The securitization of water in Israel between 1948 and 2005

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Abstract

Since the modern state of Israel's founding in 1948, a number of factors have exacerbated the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, a less commonly discussed issue is the factor that water plays in the conflict. This thesis will analyse how discourse around water from Israeli governmental officials has developed between 1948 and 2005, and why the government chose to invoke specific narratives at certain times. Water has played an important role in the establishment and expansion of the state of Israel due to the important Zionist ramifications it has in facilitating agriculture in the Negev and in creating a centralized government. Israel's efforts to achieve these goals have resulted in the government's decision to securitize water by portraying it as scarce in order to justify certain exceptional measures. The most notable is the decision to deprive the Palestinians of sufficient water supplies and limiting their water allocations even further in summer, justified as a necessity to provide for its own population, while even experiencing surplus supplies and over-allocating water to the agricultural sector. Water is even one of the factors preventing Israel from relinquishing its control over the Occupied Territories due to the rich water resources some of these territories hold. Israel would no longer have control over the water in these regions if they provided the Palestinians with sovereignty over the West Bank or the Syrians with the Golan Heights. Through the application of securitization theory to the Israeli government's discourse surrounding water scarcity and its water policies, I will attempt to analyse why the government has chosen to do this and how it has been successful in implementing the exceptional measures despite having been so successful in innovating in water technology and in providing for its population.

<u>Introduction</u>

The framing of water scarcity as a security threat in Israel goes a lot deeper than insecurity over specific water supplies. There are several other factors at play including anxieties over demographic changes, geopolitics and certain Zionist ideologies surrounding agriculture. In this thesis, I will discuss how demographics and Zionism play a large role in the securitization of water through analysing the discourse, methods and policy-making that the Israeli government undertook to frame water scarcity as posing an existential threat between 1948 and 2005. To an extent, the government's concerns over water scarcity are apparently legitimate given the geography and climate of the country alongside having an ever-increasing population. However, through analysing how Israel attempted to securitize water and uncovering those motivations, it becomes clear that genuine water concerns aren't always the reality. Portraying water scarcity as a serious threat can invoke extreme and at times, discriminatory measures. Due to this, the case of water allocation between the Israelis and the Palestinians has been a source of tension.

Research question

My main research question is essentially *how* and *why* the Israeli government securitized water through different frameworks between 1948 and 2005. I also seek to analyse how the Israeli government managed to succeed in securitizing water and garner public acceptance. One of the issues that the Israeli government's policy of securitizing water is inextricably linked with, is to do with the Palestinians living within the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In Israel, there is a degree of insecurity regarding the possibility of the Jewish population no longer being the majority due to an influx of refugees, high Palestinian birth rates and the possibility of the implementation of the Right of Return for Palestinians.[1] This could result in the Israelis no longer having control over not only water allocation policies, but over the Occupied Territories that have important Zionist ramifications and provide points of defence for Israel.

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[1] Uriel Abulof, "Deep Securitization and Israel's "Demographic Demon", *International Political Sociology* 8, no. 4 (2014): 396-415.

Securitization theory

The methodology of this paper will involve applying securitization theory to both primary sources and secondary literature. The origins of securitization come from the Copenhagen School, and the theory was penned by Ole Waever, Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde, who attempted to move beyond the traditional and Realist conception of security that focused on physical threats that were usually of a militaristic nature.[2] Their securitization theory took an inter-subjective and constructivist approach whereby securitization placed a strong emphasis on the importance of speech. Securitization occurs through a speech act, made by a securitizing actor, whom is usually someone with a position of power. This moves an issue from the realm of normal democratic politics, but only once it is accepted by the relevant audience as being a serious threat to a collective that requires urgent action. The purpose of the speech act and securitizing an issue is to allow the securitizing actor to take what are deemed to be 'exceptional measures'. The actor can consequently implement policies that under normal circumstances would be viewed as unacceptable. However, due to the urgency of the situation, the relevant audience agrees that exceptional measures are required to combat the threat, thus permitting the securitizing actor to undertake the action they are portraying as necessary to the referent object's security.

Niloy Ranjan Biswas, a professor in International Relations, discusses how the shift to non-traditional security was undertaken by the widening and deepening of the concept, especially widening which involves increasing the scope of issues that can be included as security threats.[3] Indeed, in 1994 the UN stated that human security, not just a nation's security, was equally as important as a response to the ethnic and civil wars that took place during the Cold War, moving beyond the state-centric, realist approach to security, paving the way for other issues such as the environment be included in the security discourse.[4]. As this thesis concerns water scarcity and perceptions of water, this thesis will look at environmental security and on how natural resources and environmental problems can be constructed as a security threat.

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[2] Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A new framework for analysis*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Colarado (1998).

[3] Niloy Ranjan Biswas, "Is the environment a security threat? Environmental security beyond securitization", *International Affairs Review* 20, no. 1 (2011): 1-22.

[4] Carol Dumaine and Irving Mintzer, "Confronting climate change and reframing security", *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 35, no. 1 (2015): 5-16.

However, Daniel Deudney, a political scientist at Johns Hopkins University, has argued that there is the risk of spreading the scope of security too far because it can risk undermining the validity of the term. After all, he says, defining anything that causes "a decline in human wellbeing" as a security threat results in the term 'security' no longer having "any analytical usefulness". [5] He postulates that defining the environment as a national security threat is somewhat problematic, given that many environmental threats are international and span multiple boundaries so cannot be deducted to the national. However, he explains that the reason politicians define environmental security threats in national terms is because it provokes an intense emotive response and urges people to act with greater haste, although he concludes that this effect is usually short-lived. This, as this thesis will show, is not the case in Israel as water scarcity has been portrayed as a national security threat for decades as have the extreme measures being implemented, such as depriving Palestinians of their water rights.

In making this apparent, securitization theory will be applied to primary sources such as speeches from Israeli government officials and government documents, a variety of newspapers, Israeli government websites, NGO reports, UN resolutions and reports from the UN Assembly. This will help to devise whether the narratives and discourses employed by the government are in line with reality and to detect the discourses employed to securitize. When analysing securitization in Israel, I will be specifically discussing the Israeli government as the securitizing actor as in securitization theory it is usually a powerful actor who has the ability to define an issue as a threat to national security. While I cannot speak Hebrew, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs has English documents. Israeli newspapers like Haaretz also publish articles in English, and of course international organisations also publish English reports.

The relevance of the topic

Analysing the case of securitization in Israel is significant given that the topic is understudied in the literature despite the omnipresence of security rhetoric and

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[5] Daniel Deudney, "Muddled thinking", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 47, no. 3 (1991): 24.

threat perceptions within the Israeli state apparatus. Recent publications have illustrated that because securitization is so embedded in policy-making in Israel, the extreme measures that result from securitization are no longer viewed as being extreme through becoming so routine. Amir Lupovici explains how Israel's securitization moves have been overlooked and this is due to the fact that Israel is seen as living in a perpetual state of insecurity, thus securitization practices have become so normalized that it is not entirely clear when a policy is outside the normal bounds of democratic politics.[6] Indeed, Lupovici explains that although studies on securitization in Israel are limited, the topic of water is one of the few issues that has been studied by scholars. He cites Lene Hansen who talks about how marginalized actors cannot express their insecurity, which is applicable to the Palestinians on this issue who face water insecurity every single day.[7]

Abulof analyses how 'deep securitization' is present in Israel, describing the concept as not being about what issue is securitized, but how anything in Israel can be so easily framed as an existential threat to the point where the speech act and audience acceptance are not necessarily required to take extraordinary measures.[8] He explains that this is facilitated because Israel feels that its existence is constantly threatened due to the memory of the Holocaust and the prospect of a Palestinian homeland becoming a reality due to its growing population. He emphasises the importance demography plays in Israeli securitization processes and that the goal of the state is to ensure a Jewish majority otherwise its Jewish inhabitants will be threatened, which he coins as the "demographic demon".[9] Abulof doesn't explicitly discuss water policy but as deep securitization affects a number of policy areas, water policies can too be affected by deep securitization, which I shall elaborate on in this thesis.

Samer Alatout, an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has extensively discussed the Israeli government's changing discourse on water. He exposes how the narrative shifted from water abundance in Israel's earliest years to water scarcity for political reasons and my research is an attempt to further on this work. Alatout explains that the abundance narrative in the modern state of Israel's earliest years played a vital role initially in portraying the Zionist project as perfectly

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[6] Amir Lupovici. "The limits of securitization theory: Observational criticism and the curious absence of Israel", *International Studies Review* 16, no. 3 (2014): 390-410.

[7] Lene Hansen, "The Little Mermaid's silent security dilemma and the absence of gender in the Copenhagen School", *Millennium* 29, no. 2 (2000): 285-306.

[8] Abulof, "Deep Securitization and Israel's "Demographic Demon".

9 Abulof, "Deep Securitization and Israel's "Demographic Demon": 3.

feasible in order to accommodate large-scale Jewish immigration, but the scarcity narrative eventually dominated to the point that the abundance narrative is almost forgotten.[10]

Water wars and their security effects will also be discussed. When water basins and rivers are shared by more than one state this creates a form of interdependency that can at times lead to conflict and insecurity over water. In this thesis there will be a shift from the traditional notion of security that has predominantly centred around objective military threats to a nation, whereby a lack of water can be constructed as threat to national security where the "low politics such as water" being "linked with the high politics of national survival".[11] However, I will attempt to go beyond this perspective and will show that because water in Israel has important links with Zionism, geopolitics and maintaining a Jewish majority, it is linked with the politics of national survival for the government. As water is vital to the states survival for absorbing unlimited Jewish immigrants, agriculture and for vital infrastructure, anxieties around having sufficient water supplies have led to its securitization in order to allow the government to take exceptional measures since the earliest days of the modern Israeli state. This thesis takes a long-term perspective to provide a unique contribution and cover extensive empirical evidence to show the shifts in water frameworks and to achieve a nuanced understanding of the securitization of water in Israel.

