involvement in the conflict in neighboring Syria, there is broad agreement on the need to protect and exploit Lebanon's offshore energy resources, given its potential to solve many of the country's economic woes. It is not economic issues, but competing domestic and regional security priorities, often reflecting the views of outside patrons, that have led to prolonged periods of political paralysis in the country.

[45] The Daily Star. (27 November 2009). Statement grants state monopoly on political policy. Retrieved from http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2009/Nov-27/61781-statement-grants-state-monopoly-on-political-policy.ashx

Nevertheless, during the past two years, the rigid dichotomy of separation between the respective constituents of the two blocs has been significantly curbed. This was the result of bilateral agreements that materialized between the Free Patriotic Movement and the Lebanese Forces and later between the Free Patriotic Movement and the Future Movement. The former agreement paved the way for former general Michel Aoun to become President, whereas the latter secured Aoun's presidential seat along with Saad Al-Hariri's position as prime minister.

The two major political players in the realm of the oil and gas in Lebanon are: Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri, leader of the Lebanese Amal Movement – an ally of Hizbullah; and Gebran Bassil, son-in-law of Michel Aoun, former Energy Minister and later head of the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM). As Energy Minister in 2012, Bassil announced the appointment of six board members for the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA), the sector regulator responsible for managing the bidding process for international oil companies (IOCs). However, progress on the oil and gas front stalled in 2013 following the resignation of the Lebanese government and a dispute between Berri and Bassil on how to proceed in the bidding process. This dispute endured until 2016, when an agreement was struck on what offshore blocks would be opened in the first bidding round (to be discussed later in the chapter). This development, along with the end of the presidential vacuum that saw Michel Aoun elevated to the presidency, marked the reactivation of Lebanese efforts to begin exploiting its hydrocarbon resources.[46]

However, despite the economic optimism and prospects of an effective government based on the newfound collaboration, many constraints still dominate the

[46] Nash, M. (August 2016). Decoding to the oil deal. Executive Magazine. Retrieved from http://www.executive-magazine.com/economics-policy/decoding-the-oil-deal

picture. Taking into consideration the enormous discoveries in the region as well as the advanced stages that other countries are in, a Lebanese oil and gas sectorin its infancy and years away from the export phase, partly due to delays as a result of political deadlock, could be in danger of entering a market which might be saturated by the time it does.

B. Lebanese Efforts and Positions in Exploiting the Hydrocarbon Reserves

While other countries in the Eastern Mediterranean jumped on the opportunity and swiftly started exploiting their promised hydrocarbon resources and gaining time in an effort to rapidly enter the market, Lebanon has been in a stalemate situation for much of this time, and the country's hydrocarbon reserves are yet to be tapped into. This is expected to kick off in 2019.

Since June 2011, when the Syrian war was commencing, Lebanon has been witnessing one of its most turbulent political, economic and security phases in its recent history. Before parliamentary elections were set be held on 6 May 2018, the Lebanese had not voted for national representatives since 2009, owing to the fact that parliament extended its own mandate twice, citing the inability to agree on a new electoral law and security concerns related to the conflict in neighboring Syria.[47] Furthermore, Lebanon had no president for more than two years until the election of Michel Aoun as president in October 2016. Additionally, three cabinets have been constituted since 2011, where resignations, disruptions, political turmoil, and disorderly management and administration have characterized their terms. As a result, natural gas exploration efforts have been severely hindered. Nevertheless, with the political situation in Lebanon

[47] Holmes, O. (5 November 2014). Lebanese parliament extends own term till 2017 amid protests. Reuters. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-parliament/lebanese-parliament-extends-own-term-till-2017-amid-protests-idUSKBN0IP18T20141105

relatively stabilizing in 2017 through to 2018, the country's hydrocarbon wheel has slowly started to turn.

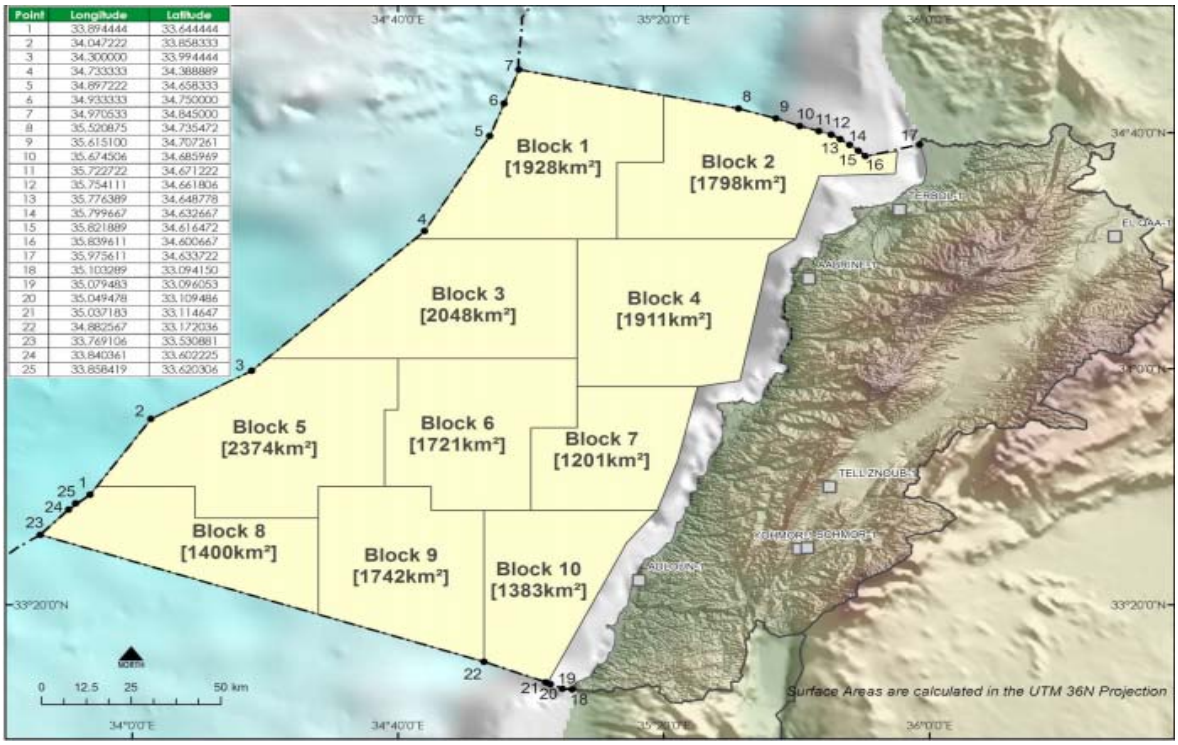

Figure 2: Lebanese Petroleum Administration (19 January 2017). Offshore Blocks Outline [Map]. Retrieved from http://www.lpa.gov.lb/pdf/Offshore%20Blocks%20Outline.pdf

Lebanon has divided its EEZ, which comprises a total area of 17,506 km^2, into 10 blocks to facilitate the tendering and licensing processes.[48] Its oil reserves have been probed and are assessed to a total of about 675 to 850 million barrels of oil (worth 40 billion dollars at a price of $60 per barrel), although no amount has been definitively confirmed.

Concerning gas, the more abundant hydrocarbon in the Eastern Mediterranean, Lebanon has surveyed most of its offshore territory using 2D and 3D seismic surveys

[48] Lebanese Petroleum Administration. (19 January 2017). Decree 42. Retrieved from http://www.lpa.gov.lb/pdf/Offshore%20Blocks%20Outline.pdf

and government officials have confirmed that there is a high probability of discovering huge quantities of gas. Tentative numbers predict that Lebanon's EEZ houses gas reserves in the range of 12 to 96 trillion cubic feet (tcf), which is enough to supply the Lebanese domestic market for many decades.[49] Although no amount has been conclusively confirmed, the projected amounts of gas in Lebanese waters monetarily translate into revenue between $300 billion and $700 billion. These amounts can prove to be a great opportunity for the relatively small Lebanese economy to expand and grow.

Furthermore, Lebanon issued a licensing round in 2017 and opened the door for the bidding companies to place their offers of exploration in five Lebanese EEZ blocks. The blocks are 1, 4, 8, 9 and 10. Interestingly, blocks 8, 9 and 10 are the three blocks adjacent to the Israeli-claimed EEZ, and a disputed maritime area between Lebanon and Israel lies in these blocks. In response to a question about the choice of blocks, Lebanese Minister of Energy Cesar Abi Khalil said in 2017 that the choice of blocks was a probability-calculated decision concerning discovering exploitable amounts of oil and gas. Additionally, Abi Khalil added that the decision was also dictated by Lebanon's need to protect its resources along its border.[50]

In December 2017, the Lebanese Council of Ministers exclusively awarded two petroleum licenses to the consortium composed of France's Total (40% stake), Italy's Eni (40% stake) and Russia's Novatek (20% stake). The licenses are for

[49] Bank Med. (2014). Lebanon Oil and Gas Report 2014. Retrieved from https://www.bankmed.com.lb/BOMedia/subservices/categories/News/20150515170326030.pdf

[50] Lebanon Gas News. (26 January 2017). The Road Map for Lebanon's First Offshore Licensing Round. Retrieved from https://lebanongasnews.com/wp/the-road-map-for-lebanons-first-offshore-licensing-round/

exploration and production in blocks 4 and 9.[51] This was followed by an event on 9 February 2018, during which the Lebanese Energy Minister Cesar Abi Khalil announced that on 29 January 2018, Lebanon signed its first offshore oil and gas exploration and production agreements with the consortium. Even though Block 9 overlaps with the disputed area between Lebanon and Israel, both Lebanon and the consortium operator Total stated that the disputed area in Block 9, which makes up of 8% of the total block area, shouldn't be an issue in terms of the exploration well. Furthermore, Total announced that they will not drill the first well anywhere close to the disputed area. Moreover, Abi Khalil declared that as soon as the first commercially feasible discovery is made, the second offshore licensing round would be announced.[52]

With this last contract signing with the three-company-consortium, the Lebanese Petroleum Authority has announced the percentages of the revenue return rate of the Lebanese government. It ranges from 65% to 70.5% in Block 4 and from 54.9% to 63% in Block 9.

And in response to Israeli infringement efforts and threats, epitomized by Israeli Defense Minister Avidgor Lieberman's 2018 statements about the "provocative" actions in Block 9, Lebanon has been extremely vigilant and has often swiftly responded to any Israeli threats to its offshore reserves rights. An example of this promptness to defend Lebanon's rights is observed on 7 February 2018, when the Lebanese Higher Defense Council, the main state apparatus responsible for military and security decisions in the country, held an extraordinary meeting to address the Israeli

[51] Lebanese Petroleum Administration. (21 December 2017). نتائج دورة التراخيص الأولى ونظرة إلى المستقبل. Retrieved from http://www.lpa.gov.lb/pdf/LPA presentation to the Media.pdf

[52] Barrington, L. (9 February 2018). Lebanon to begin offshore energy search in block disputed by Israel. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-israel-natgas/lebanon-to-begin-offshore-energy-search-in-block-disputed-by-israel-idUSKBN1FT218

efforts of building a separation wall along the southern border and inside Lebanese-claimed territory and to address Israel's claims to maritime areas inside which Lebanon is planning on exploring oil and gas resources. The Council's member are constituted of the country's top security and political leaders, such as the President Michel Aoun and Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri, in addition to the heads of the Army, the Internal Security Forces, and General Security. The Council issued a statement warning Israel of further pursuing its plan to build the six-meter-high concrete separation wall in contested areas along the Lebanese-Israeli border. The Council issued orders to confront this Israeli infringement in order to thwart Israel from building the so-called separation wall on Lebanese territory. Furthermore, the Council declared its rejection of all Israeli declarations and claims on oil and gas resources in the Lebanese EEZ.[53] This swift and resolute Higher Defense Council meeting proves that the Lebanese official stance regarding the Israeli-Lebanese maritime dispute remains steadfast in defending Lebanon's rights in its maritime territories and offshore reserves and it is yet another indication among many other past ones that the Lebanese Government is not opening the door for bargaining concerning Lebanon's proclaimed rights.

