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Contents

Abstract (English).....	6
Abstract (German).....	7
List of Illustrations.....	8
List of Abbreviations.....	9
1. Introduction.....	10
1.1. Research Intention and Research Question.....	14
1.2. Hypotheses.....	15
1.3. Research Method and Methodology.....	16
1.4. Structure.....	16
2. Terminology: ‘Power’ and ‘Channels of Power’ in International Relations.....	17
3. A Timeline of EU-Israel Relations.....	21
3.1. Historical Background.....	21
3.2. EU Declarations on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: ‘The EU’s Formula for a Just Peace’.....	25
4. The EU as an International Actor.....	32
4.1. General Assessment of the EU as a Political and International Actor.....	32
4.2. The EU as Normative Power Europe (NPE).....	33
4.2.1. The History and Development of ‘NPE’.....	35
4.2.2. Value Rationality.....	36
4.2.3. The EU’s Normative Principles.....	38
4.2.4. Norm Diffusion.....	40
4.3. Common Foreign Policy ‘NPE’ as Unifying Factor.....	41
4.4. The Capability-Expectations Gap According to Christopher Hill.....	44
4.5. The Consensus-Expectations Gap According to Asle Toje – Giving the Example of the EU’s Reaction on the Darfur Crisis.....	45
4.6. The Consensus-Expectations Gap in the Middle East: 3 Examples.....	48
4.6.1. Case 1: The Future of Jerusalem.....	50
4.6.2. Case 2: Sweden’s Recognition of the State of Palestine.....	52
4.6.3. Case 3: Sanctions on Israel.....	53
4.7. Interim Conclusion.....	54

5. The EU in Israel and the Palestinian Territories	55
5.1. EU Institutions in Israel and the Palestinian Territories	55
5.2. The EU's Political Activities in Israel and the Palestinian Territories	56
5.3. The EU's Donor Activities	60
5.4. The Perception of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict by the EU and Its Member States	62
5.5. The Perception of the EU by Israelis and Palestinians	65
5.5.1. Israelis	65
5.5.2. Palestinians	72
5.6. Interim Conclusion	73
6. The EU's Impact on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	74
6.1. Shaping the Notion of 'The Acceptable': Theory of Social Constructivism	74
6.2. The Credibility of 'NPE' in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	77
6.3. EU Norm Diffusion in Israel, the Palestinian Territories and the Israeli Government's Countering	81
6.4. The Norms-Interests Gap and EU-Israeli Trade Agreements	86
6.5. 'NPE' as a Discursive Instrument	92
6.6. Democracy in Israel	93
6.7. Outlook and Recent EU Interventions	94
7. Conclusion	99
References: Bibliography	104
References: Illustrations	118
Appendices	119
A. Structural Evolution of the European Union	119
B. Presentation of Interviewees	120

Abstract (English)

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most prominent conflicts that the European Union (EU) and its predecessors have been trying to resolve. Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the EU has issued a long list of common statements on the policies of Israel, the future of Jerusalem and the Israeli settlements in the West Bank. This contributed to the gradual establishment of 'Normative Power Europe' (NPE) as an important player in international politics. However, several scholars have depicted the EU's foreign policy as weak due to a general lack of capabilities and consensus. Therefore, this master's thesis aims to answer the question of how the EU's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be evaluated and, in particular, to what extent the measures taken by the EU to exert pressure on Israel have had an impact on Israel to end its occupation of the Palestinian Territories. On the basis of literature research and expert interviews with scholars of international relations, the present thesis illustrates that despite the fact that the EU has attempted to influence the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on its normative principles with a vast number of normative statements, it has done little to transform the rhetoric into concrete measures and interventions. Therefore, the EU's impact on Israel to end the occupation and its rights-violating policies has been very limited. The EU has merely used two of a wide range of possible policy options to influence the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On the one hand, it has exerted pressure on Israel through the issuance of statements on the illegality of Israeli policies, and on the other hand, it has tried to support Palestinians by funding NGOs working for the Palestinian cause in Israel and develop infrastructure in the Palestinian Territories. Ideally, the EU could have also used trade politics, sanctions, diffusion of norms, mediation and other activities as channels to influence the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a way to resolve it faster. However, the European Union has failed to do so due to a number of reasons, which generally harm its position as an important player in international politics.