Chapter order

The chapters of this thesis will follow a chronological order of the securitization of water to understand how the framing of the issue has evolved between 1948 and 2005. The chapters will focus on crucial years in Israel's water policies and when significant contextual changes and shifts in discourse occurred. Serving as the starting point of this research will be the time period from 1948 until the late 1950s. During this period, a water abundance narrative was initially promoted after the state of Israel was established even though Israel was struggling to provide for the huge flow of

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[10] Samer Alatout, "'States' of scarcity: water, space, and identity politics in Israel, 1948–59", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26, no. 6 (2008): 959-982.

[11] Itay Fischhendler, "The securitization of water discourse: Theoretical foundations, research gaps and objectives of the special issue", *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* 15, no. 3 (2015): p.247.

immigrants entering the new nation at the time. Paradoxically, this was done in order to attract more immigrants to obtain a Jewish majority and to facilitate agriculture. 1967 was another significant year for water as water tensions leading up to the Six-Day War between Israel and Arab nations played a factor in the outbreak of the war and Israel captured large amounts of Arab territories, improving its water security. As a result of the war, Israel became the hydro-hegemon in the region and was able to exert control over its trans-boundary water resources with its Arab neighbours. However, at this time the prominent narrative had already moved from water abundance to water scarcity, despite Israel obtaining an even greater supply of water resources. The thesis will culminate with a chapter on the water scarcity narrative in the 1990s and early 2000s and the measures that were taken as a result of the securitization of water.

Chapter 1: Constructing abundance: the water framework in

Israel's earliest years and its hydrologically-motivated clashes with Syria, 1948-1959

Water perceptions in the earliest years of the modern state of Israel were of abundance, having been constructed as such by the government. Israel's conflicts with Syria will also be discussed because it was one of the first states that armed clashes erupted with over water. Border disputes over areas with important water resources were key to these clashes. In Israel, what is evident is a shift overtime from prior to 1948 and the nation's earliest years where water was framed as being in abundance to the end of the 1950s, when water scarcity became the dominant narrative. In the earliest years water was portrayed as being a necessity to allow agriculture to receive large allocations of Israel's water supply in order to fulfill certain Zionist ideological convictions pertaining to the importance of agriculture in state-building, then throughout the 1950s, there was a shift to water scarcity. Therefore, it is important to analyze how water was framed in these early years to understand how the securitization of water today is so easily facilitated, which is why this thesis is studying a sixty year time frame, in order to study long-term developments. While water was not yet securitized, this period is vital to analyze not only because Israel engaged in a number of water wars. This was when water was first politicized in 1948.[12]

Alatout explains how the scarcity narrative has been the predominant narrative since the late 1950s but that in the early years of the modern state of Israel and prior to its establishment, water was viewed as in abundance by Zionists.[13] He explains that the time period between 1948 and 1959 is when the shift took place. This was done by the government in order to create a strong, centralized water-policy network and even to create a strong national identity through putting the full authority over water in the hands of the state.[14] Analysing the earliest years of the Israeli state, this chapter traces the development of such outlooks, the first outbreak of war with Syria in 1951 and the long-term security effects that these clashes had with Israel and its Arab neighbours.

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[12] Samer Alatout, "Bringing abundance into environmental politics: Constructing a Zionist network of water abundance, immigration, and colonization", *Social Studies of Science* 39, no. 3 (2009): 363-394.

[13] Alatout, "Bringing abundance into environmental politics: Constructing a Zionist network of water abundance, immigration, and colonization".

[14] Alatout, "'States' of scarcity: water, space, and identity politics in Israel, 1948–59."

Agriculture and Zionism

To understand the motivations of the water abundance narrative it is important to first unpack the ideological factors that determined water allocations. For Israel, securing adequate water supplies and having extensive agricultural networks was an important part of state building, as well as ensuring that the government could absorb Jewish immigrants and simultaneously provide a high quality of life for them.[15] Agriculture had strong links with the Zionist mission to the point where sustaining agricultural settlements was viewed as of greater importance than conserving water resources.[16] Of great symbolic importance for Zionist mythology were water towers, which the Israelis constructed large numbers of to symbolise both the success of the Zionist project and that the Jewish immigrants had brought a barren land to life.[17] Therefore, having extensive agricultural networks was not only significant from a strategic and economic point of view, but also had important ideological implications.[18] Indeed, if one looks at the speech by the Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett in 1953 regarding Israel's disputes with its neighbours over water rights, the language strongly pertains to Zionist understanding of the symbolic importance of agriculture:

> "For without irrigation we shall not at all produce a worthy agriculture under our special circumstances, and without agriculture, particularly highly developed and progressive agriculture shall not be a people rooted in the land, secure in its existence, stable in its character, in control of all the possibilities of material and spiritual creation inherent in it and which this country can open before it".[19]

For a senior minister to link irrigation with "spiritual creation" and to emphasise the importance of water's link with Israeli national identity highlights how the government recognised the important Zionist symbolism of water.

Agriculture was also viewed in the same way that Israeli public viewed its army- it was regarded as a means to protect national security, which was how the Israeli

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[15] Nadav Morag, "Water, geopolitics and state building: The case of Israel", *Middle Eastern Studies*, *37*(3). 179-198.

[16] Gila Menahem. "Policy paradigms, policy networks and water policy in Israel", *Journal of Public Policy* 18, no. 3 (1998): 283-310.

[17] Maoz Azaryahu, "Water towers: A study in the cultural geographies of Zionist mythology", *Ecumene* 8, no. 3 (2001): 317-339.

[18] Morag, "Water, geopolitics and state building: The case of Israel"

[19] Jewish Virtual Library. "Water in Israel: Speech on Israel's Water Right's" (November, 1953). Accessed on April 27th available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/speech-on-israel-s-water-rights-november-1953.

government managed to justify allocating so much money to a sector that made up a minor part of its GDP (3%), by insisting that agricultural settlements in territories vulnerable to invasion had to be established.[20] Therefore, even in Israel's early years because of the importance of agriculture, a lack of reliable water resources was to an extent, already being framed as a national security threat. Analysing the early years of Israel aids our understanding of how water scarcity can be so easily portrayed as a threat to national security because if water realities have been construed before, it can be done so again.

The Negev desert, where these agricultural networks were to be established, was historically viewed as an uninhabitable land due to the climatic conditions where agriculture could not be exercised. Before the birth of Israel, Mandate experts had warned that there weren't enough water supplies for the Jewish state to absorb unlimited Jewish immigrants, which consequently resulted in the prominent discourse following the birth of Israel that the issue wasn't that of water shortage, but of abundant water resources that were just waiting to be discovered.[21] Gila Menahem, a professor at Tel-Aviv University with an area of expertise in water policy describes how in the first few years after the birth of Israel, water was perceived as abundant in Israel even if it wasn't. It was viewed as such because the dominant narrative was that this was solely because many points of water resources had not yet been found. This was in line with the predominant Zionist discourse that the Israeli government promoted on Israel's need to be self-sufficient through extensive agriculture networks.[22]

In order to facilitate agriculture the National Carrier project, one of the largest hydrological projects in Israel that transfers water from the north of the country to the south began construction in the 1950s. It starts from the Sea of Galilee to the arid Negev desert-land and this managed to sustain the large increase in agriculture which wasn't motivated by economic considerations, but stemmed from the Zionist prophecies of Jewish settlers exploiting the Negev and greening the dry desert land to create a successful state.[23] The ability of the Jewish settlers to self-sustain would

[20] Amnon Kartin, "Factors inhibiting structural changes in Israel's water policy", *Political Geography* 19, no. 1 (2000): 97-115.

[21] Alatout, "Bringing abundance into environmental politics: Constructing a Zionist network of water abundance, immigration, and colonization."

[22] Menahem. "Policy paradigms, policy networks and water policy in Israel".

[23] Knesset, "The Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry on the Israeli Water Sector, Headed by MK David Magen", Jerusalem (June, 2002) Accessed on March 23rd available at https://www.knesset.gov.il/committees/eng/docs/englishwater.pdf.

prove the success of Zionism and signify that large numbers of European settlers could indeed migrate to Palestine. Therefore agriculture was exploited as a means to gain monopoly over the territory by proving that the Israelis could manage the land better than the Palestinians.[24]

Alatout explains that alongside increased conflict in the region over the Jordan River in the early 1950s, one of the reasons for the narrative shift from abundance to scarcity was because in the region "the water potential of each state had become a regional matter that would potentially determine that state's shares of the Jordan River", therefore "the greater Israel's water potential, it seemed, the less the Israeli share of the Jordan River would be".[25] Therefore, it appears that at this point Israeli government officials would have become aware that the abundance narrative was no longer conducive to Israel's interests and that it could actually threaten its water supply, resulting in a shift.

A law enacted in 1959 that allowed the state to have total authority over water resources, namely appointed to the Minister of Agriculture, was created in order to allow the state to increase water production and agricultural ability, enacted through an "expansionist policy paradigm" in order to ensure water allocation was directed towards the agricultural sector.[26] This move was a pragmatic step for nation building, because it attempted to spread out the population rather than have it concentrated in urban areas, which is why also why additional water resources were required.[27] The authority of the states water resources being placed upon the Ministry of Agriculture, explains why excessive amounts of water were directed to the agricultural sector.

The fact that the Israeli government framed water in the early years as being in abundance when this was not the objective reality, implies that if the truth about its water capacity was contorted for political means before, there is no reason that it wouldn't be done so currently, albeit with both a different discourse and different water statistics. The abundance rhetoric was not yet one of security threats but analyzing the earlier discourse exposes how easily an objective statistic, specifically water levels, can be framed for political purposes.

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24 Kartin, "Factors inhibiting structural changes in Israel's water policy."