Additionally, some policy makers in Lebanon warn against engagement in any form of indirect negotiation with Israel over the disputed EEZ zone. The rationale for this last viewpoint stems from the long history of Israeli bilateral actions of aggression and violations of UN resolutions, where the advocates of this viewpoint asked the following questions: Who would guarantee Israeli compliance with any achieved resolutions? And what is the guarantee for Lebanon that Israel would refrain from undertaking any actions that would infringe upon areas secured by Lebanon and the

[53] The Daily Star. (7 February 2018). Higher Defense Council: Israeli Border Wall Act of Aggression. Retrieved from http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2018/Feb-07/437233-higher-defense-council-meet-tackles-israeli-wall-maritime-claims.ashx

resources that it comprises, when it is clear that Israel violates Lebanese airspace on an almost daily basis?[54]

Furthermore, in Lebanon, Hizbullah and the larger anti-normalization-with-Israel bloc, who actively work to challenge any normalization efforts and advocate an anti-Israel rhetoric, argue against any form of indirect bargaining with Israel, and insist that the totality of the disputed area belongs to Lebanon. They contend that settling the dispute in such a manner would realistically mean that Lebanon has effectively recognized Israel as a political entity. And on the other hand, many in Israel could reciprocally protest this framework, claiming that Israel would be making concessions and succumbing to threats from terrorist groups.[55]

The maritime area under dispute has been described by the Speaker of Lebanese Parliament Nabih Berri to be "the Shebaa Farms of the sea", an area that Israel retained following its withdrawal from the majority of southern Lebanon in 2000. Indeed, Lebanon's official stance regarding this area remains steadfast in asserting the country's right to liberate the area by all means necessary, which was stated by the President of Lebanon Michel Aoun in his inaugural speech. Berri continued that "If [Israel] continues with its expansionist plot through the government and the Knesset, [then] that means that the spark of war is looming on the horizon… We will not be quiet and we will not accept any compromise on our people's rights to these resources, which

[54]General Abdel-Kader, N. (October 2011) Potential conflict between Lebanon and Israel over oil and gas resources- a Lebanese perspective. The Lebanese Armed Forces. Issue 78. Retrieved from https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/potential-conflict-between-lebanon-and-israel-over-oil-and-gas-resources-%E2%80%93-lebanese

[55]Stocker, J. (2012). No EEZ Solution: The Politics of Oil and Gas in the Eastern Mediterranean. *The Middle East Journal,66*(4), p. 594. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/23361618

have a degree of holiness to us."[56]Berri's depiction of the area in that manner reveals rhetoric common across Lebanon that the country should retain this maritime area at all costs.

And considering that Hizbullah has indeed clashed with Israeli forces in the Shebaa Farms in 2015 and again in 2016, in retaliation for the Israeli targeting of senior Hizbullah fighters in Syria on two separate occasions, gives the keen observer an indication that the party could be willing to go to war if Israel infringes on the Lebanese maritime area. As early as 2011, Hizbullah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah asserted that Hizbullah is capable of protecting the oil and gas located off the Lebanese coast and has threatened Israel that Lebanon will defend its interests in the disputed maritime area if Israel commences oil and gas exploration in this region. Nasrallah's latest threat against Israel was issued on 16 February 2018, where the Secretary-General claimed that Hizbullah is capable of stopping all oil and gas operations in Israeli waters within a matter of hours.[57]This aggressive warning to Israel's offshore oil and gas infrastructure was the culmination of many Nasrallah threats issued to warn Israel against infringing upon the Lebanese-claimed disputed maritime area and upon the hydrocarbon resources that lie beneath Lebanese waters. If Hizbullah is indeed capable of executing what Nasrallah promised, then Israel's offshore oil and gas infrastructure could prove to be a vulnerable soft spot in any future conflict, threatening its potential pivotal role in Israel's geostrategic future and its economic prospects.

In conclusion, Lebanon seems to be extremely vocal and diligent concerning its rights to its entire EEZ, including the disputed maritime area, as delineated in official

[56] Al Joumhouria. (22 March 2017). النفط البحري.. في خطر. *Al Joumhouria*. Retrieved from http://www.aljoumhouria.com/news/index/357809?print=1

[57]General Abdel-Kader, N. (October 2011) Potential conflict between Lebanon and Israel over oil and gas resources- a Lebanese perspective.

geographical coordinates and charts submitted to the UN, a process mandated by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.[58] In Lebanon, many official and unofficial voices argue that the totality of the disputed area belongs to Lebanon and that it is not subject to any form of bargaining. These uncompromising official and non-official stances vis-à-vis the disputed maritime area and Lebanon's rights in exploiting its hydrocarbon reserves have arguably deterred Israel from bullying Lebanon and unilaterally acting to secure its interests at the expense of Lebanese ones. Taking everything into account, and amidst the rising Hizbullah-Israeli tensions in Syria, Israel faces huge concerns over its offshore infrastructure should an armed conflict erupt.

C. The Effect of Energy Exploitation on Lebanon

The emerging oil and gas sector is considered of principal importance for the future health of the Lebanese economy. As political leaders seek solutions to existential fiscal problems outlined earlier in the chapter, the potential off hydrocarbon wealth has come to be viewed as a miracle cure to the country's ills. This view has greatly contributed to the securtization of potential oil and gas resources in Lebanon. Below are some of the suggested potential benefits that Lebanon could achieve if energy resources are found and revenues are realized.

One direct benefit of natural gas exploitation for Lebanon would be access to power generation from a cheaper, cleaner, and indigenous energy source. Furthermore, and due to large expected reserves that lie in Lebanon's EEZ, the Lebanese local energy demand could be satisfied by this energy source for decades to come, even if Lebanon decides to export a large percentage of its natural gas in order to fully capitalize on their

[58] United Nations. (10 December 1982) United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. p. 49. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf

exploitation monetization. In its policy paper titled "*Priority Reforms for the Government of Lebanon*", the World Bank advised Lebanon to build a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal and to switch its power generation operations from relying on expensive imported liquid fuels to relying on the clean and cheap natural gas. With such a switch to power generation via natural gas, Lebanon could achieve energy security for many decades, realize cheap operating costs of generating electricity, and would benefit from the LNG terminal as an important part of the infrastructure needed for offshore gas extraction and possible exportation.[31]

As another direct effect of potential self-sufficiency in energy, Lebanon would be relieved from the hefty energy import bills that the country currently pays. Currently, the government subsidizes 90% of fuel imports for the state-owned electrical utility Eletricite du Liban (EDL).[59] If the need for expensive fuel imports was rendered moot by a future domestic supply, all industries and particularly energy-intensive ones, would gain a competitive advantage resulting from access to an un-interrupted power supply determined by a non-subsidized market price. Furthermore, households would also benefit from the enhanced power generation, ceasing their dependence on privately-owned auxiliary power generators, which are billed at 45 cents per kWh, a rate more expensive than EDL tariffs. This has lead to a constraint on personal consumption and overall economic growth.[60]

The potential hydrocarbon profits in Lebanon could also be used to address Lebanon's dangerously increasingly national debt. If profits are eventually achieved,

[59]The Daily Star. (22 September 2016). Lebanon's electricity: the need for market solutions. Retrieved from http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Business/Local/2016/Sep-22/373108-lebanons-electricity-the-need-for-market-solutions.ashx

[60]Hamdan, H., Ghajar, R. and Chedid, R. (2012) A simulation model for reliability-based appraisal of an energy policy: The case of Lebanon. Energy Policy Journal. 45, p. 295

paying off some of the country's sovereign debt couldin turn allow the government to focus a great share of its budgetary spending on priority and capital expenditures such as public investment in infrastructure. A lower public debt also has been proven to have a positive impact on investment and growth in the overall economy.[61]

D. Lebanon's Potential Pipeline Routes and Export Markets

This section will examine possible future pipeline routes and export markets, which are immensely important to secure if Lebanon hopes to benefit from its potential hydrocarbon wealth. However, given that Israel is competing over the same pipeline routes, export markets and allies for its oil and gas sector, this competition has the potential to further exacerbate Israeli-Lebanese tensions and further securitize the issue of offshore energy resources.

In 2003, Lebanon and Syria signed a 25-year agreement, whereby Syria would supply Lebanon with 1.5 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas each year.[62] Consequently, the 32-km Gasyle pipeline was constructed in 2005 and it stretched from the Syrian-Lebanese Aboudiye border to the Beddawi power plant in Diniyye in North Lebanon. Although the pipeline was never utilized and no gas was imported to Lebanon from Syria, the Gasyle pipeline could still be utilized, this time to transfer Lebanese gas

[61]Fattouh, B. and Mahadeva, L. (August 2016). Managing oil and gas revenues in Lebanon. The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies. Retrieved from http://lcps-lebanon.org/publications/1472126663-fattouh-lavan_management-paper_eng.pdf

[62]World Bank. (30 June 2004). *Republic of Lebanon Hydrocarbon Strategy Study* (Rep. No. 29579-LE). p. 10. Retrieved http://www.databank.com.lb/docs/Hydrocarbon Strategy Study-World Bank 2004.pdf

to Syria. Yet, taking into consideration the current security situation in Syria, this option is highly unlikely to be implemented in the near future.[63]

1. The Middle East Option

A regional pipeline is the most commercially viable option because it usually requires the lowest infrastructural cost in comparison with the more expensive Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) subsea pipelines. LNG refers to the process of transforming the gaseous natural gas into a liquid to facilitate its transport overseas where the pipeline option is feasible technically unfeasible or economically impractical. Since countries in the region (such as Turkey, Syria and Iraq) are attempting to diversify their energy production and are moving away from high-cost oil to other resources, and since their electricity demands are growing rapidly and will continue to grow throughout 2020s and 2030s, the demand for natural gas in the region is expected to increase.[64] Export to regional markets would also entail the benefit of lower infrastructure costs compared to sending gas to farther flung markets, which could be particularly important if Lebanese reserves turned out to be on the lower end of the spectrum of estimations and thus insufficient to allow for LNG exports beyond regional markets.

