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Research Paper

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## **THE SECURITIZED ENERGY RELATIONSHIP: THE EU AND RUSSIA POLITICAL AND SECURITY DISCOURSES**

**Abstract:** *The subject of energy security in the international arena came to the platform with the increasing economic and globalization development in the framework that is called the 'untraditional security'. In today's international relations, Energy security and security issues appear to be extremely intertwined. Hence, this paper aims to identify the significance of securitization of the energy relationship between Russia and EU countries by both sides and its influence on the Energy Security on the regional security complex between EU countries and Russia. The current study argues that, regardless of the magnitude of the energy relationship, which manifests itself in a high degree of interdependence between the two sides, their relationship saw dispute, because of a high level of securitization process initiated by both EU member states and Russia.*

**Key Words:** *Securitization; Energy Security; Regional Energy Security Complex; EU countries and Russia*

## 1. Introduction

The energy security subject in the international dome came to the platform with the increasing economic and globalization developments in the framework, which is known as the 'untraditional security'. This does not imply that it did not exist before, but it is because of more development in the post-Cold War period in the structure of the expansion in the security concept generally. However, no common definition of energy security exists in literature, but this does not mean that we cannot define it exhaustively. Thus, for more clarification, this paper adopted the definition for energy security by Azzuni & Breyer (2018), which they defined as "the feature (measure, situation, or a status) in which a related system functions optimally and sustainably in all its dimensions, freely from any threats". (P. 5). Meanwhile, some factors, including economic capabilities and self-capabilities play a central role in a country's standing in its relations and foreign policy. Furthermore, the state's capability to use efficiently and optimize the usage of those resources to achieve self-sufficiency and the utilization of soft and flexible diplomacy or solid power to compensate for the lack of natural possessions is essential to obtain an economic renaissance. Besides, when a state has a comparative benefit in a particular crop or resource, its capability to utilize efficiently and investment, for example, go along to pursue self-sufficiency and the usage of soft and smart diplomacy or hard power to provide shortages for its natural sources to revive its economy. A country can achieve some of those productions or some limited materials.

In our research, we analyze the relationship between energy security and the regional security complex, and its impact on Russia and the EU countries' relations. Therefore, the current paper aims to disclose the most significant policies of energy security that have been adopted by both sides, and to what extent those policies were capable to pursue their aims and make the country undependable. Energy security is important in the sense that it can generate a war between pertaining parties, this occurred in the Ukraine Kremlin conflict in 2014, and it caused the struggle between the Russian and EU countries as discussed later in this study.

There are plenty of researches that analyzed the subject of Energy Security in international relations. Considering that, energy is an essential limit to foreign policy and it opens more room to maneuver in the international arena for those who have more undependable energy resources. This is because, the importance of energy grows day by day and gives more weight to those who possessed it, and those countries that depend on others for their energy resources have fewer

influences. Based on this, the problem of the current paper is to search and analyze the substance of Energy Security as a touchstone to project their agendas for both the EU countries and Russia and how both sides securitized their energy relationship and are there a special dimension of energy security exists between them?.

For that reason, the current paper put some questions and tried to find proper answers to them. The main question is 'what is the impact of the Securitization of energy on the regional security complex between Russia and EU countries?' and the empirical question is 'what is the influence of the Energy Security on the relationships between Russia and the EU countries, and its effect on the regional security complex between them?'. The secondary question is: what is the impact of Energy Security on the reestablishment of international alliances?. The EU countries are the most importers of energy resources and Russia is the greatest country in gas energy and the maximum exporter to EU countries, for that reason we limited the geographical area of the study to energy security between them. Especially, after the Ukraine crisis, the relationship between the EU countries, and Russia deteriorated to some extent and this affected the Energy Security of both sides. This paper tests some interrelated hypotheses mentioned below; First, both EU countries and Russia securitized the energy relations between them. Second, there is an extreme relationship between the desire of a country to pursue energy security, and the impact and changes in its international relations in different other areas such as security, political, and military.