25 Alatout, "'States' of scarcity: water, space, and identity politics in Israel, 1948–59." 971.

26 Menahem, "Policy paradigms, policy networks and water policy in Israel."

27 Morag, "Water, geopolitics and state building: The case of Israel."

Zionist influence on Israel's earliest water policies

Water was of such importance for affirming these Zionist predictions that securing adequate water supplies was the main priority after the state was established as was evaluating how and by whom water would be managed, which the Knesset decided should be the state.[28] Water is so centralized in Israel that any source is government property with the legal definition including:

> "springs, rivers, lakes and other flows and collections of water, whether surface or subsurface, whether natural, regulated or installed, whether the water wells up, flows or stagnates at all times or occasionally, including drainage water or sewage effluents".[29]

This includes water in the Palestinian territories signed during the Oslo accords, which allowed Israel full control over the Mountain Aquifer. Israel uses eighty percent for itself and the remaining twenty percent for the Palestinians, but Palestinians have only received seventy-five percent of the water that was agreed, with Israel actually selling water back to the Palestinians from Israel's national water company, the Mekorot, that was initially pumped from Palestinian territories.[30]

A number of large-scale projects were undertaken such as a 130 kilometres long pipeline from the Yarkon River to the Negev as well as the National Water Carrier to move water from North to the South.[31] The Zionist ideology here was not only concerned with creating as many Jewish settlements throughout as much of Mandate Palestine as possible. It also presupposes that when Israel becomes a homeland for the Jewish people, they will be the ones to green the Negev and turn it from an uninhabitable desert to a place where agriculture thrives. The Water Law in the 1950s provided full authority to the Agricultural Minister over water allocation. This is what more recent Israeli governments have acknowledged is not the sole cause, but one of the reasons that caused water shortages.

A seven-year national water plan was submitted to the Jerusalem Conference in

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[28] Dov Sitton,. "Advanced Agriculture as a Tool Against Desertification by Applied Research Institutes", *Israel Ministry of Foreign* Affairs Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (October 2000).

[29] Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Israel's Water Economy- Thinking of future generations" (August 2002). Accessed on April 15th available at https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFA-Archive/2002/Pages/Israel-s%20Water%20Economy%20-%20Thinking%20of%20future%20genera.aspx.

[30] B'Tselem, "Water Crisis", Jerusalem (November, 2017) accessed on April 2nd available at https://www.btselem.org/water.

[31] Sitton, Advanced Agriculture as a Tool Against Desertification by Applied Research Institutes.

1953 by a team of experts from Israel and abroad on the importance of maximizing the state's full irrigation potential and on using the water of the Jordan River. The report detailed the importance of Israel having the ability to sustain its own food production rather than importing it and claimed that it is only "a small expenditure in foreign currency for its production".[32] While one may assume that Israel should have prioritized agriculture in order to feed its population (which in its earlier years was more justifiable), it is important to look at the argument from an economic viewpoint. In a country as developed as Israel, if water shortages are indeed so severe and farming does not bring in much capita, then agriculture is not a necessity to the states survival, especially as food can be obtained from elsewhere.[33] This reinforces the not so pragmatic, but ideological importance of agriculture in early Israel, which continued until the 1990s and ultimately exploited a vital resource.

Water wars

Aside from playing an integral role in state-building, water also affected Israel's foreign relations too. From the earliest years of Israel's establishment, Israel engaged in a number of militarily clashes with its Arab neighbors over their shared water resources. Conflict also erupted again in 1967 resulting in Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights in Syria, the West Bank and Gaza with large water reserves, which will be discussed in the next chapter. The term demilitarized zones is frequently implemented when discussing Syria and Israel's clashes and border tensions. These refer to areas between the Syrian and Israeli border that repeatedly sparked a number of armed clashes between the two states. This includes the 1948 War, when Syria regained its territories that had been granted to Israel in the UN Partition Plan, thus the areas had to be demilitarized which was undertaken through the Armistice Agreement in 1949.[34] The Armistice Agreement outlines in Article 4 that:

"Where the Armistice Demarcation Line does not correspond to the international boundary between Syria and Palestine, the area between the Armistice Demarcation Line and the boundary, pending final

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[32] Jewish Virtual Library. Israel's Seven-Year Plan, from "Data and Plans", submitted to the Jerusalem Conference (October, 1953) Accessed on March 22nd available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israel-seven-year-plan-from-data-and-plans-submitted-to-the-jerusalem-conference.

[33] Kartin. "Factors inhibiting structural changes in Israel's water policy."

[34] Jewish Virtual Library, "Syria Virtual Jewish History Tour" (ND). Accessed on March 22nd available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/syria-virtual-jewish-history-tour.

territorial settlement between the Parties, shall be established as a Demilitarized Zone from which the armed forces of both Parties shall be totally excluded, and in which no activities by military or para-military forces shall be permitted".[35]

The causes behind these repeated clashes were that Israel's borders with Syria had greater significance than its other neighbors because of the Golan Heights, which provides "topographical superiority" over Israeli settlements and provided Syria with a military advantage as well as possessing hydrological advantage by providing it control over some of the Jordan Rivers sources.[36] The water resources in this area were a consistent form of tension before Israel's border expansions after the 1967 War as the borders were drawn out directly along water lines. This had serious security consequences as these types of borders can frequently result in conflict over water resources, especially in regions like the Middle East.[37]

Israel's clashes with Syria back in 1951 were initiated because of Israel's attempt to build hydroelectric power stations near the Hula Lake in the Golan Heights and divert it back to the Negev in Israel.[38] This resulted in a number of attacks from Syrian forces on Israeli farmers. In December 1955, Israel attacked Syrian armed forces in a DMZ as an attempt to prevent Israel from construction around Lake Tiberius. The UN Security Council Resolution 111 determined that:

"this Israel action was a deliberate violation of the provisions of the General Armistice Agreement between Israel and Syria, including those relating to the demilitarized zone, which was crossed by the Israel forces which entered Syria…the Council has already condemned military action in breach of the General Armistice Agreements, whether or not undertaken by way of retaliation, and has called upon Israel to take effective measures to prevent such actions".[39]

Israel initially halted construction after Syria appealed to the UN to cease Israel's construction plans and leave the Golan Heights, but Israel eventually continued with its work with the project coming to completion in 1964.[40]

This proves that environmental issues can be a source of conflict despite scholars

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[35] Jewish Virtual Library, "Israel War of Independence: Israel-Syria Armistice Agreement" (ND). Accessed on April 27th available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israel-syria-armistice-agreement-1949.

[36] Jewish Virtual Library, "Syria Virtual Jewish History Tour".

[37] Morag, "Water, geopolitics and state building: The case of Israel."

[38] Elaine C Hagopian, "The Primacy of Water in the Zionist Project." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (2016): 700-708.

[39] Security Council, Resolution 111 UNHRC refugee agency (1956). https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f1ba64.html.

[40] Hagopian. "The Primacy of Water in the Zionist Project."

arguing this is not the case, such as Daniel Deudney. Deudney argued that environmentalists who warn about the possibility of war as a result of climate change are hypocritical and that war as a response is not an effective means to solving tensions that come from environmental problems.[41] While Deudney's statement is valid in that war is not an effective response to climate change, this doesn't automatically mean that this will not be the response of political actors. There is empirical evidence to show that war can be a result of resource scarcity whether it is an appropriate response or not. On the other hand, he is correct in that instilling fear with the threat of the prospect of war is not an adequate response to environmental calamities. While water may not be a particularly common cause of conflict, there is no doubt that for the first twenty years after the birth of the state of Israel, water did play a significant role in several military confrontations with Syria and other Arab states.

In 1951, the Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett blamed the Syrians on these clashes calling it "unprovoked aggression" in an area that was meant to be a DMZ, thus violating the Armistice agreement claiming that it was an attempt by Syria to "substantiate the expansionist claim to the demilitarized zone".[42] As mentioned, this DMZ was not only of high value due to its abundant water resources, but it had an important military advantage by allowing the occupying party to be able to view oncoming invaders and acted as a defense. This was one of Syria's complaints to the UN after Israel moved into the DMZ, that not only was it their land, but that it left them vulnerable.[43] It is thus apparent that when one nation takes extreme measures to enhance its own security, this can have negative ramifications for other nations, by actually making them more insecure.[44] This is the security dilemma, coined by John Herz in 1951.[45] Israel's attempts to enhance its own water security through building dams and hydroelectric power stations in what was meant to be a DMZ, demonstrates the security dilemma of how one state using security as an excuse to take extreme measures can have negative effects on the security of other surrounding states. Diverting water towards the Negev consequently reduced the amount of water that

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[41] Deudney, "Muddled thinking."

[42] Jewish Virtual Library, "*Statement to the Security Council By Ambassador Eban on Syrian Incursions,* read by Mr Eban from Foreign Minister Sharatt" (May 1951). Accessed on March 22nd https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/statement-to-the-security-council-by-ambassador-eban-on-syrian-incursions.

[43] Jewish Virtual Library, "Syria Virtual Jewish History Tour".

[44] Dumaine, and Mintzer, "Confronting climate change and reframing security."

[45] John H. Herz,"Idealist internationalism and the security dilemma" *World politics* 2, no. 2 (1950): 157-180.

Syria and Jordan received affecting their water security. This has also been especially prominent in Palestinian territories where the water is of poor quality and the supply is nowhere near as secure as Israel's.

Conclusion

The overarching narrative of water abundance in Israel's early years predominantly originated from those with strong Zionist views who believed in the ideological importance of agriculture to build a successful Jewish state. Analyzing this early period explains why the Israeli government securitizes water to permit the implementation of other exceptional measures. These include depriving Palestinians adequate amounts of clean water rather than limiting agriculture in the Negev, which will be discussed more extensively in the third chapter. As mentioned, agriculture is not a vital economic asset in Israel, constituting only a small level of GDP. Therefore, this undermines the argument that Israel must deprive Palestinians of water because it cannot provide for them as well as their own population.

Despite early concerns over having the ability to facilitate mass Jewish immigration and the over-exploitation of Israel's water supplies because of the bias towards agrarian needs, the prominent discourse in Israel was one of water abundance. As Samer Alatout demonstrates, water is not inherently political in and of itself, but has been used as part of a strategy for political gains.[46] He emphasises that water doesn't even have to be scarce to be politicized and vice versa. He goes on to explain how issues around water had huge political ramifications in a variety of areas such as the levels of centralization (a cause for the shift to the scarcity narrative), who has control over the water policies that are enacted and what economic model Israel would choose. Another reason the shift occurred around this time was perhaps because Israel had successfully managed to attract large numbers of immigrants and was becoming a more established state, indicating that the abundance narrative was successful in achieving its political aims. The government could therefore acknowledge that water was not as abundant as it had thought (or portrayed it to be) and that extreme measures would need to be taken to maximize its water supplies, for which public acceptance was required. However, according to Alatout, overtime the

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[46] Alatout, "Bringing abundance into environmental politics: Constructing a Zionist network of water abundance, immigration, and colonization."