Meanwhile, the markets of Jordan and Egypt are also favorable energy partners, requiring a low initial infrastructure investment as they are already connected to Lebanon via the Arab Gas Pipeline (AGP) (Figure 2). The AGP isa 1,200 km natural gas pipeline in the Middle East, which exports Egyptian natural gas to Jordan, Syria,

[63]Fattouh, B. and El-Katiri, L. (2015). Lebanon's Gas Trading Options. Lebanese Center for Policy Studies. Retrieved from https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/publications/1453981980-fattouh-katiri_for_web.pdf

[64]International Energy Agency. (2013). *World energy outlook 2013*. IEA. Retrieved from https://www.iea.org/publications/freepublications/publication/WEO2013.pdf

and Lebanon, with an underwater branch pipeline to Israel. In future, this infrastructure could be reversed in the other direction to transport Lebanese gas towards the two countries. However, the Israeli peace deals and economic agreements with both countries have hindered these options for Lebanon. Additionally, the huge Egyptian offshore gas discoveries, such asthe 30 tcf Zohr field, and the potential for Egypt to discover further resources, might ultimately saturate the Egyptian gas demand and reduce Egypt's demand for imported energy to zero.[65]

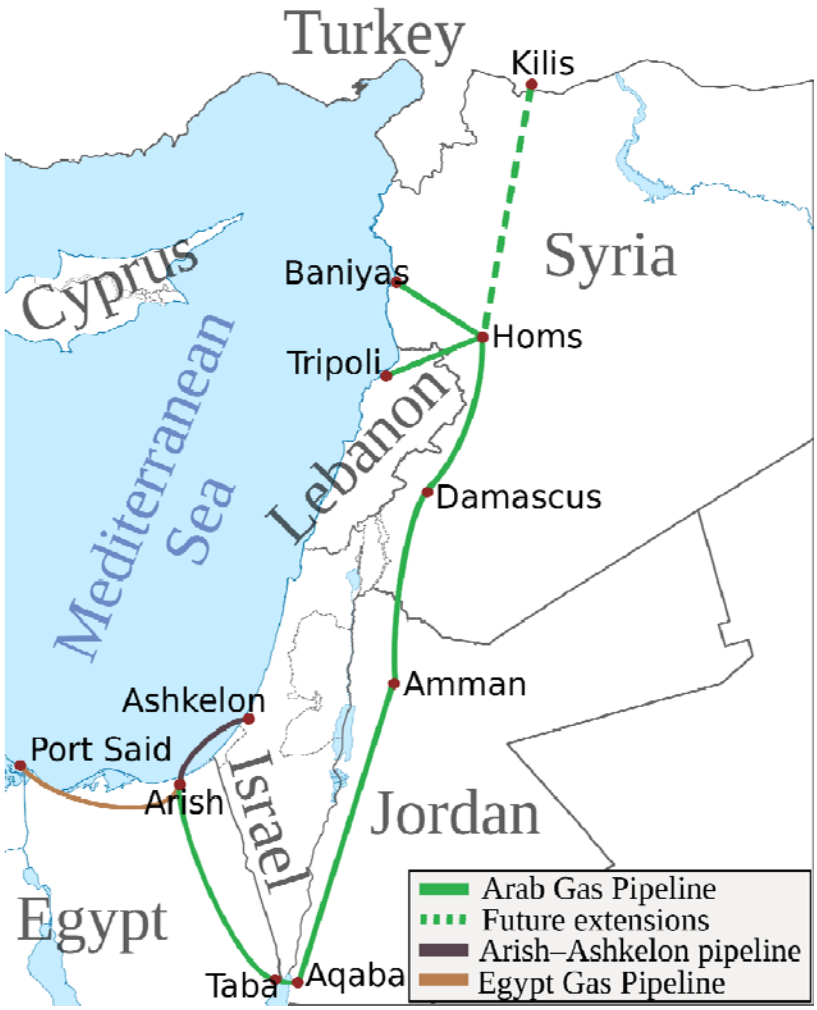

Figure 3: Bacci, A. (1 May 2015). The Arab Gas Pipeline. In Alessandro Bacci's Middle East. Retrieved from http://www.alessandrobacci.com/2015_05_16_archive.html

[65]Reuters. (29 October 2015). Zohr discovery to make Egypt's status as LNG importer short-lived. Reuters. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/article/egypt-lng-zohr/zohr-discovery-to-make-egypts-status-as-lng-importer-short-lived-idUSL8N12S3A220151029

2. The LNG option

The creation of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) could be attractive to the Lebanese government as well as to the investors from both commercial and political perspectives. Firstly, from a commercial perspective, LNG allows exports to reach further markets such as Europe and East Asia and it permits the supply of natural gas via long-term contracts and on spot market basis, thus securing a flexible production process. Secondly, this option is tempting from a political perspective since it promotes Lebanon as a global gas supplier, which could add to its geostrategic importance.[66] However, the most sustainable scenario for exporting LNG is via shared facilities with other countries in the region. However, with the Israeli-Cypriot deal on the verge of realization (to be discussed in the next chapter), it seems increasingly unlikely that Lebanon will be able to secure its own deal with Cyprus that would not clash with any ongoing oil and gas coordination between Cyprus and Israel. Moreover, given the volatile situation in Syria, coordination in the realm of LNG between Beirut and Damascus in the near-term is highly unlikely. Nevertheless, when the time is right for Syria to start investing in its potential offshore reserves, a joint LNG plant could be an economically lucrative option for Lebanon and Syria, provided that the political tension is resolved between the two countries, or at least trumped by their mutual economic interests.

Another option for Lebanon, if commercially viable hydrocarbon discoveries are confirmed, could be building its own LNG infrastructure offshore. As a model of this could work, one can look at the case of Cyprus. The country's initial high-cost development for the upstream capacity and the LNG liquefaction facility is covered by

[66] Fattouh, B. and El-Katiri, L. (2015). Lebanon's Gas Trading Options. Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.

U.S. IOC Noble, which will later be compensated through future oil and gas profits. The Cyprus Hydrocarbons Company (CHC), which is the national oil and gas company Given the similarities between Cyprus and Lebanon in terms of limited public budgetary resources, the Cypriot financing model for its LNG infrastructure will undoubtedly be studied closely as an example for possible replication.[67]

3. Turkey and Europe

A third Lebanese option for monetizing its oil and gas exports would involve exporting its resources to Turkey, from which it could be delivered to the lucrative European market. However, any Lebanon's pipeline connection to Turkey, either by land or by sea, would have to pass through Syrian territory. Nevertheless, the Syrian crisis has reduced Syrian-Turkish relations to their absolute worst state in recent history and has severely polarized opinion in Lebanon regarding its relationship with Damascus. Consequently, a Lebanese-Turkish infrastructural connection is unrealizable in the near future due to the anticipated Syrian hindrance and insecurity in the country.[68] In case of the restoration of relations between Syria and each of Lebanon and Turkey, all three countries could benefit from the Lebanese and Syrian potential hydrocarbon resources and from Turkey's strategic position as a gateway to Europe. The fact that the onshore infrastructure is already available via the AGP would also minimize the initial investment cost for Lebanese natural gas to reach Turkey and eventually Europe. The Turkish option is geopolitically attractive for Lebanon because it offers the potential of

[67]Fattouh, B. and El-Katiri, L. (2015). Lebanon's Gas Trading Options. Lebanese Center for Policy Studies. p. 18

[68]Nehme, Michel. (April 2013). Oil and Gas: additional predicament to Syrian Crisis. Lebanese Army Magazine Issue Number 84. Retrieved from https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/oil-and-gas-additional-predicament-syrian-crisis

valuable regional allies, in addition to opening the country to the large European market without the need to work with an Israeli-aligned Cyprus.

However, several factors could dampen the EU's enthusiasm for Lebanese gas. The European gas market might in the near future be saturated by other gas producers, such as Israel, Cyprus, Egypt, the United States; as well as Russia, the traditional main supplier of natural gas to Europe. In addition, Turkey could also strike a deal to allow Iranian natural gas to flow to Europe. Time is not on Lebanon's side, given its early stages of the development and the head start that competitors have in efforts to export natural gas to Europe. This particularly relevant with the prospective Israeli-Cypriot-Greek-Italian pipeline, which will be covered later in detail in the next chapter.

E. Conclusion

Potential hydrocarbon discoveries in Lebanon's EEZ are of paramount importance to the Lebanese political economy. There is unanimity among all the Lebanese politicians across the political and sectarian divide on this matter. This chapter has suggested that the securitization trends concerning the potential offshore reserves in Lebanon are significant for the state, mainly due to the view of oil and gas as a potential economic lifeline for the country, and for non-state players such as Hizbullah, which can use threats against the offshore reserves as another justification for its existence and non-state arms. In fact, in its rhetoric to the Lebanese people, Hizbullah argues that the state is too weak to defend against Israeli aggression and that it is the only actor capable of employing extreme measures in order to safeguard these potential reserves. The next chapter will be investigating Israeli offshore hydrocarbon discoveries and reserves in order to explore how the securitization trends work there.

CHAPTER III

ISRAEL AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN HYDROCARBONS

Israel is one of the key players in the Eastern Mediterranean energy game. Its proven gas reserves have placed it prominently on the international map of countries with a great future prospect for becoming an important international energy player. In this Chapter I will first consider the political economy of Israel that is relevant for this thesis. I will then examine the Israeli efforts in exploiting the hydrocarbon reserves and present significant milestones, such as its agreements with regional players, secured pipeline routes and export markets. Finally in this chapter I will also discuss the effect of energy exploitation on Israel.

Israel's offshore energy reserves have become the referent object within the securtization theory framework. By understanding why these resources are accorded such high importance in Israel, and how the Israeli government plans to utilize these resources for its geopolitical, economic and security benefits, we are able to gain a clearer understanding of why Israel is likely to employ extraordinary measures to protect their hydrocarbon resources, particularly in the face of potential security threats.