## **2. Regional Energy Security Complex**

Buzan and Waever (2003) introduced the concept of the Regional Energy Security Complex; they erased the old line between security and energy as a different sector by defining energy security in the structure of economic security. However, one should keep in mind that, the energy security complex is considered as an analytical concept, and per se, it needs to be clarified to not confuse with other concepts such as the energy and fuel complex, where it has been described as the energy sector in the Russian economy context (Khrushcheva, 2013). Moreover, the idea of Regional Energy Security Complex, defined as a separate concept by Polonkorpi, as he claimed that "regional energy security complexes are formed by energy-related interaction between two or more states in a limited geographical area, which includes an energy dependency relationship between the states involved and perception of this dependency as a threat" (Vakarinaite, 2016, p. 22). The interaction of energy comprises transactions for example transit of energy 'export and import'. Similarly, the definitions

of regional energy security complex by Buzan and Wæver (2003), the regional energy security complex contains the threats of increasing tensions between states or regions because of energy dependencies, especially in regions close to each other geographically. The evaluation and measuring of the degree of energy trade figures can be decisive to delineate a regional energy security complex between Russia and EU countries. For instance, 69% of EU countries' energy resources, especially natural gas-dependent on Russia (EU imports of energy products - recent developments, 2017), this designates that, there is a strong dependency example resembling circumstances in EU countries. Therefore, to understand the process of securitization of energy relations between Russia and EU countries, ascertaining the referent object of security is crucial, or put it in another way, what has been securitized by whom?

A core tenet of security studies and international relations, in general, has been the debate about the securitization process (Ababakr and Khaddar, 2021). The extension of the security agenda encouraged by the so-called Copenhagen School provided greater insight into the contemporary world's construction of security (Mabon, 2019). Before populating the logic of such processes, we will briefly focus on the key stages of the processes. Before we can continue with our exploration, there is a range of principles that must be noted. "Security "is about survival, as Buzan, Wæver and De Wild claim" (Buzan, Waver and De Wilde. 1998, p. 21). It is when a problem is posed as presenting an existential threat to a reference object named [...]. The unique nature of security threats justifies the use of extreme measures to deal with them.

This brief description of protection is used in the article along with extra innovations that come with it. For Buzan, Waver, and De Wild, Security is "ultimately rests neither with the objects nor with the subjects but among the subjects"(p. 31). It is inter-relational and we are best positioned to comprehend it by understanding this. As Greenwood and Wæver articulate, the idea of securitization is locally rooted, as its 'nickname' implies, yet a range of conceptual problems arise when it moves beyond the West. Perhaps the most powerful is the notion that concepts such as politics, relationships between regime and culture, and autonomy are applied in the post-colonial world to contexts that bear no similarity, with a radically different substance, to their counterparts in the West (Rubin, 2014). A popular aspect of the securitization step is the suspension of normal politics to allow the installation of exceptional steps, but a troublesome principle is normal politics itself. Of course, meanings of 'natural' vary considerably when transferred through various contexts, but the essential component of such a term is based on the idea of stability. As Wilkinson (2007) notes, the

belief that European understandings of society and the state are universal is implicit in the principle of securitization. We must make a variety of assumptions about the nature of society, about political circumstances, the role of religion in society, and about economic factors to identify a specific context as having the characteristics of normal politics. The hegemonic Liberal ontology within the theory is exposed by these assumptions about the structure of state-society relations. Of course, all societies have laws and the suspension of normal politics which require the suspension of unique rules in society. By articulating what is perceived to be an exceptional threat, the securitization mechanism generates sovereignty, deciding the exception, and sovereignty generates securitization by the concept's existence. Sovereignty is about order and belonging, with protection playing an integral part in order-building efforts.

However, since securitization campaigns take place across territorial borders, relying on collective narratives and perspectives to provide a rationale, the degree to which securitization may be referred to as a linear structure must be understood. Building on this linear method, the audience to whom speech acts are pronounced must also be considered, which eventually decides the move's performance (Buzan, Waver and De Wilde. 1998). Also, it is the audience that provides the meaning for the implementation of 'distinctive policies' which may or may not be regarded as exceptional (Balzacq, Léonard & Ruzicka, 2016). Usually, audiences are part of a linear method, but we need to understand the degree to which linear processes are in effect as moves take place across sovereign boundaries to draw on normative environments. In the following, a brief discussion concerning the energy security policy is deemed to comprehend the facilitating conditions in the process of securitization.