"scarcity narrative became so successful that it erased even the possibility of imagining water resources any other way".[47]

Chapter 2: The Six-Day War of 1967: water shortages and their consequent security effects

The Six-Day War that took place in 1967 between Israel and her Arab neighbours provided major territorial gains for Israel, significantly increasing its water security. The capture of the Golan Heights during the 1967 War and its official annexation in 1981 provided Israel access to a large number of water sources such as the Yarmouk,

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[47] Alatout, "Bringing abundance into environmental politics: Constructing a Zionist network of water abundance, immigration, and colonization." 365.

the coast of Lake Tiberias and the Banias, as well as giving it a monopoly over the water in the Palestinian territories it captured.[48] Ironically, despite the sovereignty over water-rich territories including the Golan Heights that bestowed Israel with greater water security, this inadvertently generated insecurity in other ways. It has heightened tensions with its Arab neighbours, which was a motivating factor in their decision to attack Israel in 1973 during the Yom Kippur War. The conquest of these territories through the war is thought to have been partly motivated by dwindling water supplies, as the Israeli government had now recognised that water supplies in Israel weren't as abundant as they had hoped.

The importance of the Six-Day War in terms of water security is Israel's transition into the hydro-hegemon in the Middle East. This provided it with the greatest authority in the region, undermining equal allocation between the states sharing the trans-boundary water resources. This role, however, posed a so-called security paradox for Israel as heightening its security in one way decreased it in another.[49] Although it is not widely accepted by scholars and historians that Israel's hydrological motives were the cause of the 1967 war as many of the captured areas were seen as part of historic, greater Israel, thus had Zionist importance as well as providing it with more points of defence. However, the vast water resources that these territories held were no doubt a factor in Israel's decision to annex them.[50] In this chapter, I will discuss the events leading up to the Six-Day War in 1967, which included a number of water wars and the post-security effects regarding Israel's relations with its neighbours and for its water supplies. However, before discussing the implications of the Six-Day War on Israel's water security and the governments framing of water, it is important to first discuss the origins of the war and the factors responsible for the outbreak in direct conflict.

Background to the war

The Six-Day War ultimately erupted because the Soviet Union sent a message to Syria and Egypt claiming that they had discovered that Israel was planning to attack

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[48] Morag, "Water, geopolitics and state building: The case of Israel."

[49] Christopher Daase. "On Paradox and Pathologies: A cultural approach to security" in *Transformations of Security Studies,* Routledge, Abingdon (2015): 82-93.

[50] Sharif S Elmusa, "The land-water nexus in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25, no. 3 (1996): 69-78.

Syria's borders resulting in Nasser (former president of Egypt and a strong promoter of pan-Arab unity known as 'Nasserism') moving troops to the Sinai in May 1967.[51] However, this tip-off from Soviet Union intelligence claiming that Israel was planning an attack on Syria never proved to be true. Israel interpreted the move of these forces into the Sinai as a provocation. Levi Eshkol, the Prime Minister at the time, initially hoped that deploying some reserved forces while simultaneously refraining from using force would prevent full-blown conflict but this strategy did not deter Nasser who only continued to act aggressively and use violent rhetoric towards Israel.[52] In a speech to the Egyptian National Assembly on May 29th 1967, Nasser stated, *"Preparations have already been made. We are now ready to confront Israel...We are now ready to deal with the entire Palestine question".*[53] Nasser explicitly stated that his goal was the total destruction of Israel stating that, "Our basic objective will be the destruction of Israel. The Arab people want to fight".[54]

Acknowledging that armed clashes were inevitable at this point, on the 5th June 1967, the Israeli Air Force executed surprise attacks on the Egyptian and Syrian airfields resulting in heavy losses for its Arab neighbours. The result was a spectacular victory for Israel, with a huge divergence between each side's death toll and casualties, and massive territorial gains for Israel. It now had control over the Golan Heights, which provides Israel with 30% of its water supplies and also has geopolitical importance providing a strategic defence point, which explains why Israel has been so reluctant to give up the territory.[55]

The relevance of analyzing the war in 1967, the events that led up to it and the resulting conquest of Arab territories is a further indication of the extreme measures the Israeli government has taken after framing water as vital to its national security. Of course, the direct cause of Israeli officials decisions to attack the Arab armed forces was driven by self-defense, as Nasser had made it overtly clear that he had every intention to attack Israel, which prompted them to act first. However, the

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[51] Dimitrios Machairas, "The strategic and political consequences of the June 1967 war." *Cogent Social Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2017). 1-9.

[52] Zaki Shalom, "Israel's Foreign Minister Eban meets President de Gaulle and Prime Minister Wilson on the Eve of the Six Day War." *Israel Affairs* 14, no. 2 (2008): 277-287.

[53] Abdel Nasser "The Six Day War: Nasser's speech to the Egyptian National Assembly" *Jewish Virtual Library (*May, 1967). Accessed on May 1st available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/nasser-s-speech-to-the-egyptian-national-assembly-may-1967.

[54] Abdel Nasser , "Precursors to war: Arab threats against Israel" *CAMERA,* (May, 1967). Accessed on May 1st available at http://www.sixdaywar.org/content/threats.asp.

[55] Middle East Eye, "The Golan Heights: Why it matters" (March, 2019). Accessed on June 9th available at https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/what-are-the-golan-heights.

tensions that had been accumulating and the smaller armed confrontations over water that repeatedly occurred prior to June 1967 undoubtedly increased the prospect of war. The fear of losing control over these water resources certainly contributed to Israel's decisions to take the Occupied Territories. The Arab attacks together with their construction work along the rivers and their basins could have been detrimental to Israel's water security.

Water concerns and attacks leading up to the Six-Day War

The events leading up to the war did include issues over hydro-politics, which has been somewhat overlooked in literature. Moshe Shemesh, a scholar in Middle Eastern Studies, believes that tensions over shared water resources were actually the most significant reason as to why Israel's relations with its Arab neighbors became increasingly fraught in the build-up to the Six-Day War. This is especially because of the completion of Israel's National Water Carrier in 1964, created to divert water from the Jordan River and Sea of Galilee to the Negev in southern Israel.[56] When construction on Israel's National Water Carrier was almost complete, thirteen Arab leaders met in Cairo for a summit to vote to oppose Israel's diversion of the Jordan River in 1964. Although at this point it was too late, the anger over Israel's attempts to divert the trans-boundary water resources without their consent, undoubtedly provoked anger in the Arab world, further unifying the nations at this meeting.[57] The Arab League was aware that a greater water supply would provide Israel the capacity for even more Jewish immigrants, as well as enhancing its economy and infrastructure, creating a strong Jewish state in the middle of the region, threatening their own security.

Shemesh emphasizes that the tensions over the Jordan River's water resources have been a major element in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Although, he explains that this has been unnecessarily heightened due to other political reasons like the general conflict between the Arabs and Israelis that has existed from the very beginning of the modern state of Israel's establishment. While water disputes were a factor in the conflict, analyzing how great of a role they play is therefore complicated, given that

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[56] Moshe Shemesh, "Prelude to the six-day war: The Arab-Israeli struggle over water resources." *Israel Studies* 9, no. 3 (2004): 1-45.

[57] Donald Neff, "Israel-Syria: conflict at the Jordan river, 1949-1967." *Journal of Palestine studies* 23, no. 4 (1994): 26-40.

the hydrological role in the Six-Day War has been overlooked because of other factors influencing the political context at the time. Both sides already had grievances against the other, thus it is hard to measure how much water issues affected the Six-Day War. A plethora of factors contributed to the war, all heightened by the long-standing tensions the two parties had with each other.

However, it appears that water concerns were more central to the war than has been acknowledged. This is perhaps because hydrological concerns went hand-in-hand with territorial disputes over the Occupied Territories, because that was where these resources were located. This has thus led to a more nuanced focus on the territorial aspect without considering all of the factors that made these territories such a source of contention. This is especially in apparent in a UN report on Israel's policies in the West Bank before 1967. According to the report Israel was facing a water crisis as "there were no unexploited water resources" in the region and the report makes clear that the water supplies in the West Bank are still a factor today in Israel's refusal to give up sovereignty over these territories.[58]

It is equally important to note that the six days of fighting in 1967 were not the only outbreaks of violence over water as there were a number of smaller clashes over water in the build-up to the outbreak of the Six Day War. For example, on the 16th March 1965, an Israel tractor driver was killed in a DMZ, which the IDF exploited and used as an excuse to attack Syria's diversion sites and on May 13th 1965 Israeli patrol tanks attacked the water diversion equipment, resulting in Syria ceasing its work in the area.[59] Former Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon who fought as a Major-General during the Six-Day War recounted in his autobiography:

"People generally regard June 5 1967 as the day the Six Day war began. That is the official date. But, in reality, it started two-and-a-half years earlier, on the day Israel decided to act against the diversion of the Jordan. While the border disputes between Syria and ourselves were of great significance, the matter of water diversion was a stark issue of life and death."[60]

The language that Sharon employed in this speech act described the situation as "life or death", which exposes how water was securitized to justify the excess use of force

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58 United Nations, "Israel's Policy on the West Bank Water Resources" (1980). Accessed on May 21st available at https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-206852/.

59 Shemesh, "Prelude to the six-day war: The Arab-Israeli struggle over water resources."

60 Chris McGreal, "Deadly Thirst" *The Guardian,* (January, 2004). Accessed on April 30th available at https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2004/jan/13/water.israel.

that was exercised by the IDF, the many lives that were lost as a result and the conquest of the Occupied Territories. As mentioned, during this period Israel had already accepted that its water supplies were no longer abundant and there had been several clashes over shared water resources. To ensure that Israel became a prosperous state that could have unrestricted Jewish immigration, it would need to have sufficient water supplies, contributing to water scarcity being framed as a matter of national survival.