A. Political Economy of Energy in Israel

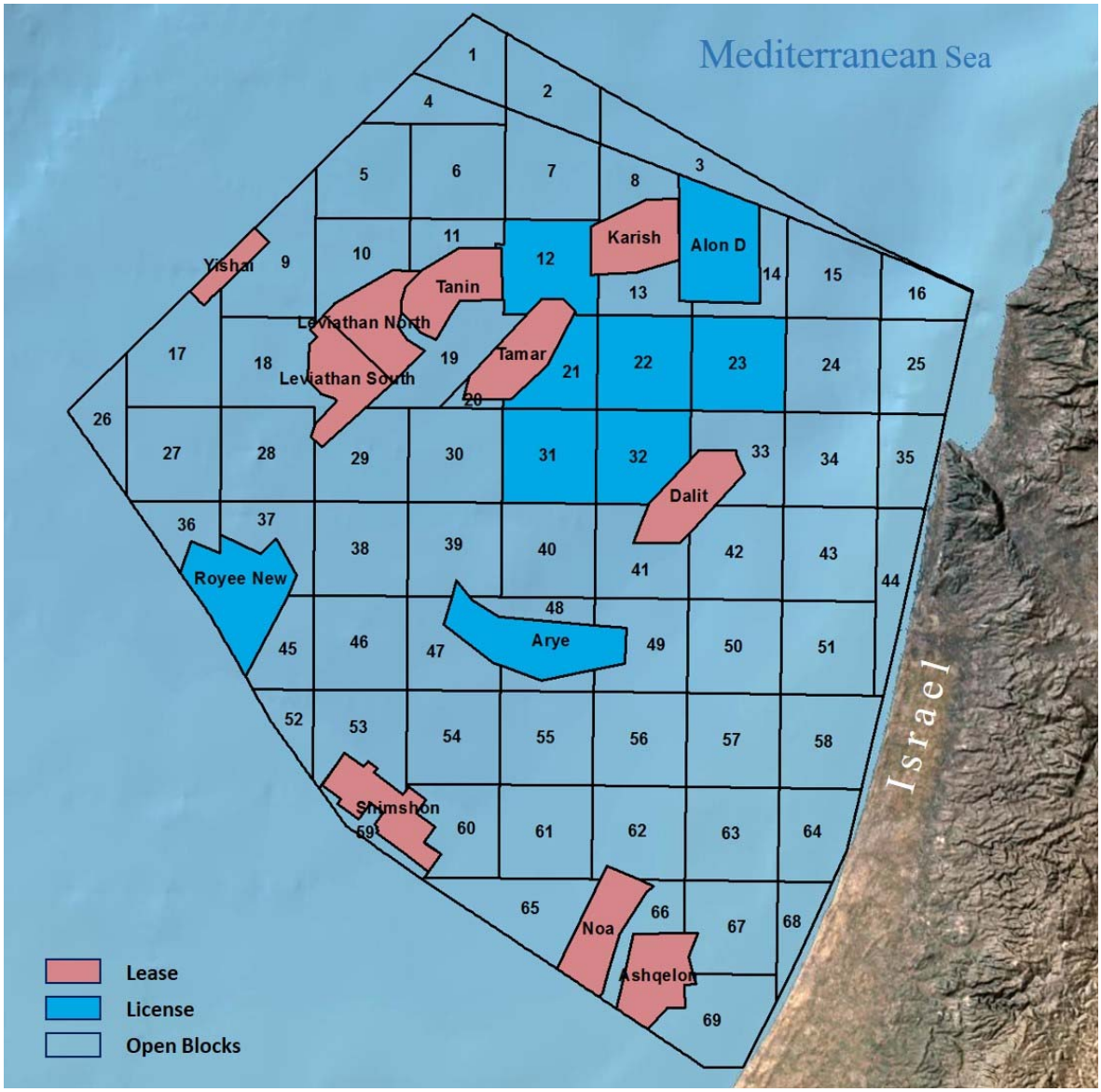

Figure 4: Israeli Ministry of Energy. Block delineation of Israel's offshore. Retrieved from http://www.energy-sea.gov.il/English-Site/Pages/Data%20and%20Maps/Petroleum-Rights.aspx

The uncertain security situation in Israel has led to a slower domestic and international demand for Israeli products and decreased foreign investment, which in turn has translated into a reduction in the overall GDP growth to an average of about 2.8% per year between 2014 and 2017. However, the new discoveries of natural gas fields off Israel's coast since 2009 have revitalized Israel's economic outlook. Although

domestic politics and regulations have postponed the development of the massive Leviathan field, the Tamar field production boosted the Israeli GDP by 0.8% in 2013 and 0.3% in 2014.[69] Israel's Natural Gas Authority and the Israeli Electric Corporation estimate that as soon as the gas energy production becomes operational, annual domestic natural gas consumption would be about 11 billion cubic meters (around 0.39 tcf) by 2020, which would cover around 70% of Israel's electricity production.[70]

However, the development of Israel's oil and gas sector has faced real bureaucratic hurdles within the country. To start with, a major dispute ensued between the energy exploration companies (the American Noble Energy and the Israeli Delek) from one side and the government from the other side over taxes to be imposed by the state on gas sales. The 1952 Israeli Petroleum Law charges a relatively low tax of 12.5%. However, with the increase of the global natural gas demand and the scale of discoveries in April 2010, then Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz appointed the economist Eytan Sheshinski to work on reforming the legislation. Nevertheless, in January 2011, Sheshinski recommended that the government's royalties remain the same. The Petroleum Profit Tax Law (Sheshinski Law) advocated what is called "super profit tax" on revenues that surpass the investment cost of the developer, which would result in raising the government's profit to a number between 52% and 62%. Consequently, the two oil companies filed a petition to the Israeli High Court of Justice regarding the excessive suggested taxes. However, Justice Minister Miriam Naor dismissed the petition. In addition to that, she dismissed another claim that the tax

[69] Index Mundi. (20 January 2018). Israel Economy - overview. Retrieved from https://www.indexmundi.com/israel/economy_overview.html

[70] Shaffer, B. (2011). Israel – New natural gas producer in the Mediterranean. *Energy Policy*,*39*(9), p. 5383. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227415790_Israel--New_natural_gas_producer_in_the_Mediterranean

regime breached a Basic Law on Humanity, Freedom and Dignity, which is the law that preserves the right to private property.[71]

Given the overabundance of projections and the dreams of the potential economic benefits of the new gas discoveries, in October 2011 Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appointed an inter-governmental committee "Tzemach" to draft new policies to satisfy energy security demands and ensure a competitive domestic market. In September 2012, the committee announced that Israel's entire production is projected to be 950 (bcm) while domestic consumption over the next 25 years would be around 450 (bcm), leaving around 500 (bcm) for exports. The committee further advised that the gas should be pumped from Israel's EEZ into its already existing national network, thus discarding the possibility of directly forwarding it to the terminals in Cyprus, a possibility that will be discussed later in the chapter.[72]

Furthermore, a minimum of 20 wells must be drilled in the upcoming two years, with an initial cost of $100 million each, requiring a $2 billion venture risk. Therefore, the initial investment's cost is high, which necessitates that Israel clearly delineate how the cost is going to be balanced between the private and the public sectors.[73]

The discoveries of oil and gas hold prospective profits in the long run, yet faces major detriments in the short- to medium-term. In Israel, a sovereign wealth fund has been established to handle oil and gas profits, yet the fund delayed several infrastructure

[71] The Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce. (March 2013). Overview of the Oil and Gas Industry in Israel. Retrieved from https://www.chamber.org.il/media/153576/overview.pdf

[72]Dagoumas, A. and Flouros, F. (2017). Energy policy formulation in Israel following its recent gas discoveries. Inernational Journal of Energy Economics and Policy 7(1), p. 24. Retrieved from http://www.econjournals.com/index.php/ijeep/article/view/3357

[73] Henderson, S. (7 September 2012). *Israel's Natural Gas Challenges* (Policy Analysis). The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Retrieved from http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/israels-natural-gas-challenges

projects of developmental nature. The gas export revenues are also intended to support the Israeli economy during a global financial crisis. To elaborate, in a worldwide recession, states would seek to protect living standards from deteriorating.

Nevertheless, an impact could be felt in Israel since the already-strong dollar-pegged shekel might not be immune from depreciating in value, resulting in complications concerning Israeli exports, especially those in the technology sector, affecting their competitiveness on the global market. However, experts claim that if the sovereign wealth fund derived from the tax revenues on gas was heavily invested overseas, then the adverse economic effects might well be alleviated and the currency will be protected.

Israel is not solely concerned about the monetary value of its hydrocarbon reserves and the chances of exporting them and generating profit. Israeli policymakers have advocated a strategy of retaining half of the extracted hydrocarbon resources in order to satisfy the domestic Israeli market. This strategy would put an end to Israel's dependence on imported hydrocarbon energy from neighboring countries, where the surrounding geopolitical situation has proved to be consistently volatile ever since the inception of the Israeli state on top of the Palestinian land. Therefore, Israel's main agenda is to achieve complete energy independence, which would untie any noose that could be placed on Israel's neck by hostile Arab neighboring states and non-state actors should any war erupt in the region.[74]

Israel is finding it increasingly easier to secure its economic interests in the region, including those in the field of energy, by signing multi-billion dollar deals with neighboring Arab countries such as Egypt and Jordan. Furthermore, we observe that

[74] Dagoumas, A. and Flouros, F. (2017). Energy policy formulation in Israel following its recent gas discoveries.

Saudi Arabia is poised to become a major Israeli economic and strategic partner in the region, and that will only solidify Israel's position among the energy-secure countries in the region, coupled with the abilities to diversify its gas export markets and to attract huge foreign investments. And indeed, if this concession-free Israeli-Arab alliance will see the light of day, then Israel would realize these economic and political gains without a having to give ground on the Palestinian question, formerly a major demand of all Arab states before any normalization of relations with Israel could occur.

B. The Effect of Energy Exploitation on Israel

Besides the myriad benefits mentioned above for Lebanon, which Israel would likewise benefit from, Israel would initially benefit from not being an "energy island" anymore. A country that qualifies as an "energy island" is one that heavily depends on an external energy supply to meet its internal energy demand. "Energy island" states can thus be very vulnerable to political pressures by either their supplier state(s) or by states that control the energy import routes of this "energy island". Ultimately, these states might, on numerous occasions, succumb to these political pressures and make concessions that are not in their favor, all in order to preserve their fragile energy security.[75]

Israel would also succeed in avoiding incidents such as the disruptions of energy supply that have been intermittently taking place since the 2011 Egyptian Uprising as a result of the attacks on the gas pipeline connecting Egypt and Israel by

[75]Aboltinis, R. (January 2011).Energy islands in the EU- a challenge to common EU energy policy. Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS. Retrieved from http://providus.lv/upload_file/Publikacijas/2011/Energy%20islands%20in%20the%20EU%20%E2%80%93%20a%20challenge%20to%20a%20common%20EU%20energy%20policy.pdf

militant groups operating in the Sinai Peninsula. These incidents have constituted a strong incentive for Israel to rethink its dependability on imported gas from Egypt.[76]

Therefore, the exploitation of the natural resources in the offshore Israeli fields are essential for economic and geopolitical reasons as it might ameliorate the political and economic relations between Israel and other regional countries in addition to its pivotal role in safeguarding Israel's energy security.

The natural gas discoveries are projected to support the country's energy demands and are expected to provide Israel with 73% of its energy supply for five decades starting in year 2020.Furthermore, the hydrocarbon wealth will provide substantial benefits to the Israeli economy by lowering the cost of power generation and eventually reducing energy imports to zero in the medium to long run.

In addition, the government has begun several projects to benefit from the resources in all aspects. First, it launched a state program in January 2011 to promote the development of new technologies for the utilization of natural gas in the transportation sector. Second, major funds have been allocated to foster scientific developments in this field. Finally, by providing instituting security measures for the newly discovered natural gas fields and related infrastructure, Israel may advance technology in the domain of energy infrastructure security, which could open a new technological niche for Israeli companies. Many Israeli experts believe that these discoveries are the seeds for the birth of new Israeli energy policies that will not only improve the country's energy security but also place Israel on the map as an energy

[76] Zemach, S. (April 2016). *Toward an Eastern Mediterranean Integrated Gas Infrastructure?* The Germany Marshall Fund of the United States. Foreign and Security Policy Paper No. 20. Retrieved from http://www.gmfus.org/publications/toward-eastern-mediterranean-integrated-gas-infrastructure

exporter. Hence, the Israeli policies would tend to focus on the techno-economic feasibility of its resources while trying to avoid any possible tensions in the region.[77]

C. Israeli Efforts and Positions in Exploiting the Hydrocarbon Reserves

Israel has modest proven oil reserves of 11.5 million barrels, but the number could be higher as more discoveries ensue. In terms of natural gas, Israel has confirmed natural gas reserves of 6.4 trillion cubic feet (and estimated reserves of over 35 trillion cubic feet).[78]Additionally, Israel has allied with the United States by partnering with major U.S. IOCs in exploration and exploitation and has also drawn significant investments in energy from the United States. Moreover, the "United States-Israel Maritime Security Partnership Act of 2016" is considered to be a strategic gain for Israel and its lobby in the United States, since it can now rely on the United States to defend its offshore infrastructure in the event of conflict.

Israel has also been keen to ally itself with other Mediterranean counties, particularly Cyprus and Greece. Israel has tremendously worked on forging a tripartite alliance with these two countries in an effort to secure its foothold in the European market via a pipeline connecting Israel to Europe and passing through Cyprus and Greece. Israel has also been partnering with Cyprus in an effort to build joint infrastructure in order to reduce hydrocarbon extraction costs.[79]

However, the prevailing perspective in Israel is fear or at least caution from operating in or near the disputed maritime area. Israel has long refrained from exploiting

[77]Dagoumas, A. and Flouros, F. (2017). Energy policy formulation in Israel following its recent gas discoveries.