### **3. The policies of energy Security of Russia and the EU Countries**

This section tries to ascertain the policies that have been implemented by Russia to securitize energy security since it is the guarantee for exporting to other countries. Thus, Russia takes multiple procedures at the internal level to improve the sector of energy, and on the external level, in attracting several countries to import the energy sources via Russian oil and gas companies. Also, it attempts to determine the EU countries' energy security, which guarantees the security of exportation as the most importer states in the world.

### **3.1 The policy of energy security of Russian**

The adopted Russian policies to manage its internal oil sector plus its foreign policy, which gives Moscow the guarantee of security of its exportation of gas and oil, and this is a crucial factor 'energy factor' as pillar stone for Russia to project its foreign policy (Jack, 2014). Besides, this sector is an essential factor for Russia's policies and initiations, because it represents economic power for Russia's development after the fall down of the former Soviet Union, since that time, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed several big economic contracts (Kaczmarek, 2015), and changed the international power struggle for his countries' benefits.

The country took beneficial economic policy for itself from its material resistances, resources, and capabilities. Since, it is among one of the richest countries, which come in the seventh in the World for oil reserves and first for natural gas reserves. Russia empowered its management in the energy sector and produced designated processes, but under the supervision of the government through government companies such as 'Gazprom' that increased the extraction of gas and has granted government support, Rosneft and Lukoil companies enlarged the extraction of oil and gas 70% since 2007, and Russia joined 'G7' because it influenced world market of energy and its policies on that sector (Ibid).

A close connection exists between the energy sector and political power in Russia. For example, the state possessed 51 percent of the 'Gazprom' the largest company in producing gas and it is the world's largest company in gas pipelines network. Russian legislation secured the Gazprom monopoly of transportation and trade of Russian gas (Khrushcheva, 2011). The aim of increasing the extraction of resources to EU countries was to equip the Russian companies with more power to compete abroad. Indeed, Lukoil Company was able to open a big market in EU countries of Russian resources, especially in Germany and the East of the EU. As the result, Russia guarantee its extortions to those countries in a permanent way, this equipped Moscow with the necessary instruments to have control and influence to dominate the role of Russia in the sector of energy.

Those aims took stages to become formulated, after that, Putin commenced the concept of a superpower that considers the sector of energy in appearance and this became clear in his political statements. Furthermore, President Putin for his policies depended on the fact that Russia is a rich and big power in oil and gas resources. And more importantly, it controls the path of its transportation passages, but many experts and analyzers rejected this dependability, and argue that

only one resource is not enough to turn Russia into a superpower, but several other capabilities need to be provided for a country to dominate its influences over most countries (Česnakas, 2016). However, Russia turned into a big power through energy dependence and established its policies in that framework. Indeed, it became a big economic power. Nevertheless, some others rejected both the change of the concept of power and Russia's shift to a big economic power because of Russia's neglecting political considerations and its concentration on gaining economical achievements only. In addition, Moscow did not consider geopolitical importance, for that reason, it did not provide the energy power efficiently, as Russia separated its relationships between economic interests and strategic alliances (Huotari, 2011). Moreover, it utilized the energy in conflict with neighboring countries for the sake of increasing the interests rather than punishing them, as Russia had to decline its dependence on the reserves because it could face the risk of gas execution. However, the success of Russian foreign policy neither before nor now is because of the power of its resources. At the level of external policies, in the framework of past, Moscow's multiplier strategies dimensions for the increasing of the power of competition for its exportation in the EU countries' market and its control over the transportation network and distributions can be analyzed in some points (Mukhametshina, 2015). Firstly, the penetration of the sector of energy in some EU countries, from Russia's contracts to increase the activities of Russia, for example, the deal between Gazprom and British Centrica company to provide natural gas for millions of customers in London (Gusev & Westphal, 2015). Secondly, there are unstoppable Russian efforts to control and dominate the transformation networks in central Asian's countries that can be an alternative to Russia's resources for EU countries in the future, and this fact made concerns for Moscow, which always tried to convince EU countries that Russia will remain the primary source of resources for EU countries. For that reason, Russia conducted several contracts with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan for collaboration in the mining of natural resources and their exportations. Through this strategy, Moscow dominated management over natural resources and owned more than the US, EU countries, and China. The concept of energy security has changed after president Putin took power (Austvik, 2015). Based on this, Russia's policies increased dependence on energy resources, in other words, the usage of energy as a strategic instrument facilitated Moscow's restored influence. Directed foreign investments aimed to develop economic monopoly and control upon the infrastructure of strategic importance. It limited the influence and hegemony of the US and made effort to restrict the relationships between the US and the EU countries. Moreover, it increased