Abstract (German)

Der Israelisch-Palästinensische Konflikt ist einer der prominentesten Konflikte den die Europäische Union (EU) und ihre Vorgänger versucht haben zu lösen. Seit der Gründung des Staates Israel im Jahr 1948 hat die EU eine lange Liste gemeinsamer Statements über die Politik Israels, die Zukunft von Jerusalem und die Israelischen Siedlungen in der West Bank herausgegeben. Dies hat zur allmählichen Etablierung von „Normative Power Europe“ (NPE) als wichtiger Akteur in der internationalen Politik beigetragen. Allerdings haben verschiedene Wissenschaftler die Schwächen der Europäischen Außenpolitik – im Allgemeinen bedingt durch das Fehlen von Kapazitäten und Konsens – aufgezeigt. Daher zielt diese Masterarbeit darauf ab, die Frage zu beantworten, wie die Rolle der EU im Israelisch-Palästinensischen Konflikt eingeschätzt werden kann und, im Speziellen, inwiefern die durch die EU gesetzten Mittel zur Ausübung von Druck auf Israel einen Einfluss auf den Staat hatten, dass dieser seine Besatzung der palästinensischen Gebiete beendet. Anhand von Literaturrecherche und Experteninterviews mit Wissenschaftlern aus dem Gebiet der Internationalen Beziehungen, veranschaulicht die vorliegende Arbeit, dass trotz der Tatsache, dass die EU den Israelisch-Palästinensischen Konflikt basierend auf ihren normativen Prinzipien durch eine große Anzahl an normativen Statements versucht hat zu beeinflussen, sie wenig getan hat, um die Rhetorik in konkrete Maßnahmen und Interventionen zu verwandeln. Daher war der Einfluss der EU auf Israel, die Besatzung und seine menschenrechtsverletzende Politik zu beenden, sehr beschränkt. Die EU hat nur zwei Optionen von der breiten Palette an Möglichkeiten, auf den Israelisch-Palästinensischen Konflikt Einfluss zu nehmen, genutzt. Einerseits hat sie durch die Verlautbarung von Statements zur Ungesetzlichkeit israelischer Policies Druck auf Israel ausgeübt. Andererseits hat sie versucht, die Palästinenser durch die Finanzierung von NGOs, die sich in Israel für die palästinensische Sache einsetzen, und den Aufbau von Infrastruktur in den Palästinensischen Gebieten zu unterstützen. Jedoch hätte die EU auch die Handelspolitik, Sanktionen, die Verbreitung von Normen, die Vermittlung in Friedenskonferenzen und andere Aktivitäten als Mittel um den Israelisch-Palästinensischen Konflikt zu beeinflussen, nutzen können, sodass dieser schneller gelöst würde. Allerdings ist die Europäische Union aufgrund einer Anzahl von Gründen, die ihre Position als wichtiger Akteur in der internationalen Politik generell schädigen, daran gescheitert.

List of Illustrations

Table 1: Civilian, Military and Normative Powers.....	18
Table 2: The Transformation of EU's Formula for a Just Peace, 1971-2009.....	25
Table 3: The EU's Normative Basis.....	38
Illustration 1: Map of the Corpus Separatum intended for Jerusalem.....	51
Table 4: European Donations to Israeli Human Rights NGOs by Area of Focus.....	61
Figure 1: Israel's Exports to the EU (in Millions of Dollars).....	91
Illustration 2: Structural Evolution of the European Union.....	(Appendix A) 119

List of Abbreviations

BDS	Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
CFDP	Common Foreign and Defence Policy
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
EAD	Euro-Arab Dialogue
EC	European Community
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECJ	European Court of Justice
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEC	European Economic Community
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EPC	European Political Cooperation
EU	European Union
EUSR	European Union Special Representative
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
NPE	Normative Power Europe
ROO	Rules of Origin
TEC	Treaty establishing the European Community
TEU	Treaty on European Union
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

1. Introduction

‘The EU’s impartiality and objectivity vis-à-vis what is a very complex dispute is another great European asset, and it would be hard to imagine what other mediator could be a more honest broker. [...] In fact, the Union’s aim is not to support politically one or other of the parties but to promote a peaceful solution. The EU seeks a solution that is the fairest possible, which also means the most lasting, the most stable and the only one that ensures the security and prosperity of both parties’ (Ortega 2003, p.58).