[78]Ratner, M. (August 2016). Natural gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean. U.S. Congressional Research Service. Retrieved from https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R44591.pdf

[79] Henderson, S. (7 September 2012). *Israel's Natural Gas Challenges* (Policy Analysis).

and extracting gas from either the disputed maritime area with Lebanon or from the gas fields that lie just south from disputed area and might overlap with over fears that operating in or around the area could trigger Lebanese insecurities concerning the disputed area and even instigate a retaliatory reaction from the Lebanese sides.[80]

Due to diplomatic and security issues that could arise over the maritime dispute with Lebanon over economic waters, the Israeli Minister of Energy Steinitz has denied the companies that hold energy exploration and exploitation licenses any right to drill for hydrocarbons either inside or close to the disputed maritime area. On the other hand, speaking to Tel Aviv radio station 102 FM, Steinitz said: "We made two things clear, in a very forthright manner, over the last year. One, don't provoke us, and don't explore in or even get close to the disputed line-of-contact."[81]

As mentioned in the beginning of this research, Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman has also adopted confrontational rhetoric in his response to Lebanon's licensing of Block 9,which contains about 16% of the disputed maritime area.[8283] Lieberman even went as far as claiming that the totality of Block 9 is by all accounts owned by Israel. This was met with staunch Lebanese condemnation of this claim and a strong response from various Lebanese political and military leaders in addition to Hizbullah.[84]

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[80]Dbouk, Y. (2017, October 11). هل تقترب إسرائيل «خطوة خطوة» من الغاز اللبناني. *Al Akhbar*. Retrieved from https://www.al-akhbar.com/Politics/238955

[81] Butt, G. (8 March 2018). Troubled Waters Ahead in Israel-Lebanon Border Dispute. Petroleum Economist. Retrieved from http://www.petroleum-economist.com/articles/politics-economics/middle-east/2018/troubled-waters-ahead-in-israel-lebanon-border-dispute

[82]Barrington, L. (9 February 2018). Lebanon to begin offshore energy search in block disputed by Israel

[83] Lebanese Petroleum Administration. (2017). Available geophysical data for licensing. Retrieved from http://www.lpa.gov.lb/pdf/Available%20Geophysical%20Data%20by%20Block.pdf

[84] Times of Israel Staff, & Associated Press. (16 February 2018). Lebanon Rejects US Proposal to Solve Maritime Border Row with Israel. Times of Israel. Retrieved from https://www.timesofisrael.com/lebanon-rejects-us-proposal-to-solve-maritime-border-row-with-israel/

1. Israeli Bilateral and Quadrilateral Agreements

a. The Israeli-Jordanian Agreements

In addition to the 2014 deal that will see Israel supply Jordan by $500 million worth of gas from the Tamar field, on 26 September 2016, an Israeli gas consortium of the US-based Noble Energy and Israel's Delek Group signed a $10 billion deal with the Jordan Electric Power Company to supply Jordan with approximately 45 billion cubic meters of gas from the Leviathan field for 15 years.[85]

b. The Israeli-Cypriot-Greek-Italian Memorandum of Understanding

On 5 December 2017, energy ministers from Israel, Cyprus, Greece, and Italy met in Nicosia and signed a memorandum of understanding concerning a $7.14B underwater pipeline deal that would link Israel to Italy in order to deliver Eastern Mediterranean gas directly to Europe. The pipeline would span a distance of 2100 km, becoming the main export artery of Israel. Specifically, it would begin at Israel's huge Leviathan gas field and would also run via Cyprus's Aphrodite gas field. The pipeline would surface onshore in Greece and Italy where it would start feeding the European gas market and its insatiable appetite for this energy source. Consequently, if this pipeline were realized, Israel would strongly place itself on the international energy map by becoming an important player in the European energy market. The proposed pipeline would also counterbalance the immense Russian leverage on Europe by virtue of its huge natural gas exportation figures to the continent. The EU has dubbed this plan as a Project of Common Interest (PCI). And as expected, all sides would benefit from this pipeline project, as Israel would find its way to the European market while Europe

[85] Times of Israel Staff. (26 September 2016). Israel consortium signs 'historic' 15-year, $10b gas deal with Jordan. Times of Israel. Retrieved from https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-consortium-signs-15-year-10b-gas-deal-with-jordan/

would strengthen its energy security by diversifying its sources of natural gas supply. The final agreement is expected to be formally signed in 2018while the pipeline is projected to be completed by 2025. The forecasted capacity that the proposed pipeline would be able to convey lies in the range of 12-16 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas per annum. It is worth noting that the EU has estimated that the future EU energy demand would require the importation of 100 bcm of natural gas annually. Nevertheless, if further large fields are discovered in the Cypriot and/or Israeli EEZs, plans for a double pipeline construction, conveying an enormous 30 bcm of natural gas per year, are also under consideration.[86]

This MoU is the first step towards further technical and legal cooperation that should lead to an intergovernmental agreement within 2018. The owners of the East Med pipeline project would be Greece's natural gas firm DEPA and Italian energy group Edison.[87]

c. The Israeli-Egyptian Agreement

On February 19, 2018, Israel signed a $15 billion agreement with Egypt. This deal entitles Noble Energy and Delek Drilling-LP to supply around 64 bcm of gas from both the Tamar and the Leviathan gas fields to Egypt Dolphinus Holdings Ltd. over a period of 10 years. The deal might also lead to further agreements such as the selling of Israeli gas to Royal Dutch Shell Plc, which is currently operating the LNG plant in northern Egypt.

[86]Gorodeisky, S. (5 December 2017). Israel-Europe Gas Pipeline MoU Signed. Globes. Retrieved from http://www.globes.co.il/en/article-israel-europe-gas-pipeline-mou-signed-1001214430

[87] Cyprus Mail. (5 December 2017). Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Israel back natgas pipeline to Europe (updated). Retrieved from http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/12/05/cyprus-greece-italy-israel-back-natgas-pipeline-europe/

The deal still requires several regulatory steps in both Egypt and Israel, and it terms of implementation, the pipeline that will transmit the gas from Israel to Egypt still entails several security risks, most notably of sabotage by militants operating in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.[88]Another possible way to transport the gas is to utilize the existing pipeline that connects the Israeli transmission system with the Jordanian one. Notably, because of the highly securitized trends towards Israel in Arab public opinion, Egyptian Petroleum Minister Tareq El Molla refrained from bluntly mentioning Israel as the source of the gas while announcing the deal. On the other hand, the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu characterized the announcement of the deal as "a joyous day."[89]

It is worth mentioning that this deal is the second of its kind for Israel with an Arab country in the region after the agreement with Jordan in 2016.

By securing the first buyers and the initial investment, Israel had succeeded in attaining the feasibility of the first phase of the Leviathan field. This phase is characterized by serving the Israeli domestic market in addition to two regional markets, Jordan and Egypt. Taking the infrastructure and pipeline issues into consideration, it was also essential for Israel to target joint export initiatives with other countries to achieve export beyond local markets at this stage, as it has done with Cyprus, Greece, and Italy. Meanwhile, Israel will continue perusing further agreements and working toward commercial viability of the next phases of the Leviathan and the other fields.

[88] Jerusalem Post and Reuters. (30 July 2011). Explosion hits natural gas pipeline in Sinai Peninsula. Retrieved from https://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Explosion-hits-natural-gas-pipeline-in-Sinai-Peninsula

[89]Wainer, D., &Benmeleh, Y. (19 February 2018). Israel-Egypt $15 Billion Gas Deal Boosts Energy Hub Prospects. Bloomberg. Retrieved from https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-02-19/noble-delek-sign-15-billion-deal-to-export-israel-gas-to-egypt

D. Israel's Potential Pipeline Routes and Export Markets

Through its search for export routes, Israel is attempting to use its newfound hydrocarbon wealth as a tool to increase its geopolitical strategic importance and improve relations with both Europe and regional states. In this context, Israeli oil and gas has become a referent object and thus securitized as a result of the significant geopolitical, and to a lesser extent, economic benefits it accords them. Indeed, this logic can be seen in the thinking of former Israeli minister for national infrastructure Uzi Landau, who perceived the importance of selling gas to Jordan and the Palestinian territories to be essential for the coexistence of Israel with its neighbors and open other doors to the wider region.[90] Meanwhile, if Israel is eventually able to export to Europe and create a reliance on Israeli hydrocarbons, this will increase the strategic leverage Israel has against European pressure to solve the Palestinian issue.

For the Israeli natural gas to reach Europe Israel must guarantee two matters; the first would be securing buyers at least for the short- to medium-term as well as identifying and opening viable export routes. With the first buyer position filled by Jordan in September 2016 with the 15-year agreement, the Final Investment Decision (FID) to develop the first phase of the Leviathan Field was announced on February 2017 permitting the extraction of 12 bcf per year starting end of 2019.[91]

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[90] Craig, A., & Jones, C. (2013). Discovery of Israel's Gas Fields and their Geopolitical Implications. *The Emirates Occasional Papers*, (81), p. 4. Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/docview/1528096686/fulltextPDF/2F7727B1F1534AB6PQ/1?accountid=8555

[91] Baconi, T. (21 April 2017). Pipelines and Pipedreams: How the EU can support a regional gas hub in the Eastern Mediterranean. p. 6.The European Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/pipelines_and_pipedreams_how_the_eu_can_support_a_regional_gas_hub_in_7276

As mentioned earlier the Israeli gas market can utilize almost half of the projected resources and the other half would be distributed between regional and other markets, where Israel had several options to consider.

1. East Med Pipeline Option

Since May 2015, the Innovation and Networks Executive Agency (INEA) at the European commission has been carrying out an action for Project of Common Interest (PCI) 7.3.1 known, as the "pipeline from offshore Cyprus to Greece mainland via Crete". This action is related to the Pre-FEED (Front-End-Engineering Design) phase of the PCI Eastern Mediterranean Gas Pipeline (East Med), which covers the technical feasibility studies, inspection marine surveys as well as the economic, financial and competitiveness studies. The objective of this study is to offer all the information required by the producers and gas market operators to reach a desirable export option for part of the gas resources of the Levant Basin. The action is expected to be completed by March 2018 and its aim is to provide the project with a complete technical and economic assessment.[92]

Even though the feasibility study needs at least a month from the time of writing to be completed, investors are optimistic by its projections. They predict that the demand for gas within Europe is adequate to make the pipeline commercially viable. The reason for their optimism lies behind the fact that the amount of the resources in the region combined is estimated to be around 50 bcm per year. Therefore, it could meet the European projected demand of 100 bcm per year.[93]A long-term gas sale agreement with

[92] The European Commission. (January 2016). Eastern Mediterranean Natural Gas Pipeline – Pre - FEED Studies. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/inea/files/7.3.1-0025-elcy-s-m-15_action_fiche_final_2.pdf

[93]Gorodeisky, S. (5 December 2017). Israel-Europe Gas Pipeline MoU Signed. Globes.

the EU could also boost the initial capital investment required for the pipeline to be operational.