room for the influence of Russian foreign policy through exploiting the East of EU countries to restore the power of the former Soviet Union. Finally, the removal of the EU countries' influence in all shapes increased the influence areas of Russia. Through securitizing the external and internal Russian energy security policies, it became obvious that the government of Russia is the most vital actor to securitize the energy relationship between Russia and the EU countries. The evidence is that the adopted policies externally and internally equip the government with control over significant parts of the energy sector especially the economic sector generally (Gheciu, 2013). This is through the government ownership of energy companies and pro-government businessmen running them. The audiences of securitization are business and political elites in Russia and the Russian population. Thus, this process provides the Russian government extra power to take extraordinary measures in the energy sector as a security issue when it comes to its energy relationship with EU countries. For example, the state-sponsored media framed the problem by pointing to both the conventional lack of confidence in international investors and the deals and decisions taken, typically associated with political weakness. For instance, Valerij Zorkin, the former head of the Constitutional Court as follows: "It is important to reconstruct energy sovereignty, including revision of the PSA agreements with foreign investors. These agreements signed in the 1990s provide favorable conditions to the large international companies, but Russian interests are overlooked"(Dobrnina, 2009, p. 5). It is significant to look at the context itself to understand how the context has been distorted by the government.

The additional restrictions on investment in Russia's strategic industries were clarified by security implications in 2004–2005. Putin's address to the Federal Assembly in April 2005:

"Investors sometimes face all kinds of limitations, including some that are explained by national security reasons, though these limitations are not legally formalized. This uncertainty creates problems for the state and investors. It is time we determined the economic sectors where the interests of bolstering Russia's independence and security call for predominant control by national, including state, the capital. I mean some infrastructure facilities, enterprises that fulfill state defense orders, mineral deposits"(Lihto, 2008, p. 2).

The sectors referred to in this address are known as strategic sectors. Consequently, foreign-owned companies are not allowed to engage in the production of vast oil and gas reserves. A new law on FDI in these strategic industries was signed by Putin in April 2007. The law notes that a governmental commission must be authorized for any foreign company seeking to acquire a majority interest in a company operating in a strategic sector or to purchase more than 10 percent of

larger oil and gas reserves. After his second presidential term, Putin himself became the head of this committee (Pleins, 2009).

### **3.2 The Policy of Energy Security of EU Countries**

As the Cold War now is history, the EU countries witnessed a combination of changes alongside a faction of strategic ambitions, which was not clear to what extent some countries are capable to commit those responsibilities from their prospective range at least. After twenty years, those ambitions became the essential pillar for the establishment of the EU countries' policies for the short and long terms, and they are at the core strategic decisions for all the EU countries. Energy Security has formed, and it remained the foundation of those goals to enshrine the concept of belonging to the future and integrated trend that discussed between EU countries. Those countries demanded to be completely free of the Soviet influence, and later on Russia, but they also conceived that this could not be achieved easily (Szulecki, Fischer, Gullberg & Oliver, 2016). Energy security is not purely an economic issue for EU countries anymore, especially in the glare of its economic power, but diversification has become an integrated ideological situation, which confirms the prevailing political concept. Furthermore, the EU countries paid attention to the middle and east of the EU as a new geopolitical area, which has not completed its procedures yet. Because this will facilitates to gain independence and limit the danger of the emerging threat of any sort of independence (Ashirova, 2015), especially, if politics and ideology develop anchored in a dispute of a character of more danger, which is desirable for all countries that have become independent of astronomy of former Soviet, first from Baltic then to Balkan and middle of EU countries. Therefore, the approved energy policy of EU countries depends on a collection of settings including:

First, the existence of a general convinces members, that the rate of dependence on imported materials has risen, and this could trigger a crisis with the existence of unhinging between production and consumption. Second, regarding environmental protection, some members tried to guarantee clear energy resources far from Nuclear energy, while others preferred nuclear energy. Third, the strategic outlook comes for energy before the economy (Aoun, 2015). Despite the successful experience of the EU countries in cooperation and coordination, it failed to identify a definition of energy security for whole countries. Because the member states, each have their definition according to their necessities and priorities, they did not solve that particular issue.