In an article from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs that reported on the causes of the Six-Day War, it states that the strained relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors that contributed to the war were a result of the exploitation of the Jordan River and Kineret Lake, indicating that there was angst over water supplies at the time. However, it attempts to shift most of the blame to the Arabs. It states that the clashes were "initiated by Syria" and because the Palestinians had carried out "terror attacks against Israel encouraged by Arab states, particularly Syria", concluding that "the immediate causes for the war included a series of escalating steps taken by the Arabs".[61] While these statements do contain some validity, as both sides did indeed carry out attacks on the others and Syria was supporting Fatah, the Palestinian organization that had carried out a number of terrorist attacks on the state of Israel, the issue is that the report is omitting the part that it played in the build-up to the war. Its continual work in the DMZs and its attacks on Syrian forces and construction workers are what motivated many of these "escalating steps" in an attempt to shift the blame in order to justify its decision to occupy the territories, although as this source comes directly from the Israeli government it is unsurprising that it contains an element of bias.

Israel had essentially abandoned the Armistice Agreement by diverting water away from its Arab neighbors towards the Negev without consulting them. This consequently prompted the Arabs to then set up their own diversion plans, such as Jordan's plans in late 1958 to divert water from the Yarmuk River before it could join the Jordan River, essentially cutting Israel's supply.[62] This reflects Sharon's sentiment that water diversion was a threat to Israel's survival and the role it likely played in the government's decision to capture the territories that would provide it monopoly over

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[61] Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Events leading to the Six-Day War (1967)". Accessed on April 29th available at https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/maps/pages/events%20leading%20to%20the%20six%20day%20war-%201967.aspx.
[62] Neff, "Israel-Syria: conflict at the Jordan river, 1949-1967."

their shared water resources. Utilising Waltz's theory of offensive and defensive realism to analyse these alternating attacks between both parties it becomes apparent that the responses of the parties were a balancing act as each felt their security threatened.[63] This explains the back and forth attacks over constructions along their trans-boundary water resources that they shared that had been culminating throughout the two decades prior to the Six-Day War.

Security effects post-1967

The extensive territorial gains that Israel made after the war in 1967 altered the hydro-political situation in the Middle East, providing Israel with control over the Jordan River's Basin. Israel's conquests provided it with an area triple the size of its borders prior to the war occupying the West Bank, the Golan heights, the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza strip which heightened its defense from potential border clashes since the new borders provided Israel a strategic advantage to predict any potential threats.[64] Indeed, through the prism of realism, nothing is more important for a state than its territorial integrity, which is intertwined with its national security.[65] However, enhancing Israel's border and water security decreased its security in another aspect. It worsened the Arab-Israeli conflict, which was not a new phenomenon at the time, but capturing the territories heightened the resentment felt by the Palestinians and other Arab neighbors due to the humiliating defeat and the loss of their lands to Israel.[66] Tying into the security paradox, while Israel's short-term border and water security were improved, it had several adverse outcomes in the long-term.

An example of one of the negative outcomes on Israel's security was the Yom Kippur War in 1977, which was a surprise attack executed by Egypt during a Jewish religious holiday, Yom Kippur. The war effectively stemmed from the 1967 War as Egypt and Syria were attempting to redeem their massive defeat and to regain some of

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[63] Marcel Serr, "Struggle for Existence or Urge for Expansion? A Reappraisal of the Six-Day War Through the Prism of Defensive and Offensive Realism." *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 11, no. 1 (2017): 55-66.

[64] Machairas, "The strategic and political consequences of the June 1967 war."

[65] Serr. "Struggle for Existence or Urge for Expansion? A Reappraisal of the Six-Day War Through the Prism of Defensive and Offensive Realism."

[66] Machairas, "The strategic and political consequences of the June 1967 war."

their lost territories.[67] While Israel won the war, it was not the victory of 1967 as it came very close to defeat, which forced Israel to enter into negotiations with Egypt and Syria.[68] However, this would actually improve its security long-term as it now was at peace with its neighbors, with both sides no longer fearing an attack from the other, although the psychological trauma was long-lasting and still remains "the most traumatic phase in Israel's history".[69]

However, there were some positive security effects too. Israel's conquest of vast territories in 1967 did not only enable it to exert dominance over its Arab neighbors due to having topographical superiority and greater defenses but it could also do so through dominating over the river basins, a form of 'hydro-hegemony'. Mark Zeitoun and Jeroen Warner define hydro-hegemony as:

"hegemony at the river basin level, achieved through water resource control strategies such as resource capture, integration and containment. The strategies are executed through an array of tactics (e.g. coercion- pressure, treaties, knowledge construction, etc.) that are enabled by the exploitation of existing power asymmetries within a weak international institutional context".[70]

They explain that while war is an effective means to exert hydro-hegemony, direct conflict over water is a rare occurrence but they consider the example of Syria and Israel's violent clashes as an exception. The military actions during conflict that they mention included the bombing of dams and attacks on construction workers, which were successful in facilitating Israel's dominance over the river basins. Josepha Wessels, using the case study of the Golan Heights, describes hydro-hegemony as a concept that distinguishes;

"between those water management regimes that are based on equitable distribution among water users and, in contrast, hegemonic systems whereby one or two users have power over other users based on access and control of the water resources, either by force or coercion".[71]

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[67] Kumaraswamy, Prasanna R., ed. *Revisiting the Yom Kippur War*. Vol. 5. Psychology Press, Frank Cass Publishers, Abingdon (2000).

[68] Uri Bar-Joseph, *Watchman Fell Asleep, The: The Surprise of Yom Kippur and Its Sources*. SUNY Press, New York (2012).

[69] Kumaraswamy. *Revisiting the Yom Kippur War*: 2.

[70] Mark Zeitoun, and Jeroen Warner, "Hydro-hegemony–a framework for analysis of trans-boundary water conflicts." *Water policy* 8, no. 5 (2006): 435.

[71] Josepha Ivanka Wessels, "Challenging hydro-hegemony: Hydro-politics and local resistance in the Golan Heights and the Palestinian territories." *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 72, no. 4 (2015): 602-603.

In fact, according to Zeitoun and Warner, a vital aspect of the process to achieve hydro-hegemony can include the securitization of water to distract from much more serious issues.[72] The Israeli government undertook this by portraying their construction work and conquest of the Occupied Territories as vital to national security to avoid opposition, which was a tactic to direct attention from and to fulfill other political aims.

Indeed, this is evident through statements that former Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol's made in a security cabinet session after Israel had achieved sovereignty over the new territories in December 1967. As there were 600,000 Arabs in the Occupied Territories, now under Israeli rule that potentially threatened the Jewish demographics and would require Israeli water supplies too, in a declassified document it is shown that Eshkol decided that they should encourage them to emigrate elsewhere suggesting: "Perhaps if we don't give them enough water they wont have a choice."[73] Currently, Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza do not receive sufficient water allocations and in summertime, the Mekorot reduces their supplies further justified by the Israeli government as a necessity to provide for their own population.[74]

International response

While Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights provided it with various economic and security benefits, it also provoked widespread condemnation and had detrimental impacts on the Syrians who inhabited the region. The United Nations Security Council declared the Israeli government's actions illegal and a violation of international law as noted in Resolution 497: "that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights is null and void and without international legal effect".[75]

However, this did not prevent Israel from annexing the Golan Heights. While the

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[72] Zeitoun and Warner, "Hydro-hegemony–a framework for analysis of trans-boundary water conflicts."

[73] Ofer Aderet, "Israeli Prime Minister After Six-Day War: 'We'll Deprive Gaza of Water, and the Arabs Will Leave'." *Haaretz* (November, 2017). Accessed on May 1st available at https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israeli-pm-in-67-we-ll-deprive-gaza-of-water-and-the-arabs-will-leave-1.5465942.

[74] B'Tselem, "Water Crisis", Jerusalem (November, 2017). Accessed on April 2nd available at https://www.btselem.org/water.

[75] United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 497" (December 1981). Accessed on May 3rd available at https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/73D6B4C70D1A92B7852560DF0064F101.

local inhabitants' nationality was Syrian, they were now living in Israeli territory. They were faced with the ultimatum to either accept Israeli citizenship (which most refused), or to face a rise in their water bills and the locals were also deprived of irrigation water from Lake Ram for ten years after the Six-Day War which were prioritized for the Israeli settlements.[76]

It would be less acceptable from the point of the international community for Israeli officials to admit that they captured the Arab's lands for Zionist or geopolitical reasons and that it was to exert their dominance over the neighbors than to say that they were for hydrological reasons. This was to ensure a larger population, increase agricultural production (which as discussed was not an absolute necessity) and conquer historical Jewish territory such as areas of the West Bank, historically known as the biblical Judea and Samaria.

Conclusion

The Six-Day War was not directly fought over water and Israel's attacks at the Sinai were not initially motivated by a desire to conquer these areas as Israel was acting in self-defense, but water did play a major part in the war. Multiple clashes over many years in the build-up to the war were due to construction along river basins with each side attempting to prevent the other from completing diversions to its territory, which no doubt worsened already tense relations. While the Six-Day War cannot be defined as a 'water war' because water was not the only issue that was at stake at the time, Israel's acquisition of multiple territories that secured its water supplies were partly motivated because of its repeated military confrontations with Syria. Therefore, the Israeli government's anxieties about being unable to accomplish its agricultural aspirations, exacerbated by its Arab neighbors attempts to divert the water flows away from Israel, likely prompted it to capitalize on this opportunity to seize the territories when it presented itself.

The idea that the politics of war and the state's national security would be linked with the politics of water may seem unusual, but a state's foreign security policy is

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[76] Wessels,"Challenging hydro-hegemony: Hydro-politics and local resistance in the Golan Heights and the Palestinian territories."

inextricably linked with its domestic society.[77] This is because the systematic factors of the state inevitably shape foreign relations and on many occasions the state enters military confrontations with another because it is vital for a state to be perceived by its people as making its national security the utmost priority.[78] The Six-Day War and the additional territorial conquests that Israel had made affirmed its reputation as a strong, secure state with abundant water supplies. Therefore, through Israeli officials' choice of foreign policy of warring (victoriously) with its neighbors and dominating them through seizing foreign territory, it satisfied its domestic demands that were integral to building a secure and economically strong state.