Figure 5: Baconi, T. (21 April 2016). Proposed EastMedpipeline route. European Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR211_-_PIPELINES_AND_PIPEDREAMS.pdf

From a commercial perspective, experts are confident that with the East Med pipeline the gas resources from the Levant Basin would be competitive with American LNG in the European markets, although other experts disagree, arguing that the projected budget for the East Med pipeline project is underestimated. On the other hand, from a technical perspective, the route should be feasible despite some technical challenges around Crete and Greece. Nevertheless, others content that these challenges might well raise the cost or even hinder the project's viability. Lastly, from a

geopolitical perspective the route faces an unsolved sovereignty dispute between Turkey and Cyprus.[94]

In summation, the viability of this pipeline is not clear yet, and even from an optimistic view, with its construction and potential use impossible over the near-term.

2. The Egypt Option

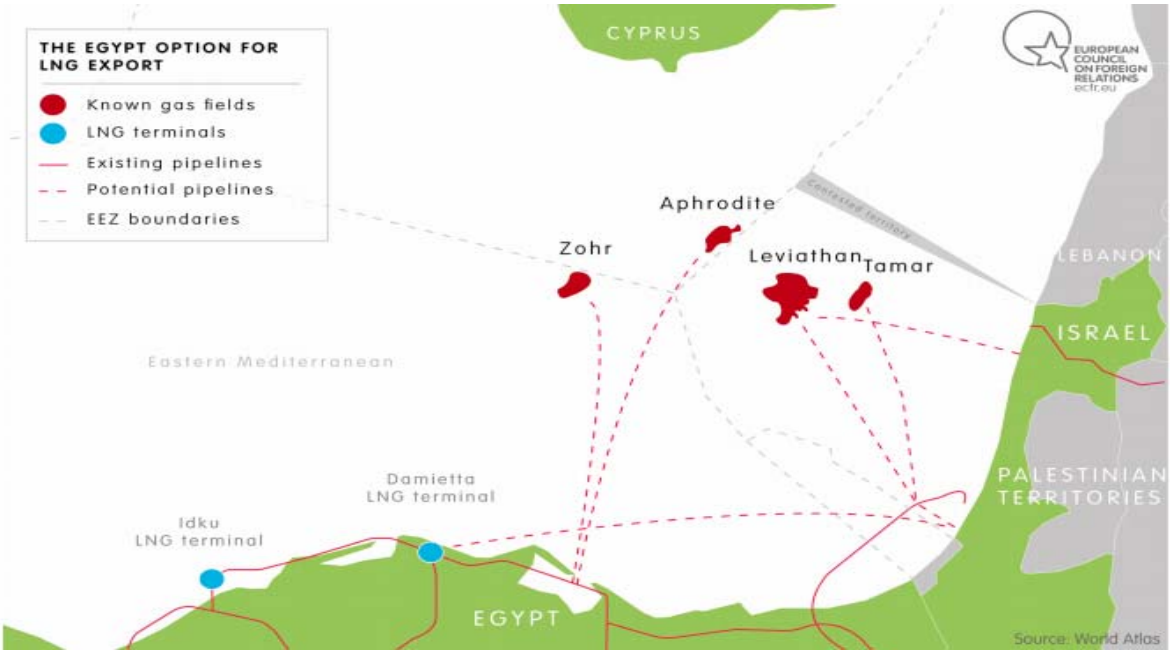

Figure 6: Baconi, T. (21 April 2016). Proposed pipeline and LNG terminals for Egypt Option. European Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR211_-_PIPELINES_AND_PIPEDREAMS.pdf

The so called "Egypt Option" calls for both Cyprus and Israel to transport gas to Egypt where it would be re-exported using one of the two already established and underutilized LNG facilities on the northern Egyptian coastline. This helps explain the Israeli agreements with both Cyprus and Egypt, which could be a prelude to sharing LNG infrastructure in the Eastern Mediterranean. This option would also entail less

[94]SigmaLive. (24 January 2017). Study finds EastMed pipeline viable and technically feasible. Retrieved from http://www.sigmalive.com/en/news/energy/152036/study-finds-eastmed-pipeline-viable-and-technically-feasible

costs and technical difficulties than the East Med pipeline proposal, making it more commercially viable.[95]

Conclusion

After analyzing Israeli energy discoveries, a conclusion can be draw that the natural resources exploitation in the offshore Israeli fields is of paramount importance for the country where it holds significant economic, security and geopolitical benefits. In addition, we observe that Israel has made significant progress in its hydrocarbon exploitation and exportation endeavor by forginga strong alliance with Cyprus, Israel's gateway to Europe, and by securing important prospective pipeline routes such as the Israel-Cyprus-Greece-Italy East Med Pipeline. Furthermore, Israel seems to creating promising, mutually beneficial cooperation agreements with Arab countries such as Egypt and Jordan related to energy economics.

[95]Baconi, T. (21 April 2017). Pipelines and Pipedreams: How the EU can support a regional gas hub in the Eastern Mediterranean

CHAPTER IV

LEBANON AND ISRAEL: A DEEPLY SECURITIZED RELATIONSHIP

The chapter will cover the securitization theory in depth and will discuss the securitization components: actors, existential threats, referent objects and audiences. Moreover, it will present the securitization trends between Lebanon and Israel amid the new energy discoveries, and how developments in the political economy of energy in Lebanon and Israel have contributed to these trends. Furthermore, the chapter will discuss the profound effect that energy can have through the multiplier effect of energy and the spillover effect. Finally, this chapter will discuss the brinkmanship strategy and will address the question of how and why could energy instigate war. Through this, I will argue that the highly securitized relationship between Lebanon and Israel will likely experience even sharper securitization trends as a result of the Eastern Mediterranean energy discoveries.

A. Securitization Components: Actors, Existential Threats, Referent Objects and Audiences

1. The Securitization of the Israeli State

The securitization of a societal security issue can be clearly exemplified by observing the Israeli society, a society which is heavily indoctrinated into embracing a strong "we-ness" self-image and rhetoric against Palestinians and Arab neighbors. This mentality has been led to various securitization trends based on the state's identity, most notably its refusal to discuss any "Palestinian right of return", which they argue would

endanger the Jewish nature of the Israeli state.[96]This "us-versus-them" rhetoric has indeed been exceptionally potent in Israel and has been persuasively used by the state and by the military in mobilizing the society against various threats and in legitimizing the use of extraordinary measures. For example, the Israeli state pivots on the army, which is considered to be a crucial component of the state's survival. Conscription in the army is mandatory for most Israeli citizens who are Jewish, Druze, or Circassian.[97] This mandatory conscription stems from the fact that the army is considered to be almost sacred to Israelis by virtue of the powerful, long-term securitization of the survival of the state and the rhetoric that constantly enforces a sense of fear from the surrounding Arab environment in addition to advancing the idea of an Israeli ghetto that is perpetually attacked and needs to be protected.[98] In conclusion, Israel is a country where securitization can readily take place in response to any threat, simply because the state institutions and society have always been indoctrinated into retaining a readiness to mobilize and defend the country against outside threats.

Prompted by functional actors, the Israeli society has been interpreting the rise of Hizbullah's power as a serious threat to the Israeli state ever since the 2006 war. And thus, this perception of threat propagates to the sector of energy and in particular circulates around the protection of the referent object, which in this case is the energy security of Israel.

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[96]Abulof, U. (2014). Deep Securitization and Israel's "Demographic Demon". International Political Sociology. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269726373_Deep_Securitization_and_Israel%27s_Demographic_Demon

[97]Røislien, H. E. (2010). *A good Jew is in the IDF! A study of the role of religion in a military universe of meaning* (Unpublished master's thesis). Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Retrieved from https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/242880/440272_FULLTEXT01.pdf?sequence=1

[98] Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & Wilde, J. D. (1998). *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. (pp. 36-37) Boulder, CO: Rienner.

Israel's security strategy includes an arsenal of nuclear weapons that it used as a strategic deterrent. Nevertheless, Israel has continually attempted to securitize the Iranian nuclear program and has strived to present it to the international community as an existential threat not only to Israel but to all democratic and Western states. For example, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has claimed that "the year is 1938 and Iran is Germany" and compared Iran's president to Hitler and framed him as a "problem for the entire world." [99]It is argued that the Iranian threat is deeply securitized in Israel beyond a regular state-to-state threat. In other words, the threat perception is not just about military capabilities but about a threat to the Jewish nation as such. Among elites and citizenry, there is a fixation centered on Iran and its axis in the region, which includes Hizbullah, and debates range from trying to contain the Iranian threat to striking preemptively against its nuclear facilities. Consequently, Israel has engaged in a relentless worldwide securitization move in an attempt to internationally securitize the Iranian issue.[100]

Israel is often described as a continuously threatened small state despite its notable military capabilities. This is due to the fact that it's a country that is beleaguered by many hostile or enemy states that are bigger in area size and population count. This constant fear of being existentially threatened by a larger and potentially more powerful conglomerate of states has drastically shaped the Israeli security agendas ever since the inception of the state. And indeed, the securitization rhetoric employed by the Israeli security apparatuses and institutions concerning these threats has always been widely disseminated in order to influence the public citizenry and has been constantly sustained

[99] Sheffer, G., & Barak, O. (2013). *Israel's security networks: A Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*. p. 144. New York, United States: Cambridge University Press.

[100] Sheffer, G., & Barak, O. (2013). *Israel's security networks: A Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*. p. 81.

in order to justify oversized defense and security expenditures.[101] As Sheffer and Barak argue, Israel has adopted an offensive-defensive military strategy that serves to tackle threats by employing a pre-emptive strategy of moving the battle to the enemy's grounds before Israel itself is targeted. The authors point out that Israel has been implementing this strategy since the 1950s to defend the country against all threats whether real or imagined.[102] This points to a marked readiness in Israel to embrace most securitization attempts regardless of whether the threat is imagined or real, since the country has always been poised to securitize its threats and frame them as being existential threats in an almost impulsive manner.

2. Lebanon and Israel: Historical Enmity and Securitization Trends

With a history of extensive hostilities, Israel and Lebanon are constantly poised to employ securitization against one another. As Buzan, Waever and Wilde argued, threats are more easily securitized given a heavily armed neighbor with a history of aggression existing between two states.[103] Moreover, the historical enmity between the two countries and the recurrent wars that have taken place tend to magnify the present perceptions of threat on both sides.[104]

Israel and Lebanon share a border that is said to be one of the most guarded borders on the planet due to the constant fear of war or infiltration. On the Lebanese side, in South Lebanon to be precise, Hizbullah enjoys a strong military presence that

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[101] Sheffer, G., & Barak, O. (2013). *Israel's security networks: A Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*. p.146.

[102] Sheffer, G., & Barak, O. (2013). *Israel's security networks: A Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*. p. 145.

[103] Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & Wilde, J. D. (1998). *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. p. 57.

[104] Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & Wilde, J. D. (1998). *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. p. 59.

exceeds that of the Lebanese state, and one that worries Israel to a great extent. And indeed, Israel ought to be worried since Hizbullah has repeatedly used this proximity to Israel as the main facilitator of operations against Israeli forces, either to retaliate against Israeli targeting of its men or to capture Israeli soldiers for the purpose of exchanging them for Lebanese, Palestinian, or Arab captives in Israel. Therefore this geographic proximity has played, and will likely continue to play, a crucial role in securitization trends between the two countries.

Moreover, the nature of the Israeli terrain is one that poses a threat to Israel should it engage in an open war with Hizbullah. Israel security officials have long argued that the country lacks the strategic depth that would allow it to retreat to a safe area in the event the country was targeted by missiles or an invasion from land or sea.[105]Therefore, this fact would likely drive Israelis into further securitization trends in order to bolster their military capabilities and defend their existence, by either achieving pre-emption through striking first and eliminating threats (e.g. building a large air force that is capable of delivering a massive blow) or by employing technologically advanced deterrent defense capabilities such as the Iron Dome anti-missile shield.