Hence, it ought to be new understandings and criteria, which required a new process to reestablish the energy policy of EU countries. Especially, regarding the question of resource distribution and being free to depend only on a single source of energy which is Russia. The verdict is that this aim has been mentioned in the political statements of EU countries' leaders directly or indirectly. To attain extra power in directing the new energy policy, the EU countries adopted the securitization process. For example, in the form of a non-paper, the Polish Prime Minister, acting as a securitizing actor, proposed an idea (at the meeting of the EU Council on Transport, Telecommunications, and Electricity) for the new intergovernmental agreement on energy security called the European Energy Security Treaty (EEST). The key goal of that political initiative was, as to guarantee funding for energy supply in the event of a crisis, based on the unity strategy of the participants. The object of the proposal was to obtain reciprocal energy security guarantees modeled on guarantees at the time of the Western EU and NATO, 'except the armed attack situation covered by the Washington Treaty. It was a deliberate intention of the EEST proposal to induce a space of political thinking into energy deliberations in Europe, in the European Union in particular (Kustova, 2015). In the case of the gas crisis, it was formulated as a tool for mutual aid, not as a risk or crisis mechanism for an oil crisis.

At the Riga Summit of NATO. At that time, US official Richard Lugar, Senator and then Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, acting as a securitizing actor, called on the alliance to assist any MSs whose energy sources are forcefully cut off. He even called for the use of the mutual defense clause of the Washington Treaty (Article 5) (Raines & Tomlinson, 2016).

Senator Lugar emphasized that Article 5 took into account not only the situation of an attack but also the situation of intimidation (due to an energy cut-off) and stressed that: "the Alliance must commit itself to prepare for and responding to attempts to use the energy weapon against its fellow members...NATO must become a reliable refuge for members against threats stemming from their energy insecurity" (Sandoura & Vinois, 2015, p. 614). They were worried that the use of Article 5 in the field of energy could open the way for increased military intervention in a wide range of policies beyond conventional security areas, and found the EU to be a more suitable institution to tackle energy security issues. The key actors who securitizing the energy relationship between EU countries and Russia are energy-producing states and energy companies and governments of energy consumption, because the system of government in the EU is multi-level, there are three levels of decision making, including, supranational, national and regional. And the audiences of

securitization of energy are both national audiences and European officials (Ibid). Thus, securitization of energy relationships took place on both national and European levels, and the European context of securitization was shaped by the lack of coherent Common European Energy Policy. Thus, this fact provided the EU countries to take extraordinary measures in the field of energy sector when it related to their relationship with Russia as a security problem. For example, the 2008 European Security Strategy Report suggested that "concerns about energy dependence have increased over the last five years"(Kustova, 2015, p. 6). Energy security, as one of the main threats, as described in the Study, is to become an essential part of any future European Security Strategy.

### **3.3 The Security and Political Relationship in the Light of Ensuring Energy Security**

Several international crises have risen which led to a collision between the EU countries and Russia over their different perspectives. Some of those crises manifest themselves in the revolutions of Arab Spring, for example, the conflicts that happened because of the influence of Russia in some countries such as Syria, Libya in addition, to other international crises, such as the Crimea crisis. The convergence of great powers in those conflicts would create a new pattern of interactions and trends for each of them, in the interest of each party through its vision. Even though Russia has assured in many of the energy occasions that it purely making a relationship in the energy market as an exporter, the growing position of Russia in the energy market hesitated EU countries, and those fears inspired from the usage of natural resources as a political weapon against the EU countries. Despite that, energy is the essential core stone for the economy of Russia. Meanwhile, Moscow has cooperated in other fields with the EU countries, which was an expansion of the energy sector (Ferrari, 2015). Where, Russia respected its agreements with EU countries even in the Cold War era and most recently in the Ukraine crisis because Moscow is aware of the fact that any differences over this particular issue will endanger its main source of income and reputation in the energy market (Mennat, 2014). Especially, energy exporters have been able to have substantial financial strength without competing for power over military or economic, so it happened in what is so-called oil polarization in the special system.