If the EU’s side were to be asked about its own role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, many of its politicians and even some scholars would tend to consider themselves as the perfect mediator, as can be seen in Ortega’s contribution. While this perception may easily be termed as very optimistic, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains by any means one of the most prominent conflicts the EU has been trying to influence. Its various efforts in that matter shed light on broader questions of the EU: its general role in the Middle East as well as its overall capacity as an actor in international politics.

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the beginning of the resulting Israeli-Palestinian conflict, discussions on the future of Jerusalem, the Israeli settlements in the West Bank as well as on various other Israeli policies could be observed at an international level. Specifically concerning the European involvement in the discourse, there is an assumption among the European public, researchers and EU officials that the EU does and should play a role in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Asseburg and Busse 2016; Harpaz and Shamis 2010; Ortega 2003). This assumption can be traced back to the view that the EU will contribute positively to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as long as it remains involved as a mediator and financial supporter of the Palestinian Authority. Again, this way of thinking could be criticized as idealistic or even naïve in the eyes of many. Whether this assumption of a positive impact of EU involvement is in fact true, is to be analysed in this master’s thesis.

Therefore, the aim of this master’s thesis is to comprehend whether the EU’s impact in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be termed as beneficial and if so, why. This question will be discussed using a broad range of literature on the topic, as well as qualitative empirical data collected in several expert interviews. Before further elaborating the research question, research design and the structure of the thesis in the following sections, this introduction shall

give a brief overview of existing concepts on the EU's quality as an international actor and literature on its involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

When looking at the EU's quality as an international actor, as early as 1973, François Duchêne was the first to conceptualize the European Communities as a 'Civilian Power' relying on political and economic means rather than military ones. He thereby acknowledged the fact that ever since the beginning of foreign policy cooperation in the introduction of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) in 1970¹, the European Communities had been trying to present itself as a different kind of power than for example the heavily militarized USA or USSR. After the Maastricht Treaty in November 1993, the EPC was superseded by the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – apparently still holding on to the same foreign policy means. In a 2002 seminal article drawing on Duchêne's concept, the political scientist Ian Manners coined the EU as 'Normative Power Europe', taking into account the EU's norms diffusion efforts. Social constructivist theory founded by Alexander Wendt (1992) is particularly useful to understand the EU's development into 'Normative Power Europe' as part of the European integration process of creating an independent identity for the European Union (Gordon and Pardo 2013, 2015; Hill 1993, p.308; Harpaz 2011, p.1874). According to Manners, the five core values that the EU has been trying to diffuse in its foreign policy are peace, the idea of liberty, democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (2002, p.242).

But has the EU been successful diffusing these norms with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Several scholars have analysed weaknesses of the European foreign policy and its inability to fulfill the expectations the EU has imposed on itself. In 1993, Christopher Hill depicted this as the EU's 'Capability-Expectations Gap' – the gap between what the EU is expected to do in the world and what it is able to deliver, especially since it lacks its own military force. Hill defines the capabilities necessary for an effective European foreign policy to be cohesiveness, resources and operational capacity (p.322). Asle Toje argued in 2008 that the capability-expectations gap has narrowed considerably over the years, however he introduced the more recent problem of the 'Consensus-Expectations Gap', stating that 'a gap between what the EU member-states are expected to do in the world and what they are actually able to agree upon persists' (p.121). Toje illustrated this with the prominent example of the Darfur crisis, where the EU has failed to live up to the expectations (Toje 2008, p.135-

¹ For an overview of the structural evolution of the EU see the illustration in the Appendix A.