Securitization of civilian and non-military issues has been a persistent response by Israel's security apparatuses to the continuous existential threats that the country faces.[106] Thus, it can be argued that an issue as sensitive as the oil and gas of the Eastern Mediterranean, with its myriad potential long-term benefits, would readily be securitized in Israel due to its sheer significance on both economy and security in

[105]Brig. Gen. Brom, S. (September 2011). Defensible Borders and Strategic Depth. The Council for Peace and Security. Retrieved from http://www.shaularieli.com/image/users/77951/ftp/my_files/articles_in_english/brochure_eng.pdf?id=9345485

[106] Sheffer, G., & Barak, O. (2013). *Israel's security networks: A Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*. (p.147) New York, United States: Cambridge University Press.

addition to being entangled with the perceived threat of being a target in any upcoming war.

One of the issues that is considered to be of paramount importance in Israel is energy security. The definition of energy security can be stated as the ability of states to sustain a supply of energy greater than its internal demand at an affordable and stable price. Conversely, energy insecurity is the inability of a state to sustain a supply of energy to meet its internal energy demands due to an interruption of energy supply or a surge in energy prices.[107]

In our case of study, energy and its derived economic benefits can be seen as the main referent object for some states, such as Lebanon. For others, energy security can be considered to be the referent object, such as in the case of Israel. The fact that energy security is the paramount referent object, where it trumps important economic and geostrategic benefits that are derived from the offshore hydrocarbon reserves, is largely due to the apprehensions correlated with energy insecurity that might even threaten the survival of the state. In the Lebanese case, the energy derived from the offshore reserves is commonly regarded as a stimulator for the Lebanese economy and a means for the Lebanese government to lower its crippling national debt. And although the energy situation in Lebanon is in a very poor state, this can mainly be attributed to the lack of funds invested in maintaining good energy distribution infrastructure and energy production facilities. Energy insecurity derived from the threat of not being able to supply the country with energy due to the refusal of viable energy exporters to supply Lebanon with energy or due to an energy cut-off caused by an embargo is not a central

[107]Adamides, C., & Christou, O. (2015). Beyond Hegemony: Cyprus, Energy Securitization and the Emergence of New Regional Security Complexes. p. 180. In *The Eastern Mediterranean in Transition: Multipolarity, Politics and Power*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge. Retrieved from https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/books/e/9781317034780

concern for the state. On the other hand, in the case of Israel, energy insecurity derived from turmoil and conflict and the resulting apprehension about the survival of the state holds a central position in the strategic concerns of Israeli decision-makers.[108] Principally, this concern stems from the fact that Israel is a country that is embedded in an environment that is inherently hostile towards it. This atmosphere may be imminently affected by political turmoil or military escalations that could cut off a source of energy or an entire energy corridor, with heightened immediacy and acute severity. Moreover, due to its geographical location that engulfs Israel from nearly all sides, this hostile Arab environment theoretically has the ability to cut off energy supplies by employing an embargo on Israel, thus rendering it an "energy island". The resultant scenario could see Israel struggling with a shortage in energy that could prove to be an existential threat for the state as a whole and not only limited to economic sector or monetary losses. Therefore, Israel's offshore energy reserves can be considered of existential importance to the security of the state and can thus be readily and easily securitized by the state.

However, a counter argument to the "hostile neighbors" argument could be the following rationale. It is clear that some of Israel's Arab neighbors, such as Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, do not constitute any threat to Israel. On the contrary, Egypt and Jordan have signed formal peace agreements with Israel and are even engaging in cooperative economic and security activities with Israel, while Saudi Arabia has increased unofficial cooperation with Israel in effort to counter their mutual enemy Iran.[109]Nevertheless, the threat of Israel being turned into an "energy island" still holds

[108]Bahgat, G. (2011). Israel's Energy Security: Regional Implications. *Middle East Policy,18*(3), 25-34. Retrieved from https://goo.gl/XCj6vx
[109]Marcus, J. (24 November 2017). Israel and Saudi Arabia: What's shaping the covert 'alliance'. BBC. Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42094105

in Israeli strategic thinking despite the fact that Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia pose no real threat to Israel. However, the threat might still hold simply because the remaining anti-Israel players in the region, Hizbullah, Syria, and Iran, claim to have the ability to impose a naval blockade on Israel in the event of war.[110]

Energy exploitation has led to an enhanced state of energy security for Israel, in addition to the economic benefits. Energy security can be defined as the referent object that the Israeli state – the securitizing actor – needs to protect against an existential threat – energy insecurity and its derived adverse chain reaction –and to shield it from the volatility of the complex security trends in the Middle East. And as Israel's energy exploitation would grow over time, propelling the country into the tier of prominent international hydrocarbon producers and exporters, Israel's energy security is expected to secularly improve.

The question of the audience in securitization is one that holds many possible classifications. Essentially, the audience is the recipient of the securitization move that is attempted by the securitizing actor, in order to frame a referent object as being targeted by an existential threat. However, some argue that there should be a distinction between two types of audiences, mainly between policymakers and the general public.[111] This suggestion can be supported by the fact that officials or legislators are a crucial subset of the general audience that need to be convinced by the securitization pretexts in order to provide formal support for the securitizing step to flourish into a successful securitization. On the other hand, the general public is less important members of the general audience, albeit they are crucial for the securitizing move to

[110] Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & Wilde, J. D. (1998). *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. p. 36-37.

[111] Roe, P. (2008). Actor, Audience(s) and Emergency Measures: Securitization and the UKs Decision to Invade Iraq. *Security Dialogue,39*(6), 615-635. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/doi/pdf/10.1177/0967010608098212

succeed, yet, they can be convinced by policymakers and/or influencers if the latter two were already on board with accepting the securitization persuasion.

To clarify matters for the reader, I will concisely summarize the securitization components for both Lebanon and Israel vis-à-vis their respective Eastern Mediterranean energy reserves.

In Lebanon, there are two securitizing actors, the Lebanese state and Hizbullah. For both securitizing actors, the referent object that needs to be protected against the existential threat of an Israeli attack or plunder are the offshore hydrocarbon energy resources and their correlated economic and geostrategic benefits. While the country's oil and gas is securitized by the Lebanese state, Hizbullah in fact has a greater incentive to securitize the issue. This is due to the fact that Hizbullah will then persuade the Lebanese audience that the party's existence is vital to protect the country's oil and gas reserves against any possible Israeli aggressions. The main audience also remains the same for both actors, which is the general Lebanese population that both securitizing actors are trying to persuade into accepting the issue as a security threat.

As for Israel, the securitzation actor is the Israeli state. It is presenting the subject of energy security (in addition to the economic and geostrategic benefit secured by energy exploitation and exportation) as the referent object that needs to be protected against the existential threat of being targeting by Hizbullah or indeed any enemy. Finally, the audience that the Israeli state is appealing to is the general population of Israel.

B. Securitization Trends: Lebanon and Israel amid Energy Discoveries

The Middle East is a region dominated by various intertwined securitized relationships that are entrenched between a multitude of its states and non-state actors. As a result, the ever-tense atmosphere frequently bursts into rounds of conflicts and wars.

The relationship between Lebanon and Israel is no exception to the prevalent securitized relationships. The discovery of hydrocarbons in Lebanon and Israel's EEZs and the hypothetical potential for collaboration did not lead to any political or military de-securitization nor did they curb the prevailing securitization trends between Lebanon and Israel. On the contrary, energy discoveries have been exacerbating the existing securitization trends among the two countries, where their vocal threats against one another have intensified, largely due to the dispute over the contested maritime area and the disagreement over the demarcation lines.

Direct negotiation or diplomacy to resolve potential maritime disputes are not viable options in the case of Lebanon and Israel, two countries that are officially in a state of war. Even indirect diplomacy is, I argue, insufficient, because of the deeply entrenched securitization trends that dominate the relationship between the two countries.

Hence, it can be concluded that the lack of mediation opportunities to curb the escalation between Lebanon and Israel would ultimately leave the door open for securitization to prevail and dictate the course of events that are yet to unfold.

The impact of the Eastern Mediterranean energy discoveries, therefore, appears to be derived from the persistent securitization trends in the Middle East. Essentially, this region has been trapped in a heterogeneous security complex that is comprised of

different types of actors (states, nations, non-state actors, firms, etc.) interacting across different sectors (political, military, economic and societal). In this intricate web of interrelations, constant interactions between most actors take place, leading to substantial and frequent spillovers from one sector to another.

C. Multiplier Effect of Energy: The Spillover Effect

Energy can have a multiplier effect on existing securitization relationships where political and military tensions can be exacerbated if energy insecurity is added to the equation of securitization and posited as an existential threat to a state by another state or by a non-state actor. And indeed, Adamides and Christou support this argument by denoting the example of the 2009 Ukraine-Russia gas dispute, in which Ukraine and EU member states found themselves mired in an energy crisis that broke out within only a few days.[112]

Hence, as a result of this energy multiplier effect, subsequent spillovers into the political and military sectors are likely to materialize.

The Copenhagen School deals with energy as an economic commodity that, by virtue of being abundant enough and enjoying an established buyer's market, is removed from the realm of existential threats that could face a state.[113] Nevertheless, Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde embrace the idea of potential overspill of certain securities from the economic sector onto other sectors, such as the military or political, should the economic commodity that is susceptible to scarcity be able to trigger an

[112]Adamides, C. and Christou, O. (2015). Beyond Hegemony: Cyprus, Energy Securitization and the Emergence of New Regional Security Complexes. p. 181. *The Eastern Mediterranean in Transition: Multipolarity, Politics and Power*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge. Retrieved from https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/books/e/9781317034780

[113] Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & Wilde, J. D. (1998). *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. p. 116.

insecurity that poses an existential threat to a certain state. However, other experts, including Adamides, Christou, Herranz-Surralles, and Natorski, argue that energy security is ought to be examined in light of the military, political, technical and economic sectors since the concept of energy shortage propagates it beyond the economic calculations and monetary balances and can be considered an existential threat to a state.Adamides and Christou contend that energy could be studied as a referent object in the other sectors because of the impact of energy insecurity on the securitization processes of non-energy referent objects in those sectors. Furthermore, the urgency and intensity of which energy security propagates through different sectors, creating problems in each, awards energy a central role in threat discourses.[114]

In examining the case of a highly securitized relationship between two countries such as Lebanon and Israel, the absence of attempts between the two countriesto reach what could have been mutually beneficial agreements indicate that when there are deep securitization levels in the political and military sectors, energy cannot prompt desecuritizing trends that lead to potential economic cooperation. In this case, energy is expected to amplify securitization levels between states with already securitized relations, which is clearly observed in the case of Lebanon and Israel.

To highlight the opposite case where securitization trends are weak among states, we can refer to the agreements between Israel and Egypt and between Israel and Cyprus to notice that the economic interests are highlighted and collaboration becomes likely only when securitization levels in the political and military sectors are low. Hence, the desecuritization trends are amplified at the expense of securitization in both the political and military sectors.

[114]Adamides, C. and Christou, O. (2015). Beyond Hegemony: Cyprus, Energy Securitization and the Emergence of New Regional Security Complexes.