The EU countries remained the biggest and most important market for the oil and gas of Russia during that period. The most important country was Germany, which imported oil and gas from

Russia. And the significant point in that is, Germany plays a crucial role in the international arena (Scott, 2013), and it influences what is happening in the world because it works as the leader of EU countries, as this role appeared clearly in the EU countries conflict with Russia which suffered EU countries. Following are Italy and a part of eastern EU countries, where Russia supplied one-third of their consumption of oil at fewer prices compared to the international market, and in 2015, it started the project of “Southern Stream” to transport Russian gas to EU countries from Turkey.

Perhaps more complicated the relationship between Russia and the EU countries on a political level and more hindered the rapprochement between them, since the majority of the EU countries are in NATO as well, and this in itself hindered the negotiations between both sides. In addition, the missile shield project and deployments of its elements in the EU countries had been considered by Russia as a real threat to its national security and strategic nuclear. The consequence of the nature of the conflict, which has crossed to the other aspects such as compromise and coexistence between them, and translating this to bilateral relationships and interactions, in recent time increased the desire of the EU countries that expressed more explicitly to decrease the consumption of Russian natural gas and directed to the Middle East (Vygon, Ermakov, Belova & Kolbikoba, (2015). To that end, Qatar is the best player to play a crucial role in saturating the demand of EU countries, and this did not threaten Russia or influenced its share as an exporter in the oil market. Although, there is little possibility that EU countries would replace Russia with Qatar. But, Qatar only could facilitate the decrease of EU countries’ dependence on Russia and at the same time, equipped them with more diplomatic influence in Russia. And the proof for this is in 2013 the EU countries and Russia began to establish the south stream pipeline to transform natural gas from Russia to Bulgaria through the red sea, which can enhance the trade in the energy sector between Russia and EU countries with the ignoring of Ukraine (Djukić & Obradović, 2020). Therefore, the relations between Russia and the EU countries are complex and non-transparent, as the two sides are completely cut off from friendly relations and friendship as well as their relationship is not in direct conflict. Nevertheless, what we can understand is that it is essentially a relationship of interest. In addition, those interests centered on the security of energy supplies for Europe, and for Russia the guarantee of specific rate of exportation of its energy. Based on this, one can find it difficult to claim that, the Russian and EU countries’ energy trade can be concluded only in the purely economic issue. The energy supplies to industrial EU countries are livelihood for their economy, and the exportation of oil and gas to EU countries is the backbone of the Russian economy. Therefore, energy security considers occupying

a vital part of national security for both Russia and EU countries. Hence, the energy relationship between Russia and EU countries is securitized because of an amalgamation of reasons. First, securitizing agents exist within Russia and the EU countries. Second, adopted domestic policies to consolidate the energy sector internally under the control of government by both sides, Russia the transportation and trade of much of the Russian gas is monopolized by Gazprom, which is under the control of the government; in EU countries, solidarity among EU countries was in a low degree regarding the improved relations with Russia (Kupreishvili, 2021). This contradiction in their energy policies towards Russia paved the way for each country in the EU to increase the process of securitization either, to achieve particular interests out of the process of securitization energy relationship, or because of old problems they have in their relations with Russia (Khrushcheva, 2011). Finally, the securitization of energy was also conducted by Russia when it claimed that, the EU countries tried to expand their culture and values to the Russian sphere, which Russia considered a threat against its interests. All those reasons are in line with the Regional Energy Security Complex which argues that the securitization of energy will turn the energy-related into a security issue, as we can conceive in the energy relationship between EU countries and Russia.