138) and adds that ‘the consensus–expectations gap is apparent in the EU approach to virtually all the great foreign policy questions of the day, from the humanitarian crisis in Sudan’s Darfur region to the building of democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan, to curbing Iranian nuclear aspirations, Turkish accession and the handling of Russia’ (p.138).

Specifically looking at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the EU has been trying to influence the Israelis and the Palestinians since the early 1970s as can be seen in the various declarations the EU and its predecessors have issued over the last decades. Referring to these declarations, Anders Persson defines six stages of transformation of ‘the EU’s formula for a just peace’ between the years 1971 and 2009 (2013, p.141). The overall tenor of the more recent proclamations is that the EU supports a two-state solution. However, Persson claims that the EU’s rather positive assessment of the Palestinian role in the conflict had negative repercussions for the EU’s relations with Israel. He analyses the situation as follows: ‘More than anything else, these declarations had consequences for the EU’s relations with the Israelis as they cemented an already problematic relationship by adding weight to the existing Israeli mistrust and skepticism towards EU involvement in the conflict’ (2013, p.144-145). Therefore, in terms of influence on concrete policies, as Neve Gordon and Sharon Pardo claim, ‘there is no concrete evidence that EU norms have been successfully diffused toward Israel’s policies in the West Bank (2013, p.106)’. The complete refusal of any kind of withdrawal from the Palestinian Territories² by Israel, even at times of peace negotiations involving the international community, could hardly manifest itself more obviously than in the settlement expansion in the West Bank during the years 1991 to 2010: Gordon and Pardo estimate that by 1991, at the beginning of the Madrid talks and thus when Israel agreed to the ‘land for peace’ formula, approximately 89,000 Israeli settlers lived in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem). By the year 2010, the number had reached 311,000. Thus, settlers³ had tripled even after agreements not to expand settlements (Gordon and Pardo 2013, p.106).

Existing literature also suggests that the main reason for the EU’s failure to have a positive impact on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and especially to diffuse its values in Israel is

² In this thesis the term ‘Palestinian Territories’ is understood as marked by the 1949 armistice line (commonly referred to as the Green Line) which was agreed upon after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War between Israel and neighboring Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. Thus, the territory includes the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Sometimes, the term ‘Occupied Territories’ is used as an equivalent. However, both terms are disputed.

³ The term ‘settlers’ here refers to Israeli citizens who are predominantly of Jewish ethnicity living within the Palestinian Territories.

that Israelis tend to have an ambivalent perception of the EU based on the memory of the Holocaust and Europe as the homeland of many of their ancestors (see Harpaz and Shamis 2010). Harpaz and Shamis summarize: 'Israel's historical approach towards Normative Europe can be characterized as oscillating between feelings of admiration and of belonging and those of bitter cynicism and resentment' (2010, p.588). They emphasize that the Holocaust appears consistently in Israeli public discourse on EU foreign policy directed at Israel (p.590). Thus, the question has to be asked whether the dark side of Europe's historical connection with the Jewish population hinders Normative Power Europe to exert pressure on Israel and to contribute effectively to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process?

Another aspect that needs clarification is the question of whether dissent among EU Member States regarding sanctions for settlement building stands in relation with the weak normative position of the EU. Indeed, EU Member States are not able to come up with a unified opinion in all issues regarding Israel's policy in the Palestinian Territories. The most recent case is the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by the Czech Republic in 2017 – contrary to the EU's decision against the recognition (The New Arab 2017). For the purpose of this research it is valuable to ask in what way publicly-shown dissent among EU Member States concerning issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict influences the EU's role in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Could it be claimed that the EU cannot currently positively contribute to the peace process because of another example of the consensus-expectation gap evoked by Toje?

In a more recent publication, Gordon and Pardo find that EU-Israel economic relations are completely unrelated to the EU's political policies (2015, p.270). Despite the fact that the EU consistently criticizes Israel's settlement policies, it remains Israel's biggest trading partner. The following question arises: Do economic relations between the EU and Israel possibly relate to the stagnation of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process?