Finally, my conclusion is that wherever natural resources are present, securitization trends are expected to get amplified either positively or negatively taking into consideration that we are dealing with energy as an intervening variable in securitization relations among states. The presence of energy in any region would either exacerbate securitization trends among actors in this region and lead to turmoil or would foster desecuritization among these actors and bring about cooperation between them, and that all depends upon the severity of the already existing securitization levels in that region.

D. Brinkmanship Strategy: How Energy May Instigate War?

Possibly the most famous, thrilling, and perilous brinkmanship strategy in recent history was the 1963 Cuban Missile crisis between the U.S. on one hand and Cuba and the Soviet Union on the other. The Kennedy U.S. administration declared a blockade on Cuba and threatened to resort to force after it discovered that the Soviet Union had managed to sneak in nuclear missiles to Cuba–an island nation that extremely close to the United States mainland – without an initial U.S. detection of this move. With nuclear missile strikes as likely options on the table for both sides, the crisis threatened to ignite a third World War, with truly devastating consequences on humanity. This crisis fortunately ended with the Russian withdrawal of its missiles from Cuba in exchange for the dismantling of U.S. missiles in Turkey. Right before the deflation of tensions was realized, the probability of war was enormous, although neither side wanted it to break out.[115]

[115] Lombardi, B. (2012). Turkey & Israel Brinkmanship & The Grand Strategy Of The Erdogan Government. p. 7. *The Levantine Review*,*1*(1). Retrieved from https://doaj.org/article/e1c492fc8c4b451094fa85d84c9e35a7

Brinkmanship takes place when a state or a non-state actor threatens to resort to the use of force to put pressure on an opponent to provide concessions, under a threat of war, that it would deem not possible. The adversary in that case can evaluate what is being requested and the probable scenarios of non-response. With the potential of escalation always looming in case of any unpredicted calamities or misunderstandings by any of the two sides, brinkmanship entails a stable stance in its implementation.

With brinkmanship, states or non-state actors apply pressure on each other, which could possibly lead them to take steps that raise the risk of escalation, which is what Schelling calls "threats which leave something to chance."[116] The impact of the threats on the risk of escalation is the only measure to whether the adversary should take a step or refrain from doing so. In brinkmanship, there is no trade-off between power and risk. The higher the stakes of the object of the political or military conflict, the more risks a state is willing to take. Brinkmanship offers the preference of taking certain steps and not others, undoubtedly smaller ones where risk of escalation can be evaluated with every step, trying to keep matters under control.

Therefore, brinkmanship strategy aims to get a positive stream at the risk of carrying threats that could be harmful to both engaging sides and could even possibly instigate an undesired war.[117]

In the case of Lebanon and Israel, one can argue that the prevalent system of threat perception and its reactions can be readily securitized by the Israeli state when the

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[116]Nalebuff, B. (1986). Brinkmanship and Nuclear Deterrence: The Neutrality of Escalation. p. 21. Conflict Management and Peace Science. Retrieved from http://faculty.som.yale.edu/barrynalebuff/Brinkmanship_and_Nuclear_Deterrence.pdf

[117] Powell, R. (2015). Nuclear Brinkmanship, Limited War, and Military Power. p. 590. International Organization*69*(03). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276456715_Nuclear_Brinkmanship_Limited_War_and_Military_Power

need arises in order to adopt extraordinary measures in response to the threat eminating from Hizbullah in Lebanon. These measures might include taking hostile actions or threatening to start a war, or might be centered on legitimizing the intervention of foreign powers – such as the United States – to aid Israel in guarding its offshore energy infrastructure. Since the stakes of the object of the political conflict are high, in this example newly discovered natural resources, then under the brinkmanship strategy Israel would be willing to take risks even if this could instigate an undesired war. The same analysis is applied in our case of study to the non-state actor Hizbullah who is playing the role of holding a stable stance in this brinkmanship strategy while taking into consideration its high stakes.

Additionally, the above-mentioned Hizbullah-Israeli clashes and skirmishes that have transpired throughout the Syrian crisis have certainly placed the region on the brink of war. Hizbullah and Israel have clashed in order to draw their opposing and restraining red lines. Consequently, these action-reaction clashes could possibly escalate from brinkmanship deterrence-driven clashes, spiral out of control in an uncontrolled chain reaction of hostilities and retaliations, and ultimately trigger a full-scale military conflict between Israel and Hizbullah or even a possible major regional war.[118]

Another possible scenario could transpire where energy-driven actions coupled with a brinkmanship approach to the situation may instigate a war between Israel and Hizbullah. Driven by certain geopolitical calculations and intelligence information that Hizbullah is too weak to effectively retaliate against an expansionist Israeli move in the offshore energy arena, Israel could decide that it is time to start exploiting the hydrocarbon resources in the disputed maritime area. In this scenario, Israel unilaterally

[118]Berti, B. (15 April 2014). Hezbollah and Israel's Risky New Pattern. Sada, by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace . Retrieved from http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/55346

decides that the time is right to claim its economic "rights" in the disputed EEZ that it had already included in its maritime border delineation according to its own interpretation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Israel then proceeds to finally grant the IOCs that have license rights in block Alon D, the American Noble Energy and the Israeli Delek, the green light to start their operations, where Alon D is the Israeli maritime block adjacent to Lebanon's EEZ and which includes part of the disputed area. Israel feels empowered that one of the IOCs that are to operate in the maritime area is the American giant Noble Energy, and bets that the United States will provide security assistance to Israel and defend Israel's offshore natural gas fields according to the US House bill H.R. 5066 "United States-Israel Maritime Security Partnership Act of 2016."[119]

Yet another possible scenario is the one where Israel would ask Lebanon to refrain from any drilling procedures near the disputed area, claiming that any such move would infringes upon its sovereignty and could provoke tensions that could escalate into war. However, Israel would be taking a high risk with its gas platforms being susceptible to any Hizbullah response.

Accordingly, I assess that this brinkmanship strategy might well prove to be perilous, specifically because the referent object of Israeli energy security which Israel is trying to defend also happens to be the one that is immediately threatened in some cases, while in other cases, the war of deterrence and red-line-drawing, another important factor between Israel and Hizbullah, could prove to be the instigator to the outbreak of a major war.

[119]United States-Israel Maritime Security Partnership Act of 2016, H.R. 5066, §§ 1-4, Congress.gov (Congress 2016).

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the highly securitized relationship between Lebanon and Israel will likely experience even sharper securitization trends as a result of the Eastern Mediterranean energy discoveries. These discoveries of vast amounts of energy reserves and the likelihood of discovering more resources is likely to have a profound effect on the political-military relationship between Lebanon and Israel, as the chapter has demonstrated the great ability of energy to have prominent multiplier and spillover effect on the military, political, and economic sectors. This chapter has also demonstrated that the discovery of energy in any geographical area will undoubtedly affect securitization trends among its countries and players. In areas where securitization trends among its countries and players are already severe, energy discoveries would likely exacerbate the already tense and securitized relations because of the ability of energy to easily infiltrate the military and political sectors due to its resulting spillover and multiplier effects.[120]Conversely, when desecuritization prevails in a region, the introduction of energy discoveries would likely further desecuritize the relationships that are based on amity, mutual cooperation, and economic benefits for all players.

Finally, this chapter has discussed the brinkmanship strategy adopted by each of Hizbullah and Israel that could trigger an undesired major war because of the breakout of an unstoppable chain of retaliatory actions and reactions.

[120]Adamides, C., & Christou, O. (2015). Energy Security and the Transformation of Regional Securitization Relations in the Eastern Mediterranean.

CHAPTER V

FORCES AT PLAY: THE IMPACT OF ENERGY ON THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

This concluding chapter will detail the key findings of this research, where I will ultimately answer my posed researched question and give a thorough explanation of the answer. Additionally, the chapter will explain the added value of this research. Finally, this chapter will propose future research prospects that could benefit from this research and possibly build upon it.

A. Key Findings

The research has touched upon the historical perspective of the conflict between Lebanon and Israel in an attempt to highlight what goes beyond the present maritime dispute.

Through a securitization framework, the research evaluated political, military, and economic capacities within the Lebanon and Israel in addition to those within the Eastern Mediterranean. It has led to a clear understanding of how these sectors interact among themselves and how they interact with energy as an independent influencing entity. The resultant analysis has led me to clearly access the possibility of desecuritization trends and the probability of such dispute being solved versus that of further securitization trends and escalation scenarios, where the latter prospect seemed to have a clear upper hand.

Driven by the mesh of interrelated security issues among the Eastern Mediterranean states and by the boom in hydrocarbon energy extraction and exportation in the Levant Basin, would the securitization trends between Lebanon and Israel get exacerbated and elevate the overall levels of tension in the region?

My answer to this question is yes. The rationale behind this viewpoint stems from the fact that energy plays a pivotal role in securitization relations among states. The research has demonstrated that in countries where securitization trends are already strong, the introduction of the energy variable into the equation of relations between these states would likely aggravate the already heated and securitized relations.[121]This aggravation is mainly due to the fact that energy issues have the ability to penetrate both the political and military sectors and to further complicate any securitized issues in these sectors. On the other hand, where desecuritization prevails between two or more countries, energy discovery would play a crucial role in opening doors of cooperation and enhancing the relationships that are based on amity. The reason behind this lies in the often vast economic benefits that energy provides for these countries, which is often lucrative enough for these states to engage in political or even military cooperation trends in order to reap greater energy-derived economic benefits with less cost than would have materialized if countries were to choose a unilateral approach to exploiting their energy reserves. Therefore, securitization trends among states will most likely be intensified in either a progressive or degenerative manner wherever and whenever energy resources are present.

[121]Adamides, C., & Christou, O. (2015). Energy Security and the Transformation of Regional Securitization Relations in the Eastern Mediterranean. p. 196. In *Societies in Transition Economic, Political and Security Transformations in Contemporary Europe*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-13814-5

B. Added Value

An added value of this research is that it utilized a securitization framework to address the effect of the emergence of hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean on the relationship between Lebanon and Israel, where the use of the securitization framework has never been adopted in researching this topic.

Moreover, I focused on examining important and useful resources in Arabic, such as articles published by the Lebanese newspapers, laws enforced by the Lebanese Representative Council, and communications letters between the Lebanese Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the United Nations. Therefore another added value of this research is that I have used a wide range of Arabic resources and have incorporated them into a research written in English. Therefore this research has effectively translated many Arabic resources of relation to the topic and compiled them in a single research paper. Ultimately, this thesis can thus be used an important asset for researchers who lack the knowledge of the Arabic language.

The securitization framework helped to accurately gauge the trends that would be witnessed in the Middle East and specifically in the Eastern Mediterranean as a result of the latest offshore energy discoveries.

C. Future Research Prospects - Building upon this Research

The topic addressing the convoluted Lebanese-Israeli relationship has never been studied from a securitization framework of analysis before. This research addresses this gap in the literature and can thus be used by future scholars who wish to explore works that centers on the topic of energy securitization in the Eastern Mediterranean and specifically between Lebanon and Israel.

Furthermore, this research has also delved into the issue of the role of energy in security studies and its effect on securitization trends between countries. The research addressed the concept of energy security and its effect on the economic, societal, political, and military sectors, where it was demonstrated that energy can prove to be a governing agent of political decision making if securitization trends dictate that energy security has surpassed a certain threshold of importance and/or urgency. Therefore, this research can thus be utilized as a benchmark of comparison for scholars who wish to examine a similar topic in any other geographical area of the world.

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