Chapter 3: The narrative of water scarcity in the 1990s and early 2000s

In this final chapter, I will discuss the exceptional measures that motivated the government's securitization of water and measures taken as a result. I will also discuss the fault in Israel's supply-side policy when it comes to its water resources, which is the decision to respond to any droughts or water shortages by searching for unlimited means to maximize its water supplies and how demand-side policies would be significantly more sustainable.

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[77] Michael Barnett, "High Politics is Low Politics: The domestic and systemic sources of Israeli security policy, 1967–1977." *World Politics* 42, no. 4 (1990): 529-562

[78] Barnett, "High Politics is Low Politics: The domestic and systemic sources of Israeli security policy, 1967–1977.".

Despite the vast amount of water resources it acquired in 1967, the shift to a more prominent narrative on water scarcity, in the 1990s and early 2000s came as a result of an awareness on how climate change could affect water supplies. There were severe droughts at the start of the 1990s prompting amongst government officials to generate fear around allowing the Palestinians to regain authority over their territories as a threat to Israel's water security.[79] However, there were also a number of peace talks with the Palestinians, although attempts at cooperatively managing water in the region were hindered partly due to water issues. Another measure outside the norm that is undertaken as a result of the securitization of water that will be discussed is the high spending on water technologies including desalination. The government is attempting to garner public support to implement high spending on desalination technology, and is one of the most expensive methods used to extract water. It also has detrimental environmental effects, which evidently are not the goal of the government, but a negative side effect of the desalination process. The purpose of the official Israeli securitization efforts here are to justify these side effects as an unfortunate outcome of a necessary process that is required to prevent serious water shortages.

Initial shifts in water perceptions and Zionist importance

The Israeli government's decision to attempt to generate fear in its population regarding water scarcity can partly be understood by empirical evidence. This is because the potential effects of climate change began to become more apparent after several years of drought in the 1990s. A government report in 2015 explained why Israel has to constantly be investing in new ways to secure its water supplies as the standards of living are continually rising as is the population, while simultaneously precipitation is decreasing by 10-15% every 30 years due to climate change.[80] This is

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[79] Elmusa, "The land-water nexus in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

[80] Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Israel: A Global Leader in Water Management and Technology".

an explanation as to why the Israeli government still framed water shortages as a threat to national security, despite the massive increase in water resources after 1967.

A major shift in the 1990s was that agriculture was no longer the major priority when it came to water allocation. Instead, the main authority over water was now in the hands of the Finance Committee instead of the Water Committee because the government began to recognise that water shortages were to a certain degree, caused by the preference towards agricultural needs.[81] In an inquiry by the Knesset in 2002 examining past policies that were a source of Israel's water crisis today, the report denied that prioritizing agricultural needs was one of the causes of Israel's current water crisis and rejected the notion that limiting agriculture was an appropriate strategy due to its "Zionist-strategic-political value".[82] It is paradoxical that the government would deny that the over-consumption from the agricultural sector is the root cause of Israel's water shortage. This is because the report goes on to acknowledge that since Israel's establishment, agriculture has always been the major consumer of water in Israel. In fact, the agricultural sector was still receiving large water allocations at the time this report was written, although it had decreased from using 80% of the sweet water in 1970, to 50% in 2000.[83] This indicates that the government was aware that water had been over-prioritized. Yet, it acknowledged that because of the ideological significance of farming in the Negev and because of the strategic value it held in regards to defense, they would have to allow agriculture to continue to receive a large percentage of the state's water.

Therefore, in keeping with the security paradox, the theory that when a state increases its security in one aspect, it will decrease it in another, Israel's attempts to expand its water supplies today could generate water insecurity in the future. Rather than conserving their water resources or limiting immigration, the apparent goal was to exploit its water resources to the limit throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. As already discussed, water in Israel has unexpected links with Zionist prophecies. For Israel, being able to maximize its water supplies has been so important for Zionism that in a government report on Israel's hydrological successes, it opens with a quote from Isaiah 41:17-18. The passage states:

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81 Menahem, "Policy paradigms, policy networks and water policy in Israel."

82 Knesset, "The Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry on the Israeli Water Sector, Headed by MK David Magen." (June, 2002) Accessed on March 23rd available at https://www.knesset.gov.il/committees/eng/docs/englishwater.pdf.

83 Knesset, "The Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry on the Israeli Water Sector, Headed by MK David Magen"

"When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water"[84]

The report also exposes how water scarcity is linked with Jewish national identity, highlighting the continuity of water scarcity in Israel throughout its whole existence stating: "For thousands of years, the history of the Land of Israel has been influenced by the scarcity of water".[85]

Further evidence of the securitization of water is when the Ministry of Agriculture in 1990 (when it was in the main body for controlling water policy) is an advertisement placed in the *Jerusalem Post,* which explained that Israel had to remain in control of the West Bank. It cited water security as a factor because "uncontrolled extraction by Palestinians would seriously damage Israel's capacity to pump water from its side, and the high risk of pollution".[86] While this was not a physical speech act by the securitizing actor at hand (the Ministry of Agriculture), the advertisement attempted to generate public fear by insisting that allowing the Palestinians full control over the West Bank and its resources was a threat to Israel's water security. In actual reality, there is little justification for this argument, given that since Israel gained control over the Palestinian territories it has been guilty of exploitative water policies by over-pumping and Israel had also not provided the Palestinians the means to construct appropriate sewage facilities leading to contaminated water in the region.[87] The possibility of ever returning sovereignty of the Golan Heights to Syria was also framed as a threat to Israel's water security when Prime Minister Rabin declared to a group of Israeli ambassadors in 1995 that: "the greatest danger Israel has to face in the negotiations with Syria is the possibility of losing control over the Golan Heights' water resources".[88]

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[84] Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Israel: A Global Leader in Water Management and Technology": *Media and Public Affairs Division Information and Visual Media Department.* 1-23. Accessed on May 15th available at https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/Documents/water.pdf.

[85] Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Israel: A Global Leader in Water Management and Technology": 4.

[86] Sharif S Elmusa, "The land-water nexus in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." 73.

[87] Elmusa, "The land-water nexus in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

[88] Frederic C. Hof. "The Water Dimension of Golan Heights Negotiations", *Middle East Policy Council,* Volume 5 no.2 (1997) Accessed on May 23rd available at https://mepc.org/node/4715.

These examples illustrate how objective statistics on resources can be construed through speech and how public perceptions on resources are commonly viewed in subjective terms rather than the material reality. They are thus dependent upon how they are framed by powerful actors. However, many actors from the international community have not accepted the Israeli narrative. At the 75th UN plenary meeting in 2004 the illegality and cruelty of Israel's water policies towards Palestine were discussed, with Resolution 59/251 highlighting:

"the detrimental impact of the Israeli settlements on Palestinian and other Arab natural resources, especially as a result of the confiscation of land and the forced diversion of water resources, and of the dire economic and social consequences in this regard…the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, including land and water".[89]

These measures are outside the law of democratic, legitimate politics as not only are Israel's settlement in these territories itself illegal, but it is also violating the Palestinians and Syrians rights to the resources in their own land in order to enhance their own domestic supplies.

The impact of water on Israeli-Palestinian relations

The securitization of water as a scarce resource has normalised these human rights abuses that the Palestinians suffer, especially limiting access to clean drinking water and means of subsistence. This rationalization of these illegal policies stem from ideological perceptions that many in the Israeli government hold such as the right-wing Likud and Tzomet parties that Palestinians have no rights to the land, so accordingly they have no right to its water resources either.[90] The normalization of these policies can be explained with Abulof's work on 'deep securitization' and Lupovici's theory that securitization processes can become so routine that it is not clear when this is occurring. Especially in a society like Israel where securitization is so embedded into policy-making and where a wide scope of issues can be deemed existential threats, a speech act is not always a necessity.

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[89] United Nations, "UN General Assembly Resolutions: Resolution 59/251" *Jewish Virtual Library* (December, 2004). Accessed on May 16th available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/un-general-assembly-resolution-59-251-december-2004.

[90] Elmusa, "The land-water nexus in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

One example that Israel has taken to maximize its water resources since 1967 at the expense of those in Palestinian territories is digging wells between the Israeli-Gazan border for Israeli use. These wells halt underground water flow towards Gaza heightening the water crisis there and Israel has also created strict rules in the Occupied Territories on water consumption on the basis of its own water security.[91] Securitizing water is thus done so to justify depriving the Palestinians of water in order to secure their own supplies. However, this is undermined when one looks at agricultural statistics differences in each territory. Agriculture is an extensively more important economic asset for the Palestinians than the Israelis. Yet many Palestinian farmers have had to find work elsewhere due to limited irrigation even though over 10% of Palestinian GDP is dependent on agriculture in contrast to just 3% of Israeli GDP, yet 50% of the land in Israel is irrigated compared to 10% in Palestine.[92]

Water issues have also affected peace talks. Tensions over water hindered peace prospects with the Palestinians in the 1990s during two majorly important events that took place in order to improve Israeli-Palestinian relations, which were the signing of the Oslo Agreement of 1993 and the Sharm-al-Sheik Agreement. Although some successes were achieved in the 1990s such as Israel's signing of a peace treaty with Jordan in 1994, little progress was made for the Palestinian cause. One of the major blockades to peace was tensions over water rights, especially the Mountain Aquifer which lies under the West Bank but flows into Israeli territory creating disagreements over who should have authority over this water basin.[93] The difficulty is that both parties base their claims to the aquifer on one of the main principles of international law regarding water sovereignty, which is prior historic use, which both parties claim to have had.[94]

However, the picture is not solely one of strife and collusion. Israeli and Palestinian authorities have attempted to collaborate several times in order to come up with a conclusive outline on how to jointly manage the water resources that they share, since 1993. The result of the Oslo Accords was that Israel would obtain full control over the West Bank and agreed allocations of water for each side were

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[91] Mustafa, I, "The Arab-Israeli conflict over water resources." *In Studies in Environmental Science* 58 (1994): 123-212.