### *3.3.1 The Ukrainian Crisis*

The Ukraine crisis, which is known as the Crimea crisis dated back to the protests that took place in the capital of Ukraine Kyiv, the demand was the stepping down of president Viktor Yanukovich, and indeed those protests succeed in widespread obedience of Yanukovich on power, and it ended by his removal. He was loyal to Russia. Therefore, through his removal of power, the EU countries gained huge success, since Ukraine is considered as a gateway to Russia. Moreover, he adopted a policy, which was loyal more to Russia than EU countries, is meant that Ukraine turned to the West camp after it has been for decades in the East camp. For that reason, the EU countries offered assistance through International Monetary Fund, approximately 15 billion dollars (Bebler, 2015), to overcome this crisis, because the success of the demonstrations was for the benefit of EU countries. Meanwhile, the result of Russia's loss in Ukraine and simultaneously its huge cost of war in Syria encouraged Moscow to immediately expand its influence on Crimea Peninsula. Because of its geopolitical importance, which is located on the west bank of the sea of Azov, and supervise the Strait of Kretch that separate it from the Red Sea, it controls the shipping of trade and military ships to several Russian and Ukraine ports, it also has a big military significant.

In 2013, Ukraine was able to sign a friendship and free trade deal with EU countries, this fact made fears inside Russia. In response, Moscow took successive powerful military tactics to bend Ukraine from approaching the EU countries, Kiev Suffered from those threats and withdrew from the friendship and free trade deal with EU countries. What occurred was the Ukrainian revolution and they refused Russian's intervention (Trenin, 2014), and the result of those former considerations in addition to the Russian's fear of EU countries resulted in Moscow's intervention with a clear aim of protecting the majority in the semi Crimea Peninsula. However, the real intention was to block EU countries' influences over Ukraine, because it represents a pressure card against EU countries for Russia. What happened was, Kyiv used busy opportunities to fill out empty political, security, and military spaces in governmental ministries and others institutions after the removal of former president Yanukovich. On the other hand, after Russia took control of Crimea, it held a referendum and annexed it to Russian's territory.

Therefore, the crisis in Ukraine exhausted the relationship between Russia and EU countries, because of apprehension between two parties, and because of the securitization of the energy sector, both Russia and EU countries labeled the Ukraine crisis as a security issue, which can affect the energy security in the region. For example, as the Ukraine crisis unfolded, Putin indicated that in the event of Ukrainian accession to the Alliance, Crimea's union with Russia was appropriate to prevent the territory from falling into NATO's hands. The crisis in Ukraine, as he suggested in September 2014 "was engineered...by certain of our western partners to reinvigorate the NATO military bloc. Putin will go on to say in this vein that: the Ukrainian army was a NATO foreign legion motivated by the geopolitical aim of containing Russia"(Klotz, 2017, p. 275). For, the EU countries, the Alliance had expressed concern about the worsening political situation in Ukraine before the annexation of Crimea, but had refrained from describing developments in the country as dangerous in any way. However, from March 2014, the emphasis changed. He then proposed to NATO Secretary-General Anders Rasmussen: "Crimea was a game-changer for NATO and concluded in late March that we live in a different world than we did less than a month ago (Sanctions over Ukraine Impact on Russia, 2016). Russia's present path of aggression, confrontation, and escalation', Deputy Secretary-General Alexander Vershbow declared, meant that it was now less of a partner and more of an adversary"(Mitasova & Havko, 2015), Also, the international reactions were in line with the EU countries in condemning and rejecting Russian's intervention in Crimea. Moreover, the international community articulated it as an act of aggression and recognized it as

illegitimate and against the principles of the UN. This brought EU countries' sanctions on Russia, intending to put pressure on Moscow and exclude the military choice.