[92] Mersiha Gadzo, "How Israel engages in 'water apartheid'". *Al Jazeera* (0ctober, 2017). Accessed on May 21st available at https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/israel-engages-water-apartheid-171013110734930.html.

[93] Shuval, H.I, "A proposal for an equitable resolution to the conflicts between the Israelis and the Palestinians over the shared water resources of the Mountain Aquifer", *Arab Studies Quarterly*. (2000): 33-61.

[94] Shuval, "A proposal for an equitable resolution to the conflicts between the Israelis and the Palestinians over the shared water resources of the Mountain Aquifer".

implemented.[95] As Israel still controls the majority of the water resources this has been a source of tension in the Arab-Israeli conflict because while Israel always ensured that its supplies are sufficient, the amount of water that each Palestinian receives is steadily decreasing, especially because its population is increasing and climate change is worsening.[96]

The effects of Israel's water policies on the environment and long-term sustainable water supplies

It is also important to note the environmental effects that have come with the securitization of water because the security paradox has also come into play regarding environmental issues. The environmental damage coming from Israel's attempts at discovering new water resources to exploit and implementing new water extraction methods, could in the long-term actually create water shortages. A report from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs on developing water resources writes that despite the success Israel has had in maximizing its water supplies, it states they are "now being exploited almost to the limit. However, the country's population is growing constantly, and so is the demand for water. Urgent measures must be taken to provide additional quantities of water" such as desalination which involves turning seawater into drinkable fresh, although this is a very expensive process and consequently difficult to sustain long-term.[97] According to a report from the Knesset, after several droughts that led to what they called "a severe water crisis" the decision was made to begin the desalination of seawater.[98]

The report however admitted that desalination technology has many negative side effects, not only in terms of economic cost and for the environment, but also for human health. The purpose of desalination is to remove salts from the water, but in doing so this removed other important chemicals such as magnesium and calcium and

[95] Amira Hass, "Just how much do Palestinians rely on Israel for water?" *Haaretz* (February, 2014). Accessed on may 16th available at https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-do-palestinians-rely-on-israel-for-water-1.5321782.

[96] Jonathan Lautze, Meredith Reeves, Rosaura Vega, and Paul Kirshen, "Water Allocation, Climate Change, and Sustainable Peace The Israeli Proposal: The Israeli Proposal", *Water International* 30, no. 2 (2005): 197-209.

[97] Dov Sitton "Development of water resources" *Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.* (October, 2002) Accessed on May 5th available at https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/IsraelAt50/Pages/Development%20of%20Water%20Resources.aspx.

[98] Ido Avgar. "Israeli Water Sector: Key issues". *The Knesset Research and Information Sector.* (February, 2018): 25. Accessed on May 17th available at https://m.knesset.gov.il/EN/activity/mmm/mmmeng250218.pdf.

it has been shown that Israel's water is unusually low in magnesium, negatively affecting citizens' health.[99] Construction began anyway in 2003 on the first desalination facility and in a government report on water technology, it insists that desalination was a necessity as it is "essential to sustaining potable water in Israel, since they supplement the severely limited natural resources to a level that meets existing national potable water demands".[100] The use of the language here is indicative of a securitizing speech act describing how the process is *"essential"* to the state portraying it as vital to national interests and describes the water situation at the time as being *"severely"* scarce. This language would almost certainly instill fear in the public as water supplies are vital to the states survival and if depleted, would also threaten their quality of life, consequently preventing the public from having issues with such expensive water facilities being built.

Environmental damage is one of the negative, but not intentional outcomes that the Israel government has evidently sought to justify through the securitization of water. Extensive drainage projects in the Hula Valley have had detrimental effects on nature. The Israeli government initially considered it a great success in the 1950s proving that the Zionist project could make effective use of the land by draining the lake and its swamps, thus substantiating their agricultural ambitions. The adverse effects on the ecosystem have meant that some of the lakes and swamps have had to be re-flooded in order to create a balance between ecological and human needs.[101] Amongst NGOs and environmental organizations, there is the agreement that although desalination methods have been an important contributor to Israel's water supply, it is not a necessity and Israel will still be able to satisfy its populations needs without desalination.[102] These organizations have insisted that conservation of the environment needs to be taken into consideration just as much as national water demands. The Water Authority's Master Plan for Water Sector Development outlines their plans for the use of desalination to meet the growing water demands in Israel. Their goal is to ensure that by the year 2050, 41% of the nations potable water

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[99] Avgar, "Israeli Water Sector: Key issues"

[100] Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Israel: A Global Leader in Water Management and Technology" (2015): 13. Accessed on May 14th available at https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/Documents/water.pdf.

[101] Jewish Virtual Library, Geography of Israel: The Hula Valley (ND). Accessed on March 22nd available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hula-valley.

[102] Abraham Tenne, "Sea Water Desalination in Israel: Planning, coping with difficulties, and economic aspects of long-term risks." *Israel Water Authority* 1 (2010): 1-13.

demands are used by desalinated water supplies but this is not particularly sustainable as building the facilities can take up to seven years and has adverse environmental affects, but desalination is perceived as vital to ensuring the states continued economic and population growth.[103]

Desalination, along with other water management strategies in Israel have inadvertently had negative consequences for the environment. Thomas Naff, a professor from the University of Pennsylvania promoted the concept of having a demand-side water policy approach in Israel in 1994, despite supply-side policies being the norm for most of Israel's existence.[104] Supply-side policies involve consistently extracting as much water as possible during times of drought, without considering the long-term effects. A security paradox is evident here as these are not sustainable neither for its water supplies nor the environment, despite being considered the easier and less-costly policy response. Naff's proposals are that population growth in the region should be slowed and that less of a priority should be given to the agricultural sector. However, he recognizes that this would be difficult due to agriculture's symbolic importance and he also acknowledges the obstacles involved in shifting public perception on water due to how it has been framed in Israel. He emphasizes that there must be an "on-going effort to instill in the public consciousness not only the need for reducing demand, but ways in which this can be done with a view to changing perceptions".[105] The relevance of Naff's contention to the securitization of water is that the Israeli government's choice to portray water as scarce is not legitimate. This is because they could choose demand-side policies that would ensure that the nation's needs are met but not over exploited, which would prevent water scarcity in the long-term. Therefore, the somewhat Malthusian viewpoint that the more people there are then the more consumption of resources there will be is flawed as the problem at hand is more to do with the demand for resources rather than the population numbers.[106]

103 Tenne, "Sea Water Desalination in Israel: Planning, coping with difficulties, and economic aspects of long-term risks."

104 Thomas Naff, "A case for demand-side water management." (1994) In *Studies in Environmental Science*, vol. 58, Elsevier. 83-92.

105 Naff, "A case for demand-side water management." 89.

106 Betsy Hartmann, "Population, environment and security: a new trinity." *Environment and urbanization* 10, no. 2 (1998): 113-128.

Indeed, looking at Israeli government reports and the topic of water on the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, it is evident that the government is very keen to showcase its hydrological achievements and irrigate even the most arid regions. In a report from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, it admits that Israel has been extremely successful in undertaking the difficult task of meeting the hydrological levels required to create a strong economy and high quality of life for its citizens.[107] However, similarly to Naff's observations, the report by the AAAS stresses that while Israel's National Water Carrier was majorly successful in facilitating agricultural growth in the South, an adverse affect of its use is that it actually worsened salinity in problem areas and caused ecological degradation. Israel's water policies have had serious consequences on its environment such as seawater intrusion caused by over-pumping its aquifers and groundwater contamination from sewers that could seriously affect its water quality in the future.[108]

Xenophobic policies

Another, but more minor reason that Israel official have continued to securitize water during the 1990s-2000s is to justify tightening its borders controls. This is due to the increased flux of African 'climate refugees' and because the number of droughts in the region have been on the rise. Israel can thus argue that it cannot supply the water needs of these increased numbers. This is especially due to an ICCIC report in 2012 that made the link between the effects of climate change and increased migration from the worst affected countries, and how this would put Israel's security at risk.[109] Incidentally, the extreme measures occurring are certain groups or communities taking the fault for the threat as combatting one aspect of the environment can result in communities take the fault for the threat, as the threat cannot be solved with a typical military response. As these securitization processes have become so normalized, due to deep securitization in Israeli policy, the government routinely would expect the population to accept these measures regardless of whether a speech act has been integrated. Therefore, norms on how to respond to water scarcity have developed into xenophobia against groups they feel would threaten their resource

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[107] Alon Tal, "Seeking sustainability: Israel's evolving water management strategy." *Science* 313, no. 5790 (2006): 1081-1084

[108] Tal, "Seeking sustainability: Israel's evolving water management strategy."

[109] Erika Weinthal,, Neda Zawahri, and Jeannie Sowers, "Securitizing water, climate, and migration in Israel, Jordan, and Syria." *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* 15, no. 3 (2015): 293-307.

allocation. This group of people have faced xenophobia facilitated by the Israeli governments own discourse, with a Member of the Knesset, Dani Danon from the Lukid party framing Sudanese migrants as a threat: "we must deport them immediately before it is too late. Israel is at war with an enemy country of infiltrators…"[110]

Deterrence strategies have included detaining Sudanese migrants on the basis that they were a security threat, as well as building fences along the Egyptian border.[111] One of the reasons for local xenophobic attitudes has been triggered by fears of competition over what are perceived to be scarce resources. This has been exacerbated by politicians' discourse on material realities generating hostilities, especially as demographic fears have been remarkably normalized generating the same reaction to other ethnic groups, not just the Palestinians.[112] Essentially, securitizing water scarcity and in turn migrants has allowed for more xenophobic policies, worsened tensions with the Palestinians and the construction of more border fences limits the ability of cooperative negotiations with Palestinians for finding solutions for water shortages.[113]

As discussed in previous chapters, because Israel lives in a state of constant existential fear due to the shadow of the Holocaust and the repeated attacks it has faced from its neighbours, alongside the possibility of a legitimate Palestinian state being established, a wide variety of issues can be deemed as existential threats to the states existence. Recently, the Israeli Justice Minister, Ayelat Shaked even admitted that extreme measures must be taken to ensure a Jewish majority, when she stated that: "There is place to maintain a Jewish majority even at the price of violation of rights".[114] While measuring public acceptance can be difficult, one can assume that the Israeli public show at least some form of passive acceptance to the securitization of water and there was little protest in this time period from the public against reducing Palestinian water supplies in order to maximize their own.

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[110] Yoav H.Duman, "Infiltrators go home! Explaining xenophobic mobilization against asylum seekers in Israel." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 16, no. 4 (2015): 1232.

[111] Yonathon Paz, "Ordered disorder: African asylum seekers in Israel and discursive challenges to an emerging refugee problem." *United Nations High Commission for Refugees* no.205 (2011): 1-15. Accessed on June 5th available at https://www.unhcr.org/4d7a26ba9.pdf.

[112] Duman, "Infiltrators go home! Explaining xenophobic mobilization against asylum seekers in Israel."

[113] Weinthal, Zawahri, and Sowers, "Securitizing water, climate, and migration in Israel, Jordan, and Syria."

[114] Al-Jazeera, "Ayelet Shaked: Israel must safeguard Jewish majority" (February 2018). Accessed on May 22nd available at https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/02/ayelet-shaked-israel-safeguard-jewish-majority-180213094846060.html.

This is clear because governments are repeatedly voted in who exercise these policies. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s the right-wing Likud party was in power, known for its support of settlements in Palestinian territories and Zionist supporters, with Labor briefly entering office between 1999 and 2001. In regards to the Golan Heights the Likud party platform stated: "The government will continue to strengthen Jewish settlement on the Golan" and emphasises that the Jordan River will remain a part of the Israeli border.[115] Regarding the possibility of ever providing the Palestinians sovereignty over areas of the Negev (the region symbolically important for agriculture) it states that: "Israel rejects out of hand ideas raised by Labor party leaders concerning the relinquishment of parts of the Negev to the Palestinians…The Likud asserts that such proposals by the Labor Party Leadership may literally cause the dismemberment of the State of Israel."[116]

Conclusion

Contrasting the earliest years after Israel's establishment when water was deliberately constructed as abundant for political purposes with the 1990s and early 2000s can explain why the narrative of water scarcity didn't exactly match the hydrological reality. This chapter has outlined the reasons for the shift in the water scarcity narrative and the policies the government has attempted to implement as a result. One of the first shifts is recognizing that it was no longer sustainable to allocate such large quantities of water to agriculture, through removing the Ministry of Agriculture as the supreme authority over water.

Another shift in discourse was the government's choice to present itself as an exemplar model of hydrological success because of its innovative ability to consistently maximize its water resources, yet simultaneously portray water in the region as scarce. It does this in order to receive support for any measures it undertakes while still maintaining the image of Israel being a leading model of water technology in the Middle East. These measures it undertakes to use the water resources in the territories that it captured in 1967 are illegitimate because they violate international

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[115] Likud Party, "Likud-Platform" *Word Press* (1999): 4. Accessed on June 5th available at https://freedomforward.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/likud-platform.pdf.

[116] Likud Party, "Likud-Platform" 1-2.

law through exploiting resources in what are internationally known as the Occupied Territories. Therefore, despite Israel's hydrological innovation and accomplishments, its policies are not without their negative consequences and Israel's future water policies must be more sustainable to ensure that it can sustain its rapid population growth. If not, the water security of not only Israel, but of those in Palestinian territories who already do not have adequate water supplies, will be threatened and hinder the possibility for peace as it did in the 1990s peace talks.

Conclusion and findings

The securitization of water has gone through many shifts over the last seven decades, but it has been a constant aspect in Israeli politics since the modern state of Israel's establishment. As Alatout made clear, the shift from abundance to scarcity took place in order to centralize all water resources and because the water abundance narrative carried the risk that its regional allocations would thus be smaller. In fact, prior to 1948 water hadn't previously been politicized until the abundance narrative was promoted by politicians back in the 1950s, which is why water can be so conveniently

framed as scarce today to fit a political agenda.[117] This answers my research question of how the Israeli government securitized water. This analysis exposes *how* the government was able to frame water as scarce and therefore a threat to national security. Constructing water as abundant in the first place and linking water with Israeli national identity and the success of the new state heightened its importance, meaning that the state could garner support for the implementation of supply-side water policies. The findings throughout the chapters indicate that Zionist ideology, geopolitics and demographic changes were particularly important in framing water as scarce.

Looking at the turning points throughout the three chapters explains *why* the government chose to securitize water. Analyzing how Israel exploited its water sources in the early years after its establishment and the unnecessary overuse by the agricultural sector can help us to understand contemporary water perceptions in Israel. Zionist beliefs pushed agricultural priorities over water conservation for many years and the depleted supplies as a result of these policies partly affected Israel's decision to capture the water-rich Arab territories. Demographics played an important role in the securitization of water. The government's desire to maintain a Jewish majority is what led the government to deprive those in Palestinian territories of water in order to accommodate for their own population. Occupying vast amounts of Arab territory after the Six-Day War meant that not only had Israel become the hydro-hegemon in the region. It now had more strategic defense points along its new borders and had proven to its military power to its Arab neighbors. As became clear in this thesis, the Israeli securitization of water also serves to justify the Occupied Palestinian territories and the Golan Heights, as relinquishing these regions would impact its water security. The water factor is undoubtedly a reason as to why Israel holds onto these territories. Analyzing these historic turning points and their consequent security effects aids our understanding of water's role in Israel's history and how water shortages are perceived as a threat to national security, especially as Israel has gone to war on a number of occasions specifically because of water.

Through analysing these years, especially the 1990s and early 2000s it becomes apparent that the government chooses to promote its hydrological success and regards itself as a pioneer in the best water technology, seeing Israel as having truly greened

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[117] Alatout, "Bringing abundance into environmental politics: Constructing a Zionist network of water abundance, immigration, and colonization."

the desert. This is true, that Israel has been hugely successful in meeting its population's needs and creating a high quality of life for them. However, it is interesting how it also consistently presents Israel as facing a water 'crisis' insisting that serious efforts must be made to satisfy demands yet it simultaneously champions the hydrological success achieved. It appears that the government has a blind spot and isn't recognizing that these successes are what are in fact causing, or at least contributing to this 'crisis' and that the link needs to be considered. The security paradox is apparent here but in terms of water, where Israel's attempts to increase its water security in one way will decrease it in another in the future due to over-use and environmental damage as a result of its water policies. However, justifying the occupation through claims that Israel cannot survive without the vital water resources that these territories provide is more internationally acceptable than using pure Zionist arguments as these territories are part of biblical, greater Israel. Securitizing water was an important legitimating narrative even if it Zionist, geopolitical and demographic concerns were actually at stake.

Of course, due to Israel's dry climate and its location in a region where water isn't naturally in abundance, it is realistic that supplies would be limited. It is understandable that policies outside the norm would have to be periodically implemented in a state where water supplies are not abundant to ensure that its population is sufficiently provided for. The fact that their population is only increasing and climate change is indeed making droughts more frequent would unquestionably make it even more difficult to cope. I have already acknowledged this and I do not wish to undermine the hydrological challenges a semi-arid nation located in the Middle East faces. However, the issue at hand is that the government has capitalised on this issue in order to violate the human rights of the Palestinians, an already seriously disadvantaged group. The government could make certain amendments and compensations to alleviate domestic problems and to allow more equal allocations of water towards the Palestinians. Israel is also holding onto Arab territories that are internationally recognised as not legally Israeli territory.

A limitation of this thesis is that public acceptance is difficult to measure when it comes to securitization. It is clear though, that there is no obvious protest or at least not enough to indicate that the securitization of water has been rejected by the Israeli public. Israel is a democracy, therefore if the water scarcity narrative and the extreme measures that are justified by it were not accepted then governments that continue to

implement these policies would not be repeatedly voted in. The reason for this unquestioning acceptance of such is easily facilitated by the fact that Israel has faced several real threats to its existence, including the Yom Kippur War of 1973 when Israel came very close to defeat, that would still be in the memory of many Israelis in the 1990s and early 2000s. Therefore, when a senior governmental actor frames an issue as a threat to Israel's national security, they can almost certainly be assured that the public will not question the 'necessary' action required. This is as a result of the deep securitization in Israel that Abulof describes, where a speech act and direct public acceptance aren't always explicit.

Following from this, it was beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss what are the future possibilities and whether the issue will ever be resolved or exacerbated by climate change and if water tensions will worsen the on-going conflict with the Palestinians, or if it could be a means for cooperation. Israel has in the past ended conflicts with its Arab neighbours, signing peace treaties with both Egypt and Jordan, thus it is not a remote possibility. This could be a topic for further analysis. While there hasn't been full-blown military confrontation directly over trans-boundary water resources since those in the 1950s and 1960s, whether these will occur again with its neighbours due to deteriorating supplies as a result of global warming, is another topic that could be further researched.

Due to the worsening effects of climate change and growth in the Palestinian population, Israelis will need to reallocate more water to the Palestinians who already don't have enough to meet their daily needs, otherwise conflict could be inevitable.[118] This is especially because Palestinians are much more likely to be affected negatively by climate change in the future than the Israelis. This is because Israeli agriculture has began to use recycled wastewater which is not affected by climate change, but Palestinians in the West Bank rely on rainwater for agriculture and Gaza heavily relies on a overused coastal aquifer.[119] Taking a different approach to the matter that focuses on conservation and a slightly more austere response to water shortages could prevent the situation from becoming dire in the future. However, it is uncertain as to when the government will cease securitizing water for their own advantage and

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[118] Lautze, and Kirshen, "Water allocation, climate change, and sustainable water use in Israel/Palestine: the Palestinian position."

[119] Eran Feitelson, Abdelrahman Tamimi, and Gad Rosenthal. "Climate change and security in the Israeli–Palestinian context." *Journal of Peace Research* 49, no. 1 (2012): 241-257.

instead speak of it in objective terms and prioritize water conservation, over other political gains.

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