It's worth mentioning, the role of outsider countries can be seen as important in triggering this crisis, for example, most of the EU countries' sanctions were initiated or at least encouraged by the US to set pressure on Moscow, to withdraw from Crimea and shrink its influences over east of EU countries. In practical reality, the magnification of sanctions could have much impact on the existence of several Russian economic and strategic cooperation institutions at the international level. For example, Brex group and Shanghai construction group (House of Lords EU countries Committee, 2015). However, it became apparent that those sanctions and countersanctions had more impact on the EU countries rather than on Russia. Given that, Russia is a booming market for high-performance German cars and consumer goods. Hence, it was understandable that Germany began to express objection against further sanctions on Russia, and this is not surprising, that the exportation of Germany to Russia hit 38 billion in 2013, this is the highest among EU countries, and Italy and Netherland depend mostly on Russia for gas energy. Therefore, it became understandable that EU countries did not have a free hand to put sanctions on Russia. After the Ukraine crisis in 2014, the scene of EU countries' energy became much different compared to the past. The occupation of Crimea by Russia, military conflict, and the continuation of unrest in Eastern Ukraine deteriorated the political relations between the two sides; this was owing to the securitization of the energy sector from both sides. In this context, implicitly or explicitly energy security has not only to take part in broader foreign policies of EU countries, but it gave them an instrument in their responses against Russia in the context of the Ukraine crisis, through putting the Russian energy sector under sanctions (Wang, 2015). The Ukraine crisis has ensued structural changes in their relationship, which deteriorated and brought more tensions and the securitization of energy questions. Hence, in the Ukraine crisis, both EU countries and Russia securitized the energy aspect of the crisis to take extraordinary measures to use the crisis against each other.

#### **4. Conclusion**

To understand energy security and its impact on the relationship between EU countries and Russia, the essential point, to begin with, is an explanation and analysis of the existing problem and consequences of the securitization of the energy relationship. One can find it difficult to claim that, the energy relationship between EU countries and Russia is a solely economic issue. Continued

supplies of energy are the main element of developing industry in the EU countries, this fact made energy security a significant part of the EU countries' national security. The energy relationship between both sides has particular problems due to the process of securitization and the main precondition for the securitization of the energy relationship between them is because of the high level of energy relationship interdependence.

The main hypothesis of the study corresponded with the outcomes, which acknowledges that both EU countries and Russia securitized the energy relations between them, the study concluded that, regardless of the magnitude of the energy relationship, which marked itself in a high grade of interdependence between the EU countries and Russia. Their relationship saw dispute during that period between 2011-2015, because of a high level of securitization process initiated by both EU member states and the Russian government. What is more, Energy Security has an impact on international relations and changing of the foreign policy of countries and this is through the following outcomes. First, Russia adopted internal and external policies designed to guarantee the energy of security as the main Russian economic renaissance. However, the EU countries followed a policy that can rise self-sufficient for them by increasing domestic production. Hence, there is an extreme relationship between the desire of a country to pursue Energy Security by growing energy resources, and being independent of the international community because not possessing energy resources means subordination to the other powers who own them.

Second, the study argues that whenever increased the desire to achieve more energy materials, it makes new or improves the relationship between countries. This became clear through what has been mentioned about the cooperation between the individual EU countries and Russia, such as Germany, France, and Italy, and those countries become Russia's trade partners, especially after economic development in the era of Putin.

Third, the international conflicts, including the Ukraine crisis proven the importance of the language of energy security regarding the international reactions that demonstrate in. the EU countries economic sanctions on Russia proved that the Russian role remained on economic advancement, that existing on the biases of the energy sector in the global market.

Fourth, the imposed economic sanctions from the EU countries on Russia were far from the aspect of the energy security, as Moscow emphasized several times that their relationship does not end only in the framework of energy. As we witnessed in the era of the Cold War, the unstopped energy supply to the West, in contrast to EU countries' energy is considered as the only aspect of their

relationships with Russia. Hence, it became clear enough that both sides regard the energy relationship between them not only as an economic issue but rather as a security issue which can label all other issues as security problems because of the process of securitization of energy.

Fifth, the Russian reaction to the Ukraine crisis proved the significance of energy security in playing a game-changer in the conflict.

Sixth, the study has confirmed that energy security can lead to the making international alliances along the expected lines, and this became obvious through EU countries attempts to find the Gulf States as energy exporters and replace them with the energy resources of Russia, but it faced big problems because of geographical distance. In addition, the Russians' direction to the East to find a new importer for its energy resources and replace them with EU countries illustrates this fact.

Through our study of energy security and Russian-Western relations, we have mentioned the impact of the availability and unavailability of energy resources on foreign policy and international alliances on both sides. The power of the impact of energy security has been on these interactions. This security falls within the framework of unconventional security, which means that energy security is no less important than traditional military security because it would create wars to obtain those important resources for the management of various sectors of the State.

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