When analysing the claims of Gordon and Pardo (2013), their study gives the impression that 'Normative Power Europe' has actually had little constructive impact towards establishing peace between Israel and Palestine. Instead, Manners suggests that the EU's most important ability is to give legitimization in the international community and that it should not be underestimated as means to indirectly influence the conflict:

‘Thus the different existence, the different norms, and the different policies which the EU pursues are really part of redefining what *can* be ‘normal’ in international relations. Rather than being a contradiction in terms, the ability to define what passes for ‘normal’ in world politics is, ultimately, the greatest power of all’ (Manners 2002, p.253).

Could it be that this ‘ability to legitimize’ is the EU’s most valuable and most influential contribution to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process? Manners’ suggestion of a ‘legitimizing power’ relates to the social constructivist theory of international relations by Alexander Wendt which, as Harpaz describes, ‘perceives social interaction as an instrument that assists in defining what is considered as a legitimate truth claim’ (2011, p.1879). Xuewu Gu argues that states meet each other on the international level, interact and produce ‘intersubjective knowledge’ (2010, p.235) or create - as Alexander Wendt called it – a ‘pool of knowledge each has about the other’ (1992, p.405). It is thus socially constructed ideas and identities, not just power, that keeps states in relation with each other (Gu 2010, p.240). Therefore, the capacity to shape the notion of ‘the Acceptable’ and ‘the Unacceptable’ is of great importance in the international system, as it can change another state’s behaviour (Ulbert 2005, p.14). This observation could be essential to evaluate the EU’s normative impact on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in a comprehensive manner.

Drawing on the former as well as on various other scientific contributions, the EU as an international actor, its activities in Israel and the Palestinian Territories and its impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be dealt with in the following master’s thesis. Additionally, the analysis shall be complemented with a range of empirical data collected in qualitative interviews conducted with experts of EU-Israel relations. In the coming sections, the research design, e.g. intention, the precise research question, the hypotheses, the research method and methodology as well as the structure of the thesis will be discussed in detail.

1.1. Research Intention and Research Question

Considering what has been mentioned above, the main research question of this master’s thesis is the following: **How can the EU’s role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict be evaluated?** This question is valuable not only in search of a critical analysis of the EU’s approach towards the conflict, but also as an instance to study the EU’s general capacity to

influence international politics. To answer this question, it is useful to introduce a few secondary research questions:

- 1. In what way has the EU tried to influence the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?**
- 2. What does the EU's approach to peace-building in the Middle East tell us about its role as an international actor?**
- 3. To what extent has the EU had an impact on Israel to end its occupation structure in the Palestinian Territories?**

After an analysis of the relevant literature, I will put the findings into perspective by interviewing experts of Middle East politics on this issue.

Due to the scope of the master's thesis and time limitations, I will mainly focus on the impact that the EU has tried to exert on Israel, and not so much on the Palestinian Authority. The decision to research this actor in the conflict and not the other – namely how the EU has tried to influence the Palestinians – is based on the consideration that recently, the EU has pointed to the Israeli side as the aggressor that has to change its policies towards the Palestinians and therefore the pressure that the EU has tried to exert on Israel might be particularly high.

1.2.Hypotheses

Based on the findings of Toje (2008), Harpaz and Shamis (2010), as well as Manners (2002), the following hypotheses can be derived:

H1: Both a capabilities-expectation gap and a consensus-expectations gap exist in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that injures the EU's effectiveness to influence Israel's occupation policy.

H2: An important factor in the EU's failure to diffuse its values in Israel is that Israelis tend to have an ambivalent perception of the EU based on the memory of the Holocaust and Europe as the homeland of many of their ancestors.

H3: The EU's 'power to legitimize' is its most effective contribution to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

1.3. Research Method and Methodology

In order to answer the research question, this master's thesis draws on two types of data: For the most part, it draws and reflects upon secondary literature, e.g. existing articles and surveys, and analyses and contextualizes primary literature, such as official EU statements and declarations. I have mainly studied literature by Harpaz, Gordon, Pardo, Persson, Asseburg, Hill, Manners and Toje. However, I will also include research from various other scholars.

While focusing on answering the research questions and proving the hypotheses by means of existing literature, the preliminary findings were compared with results drawn from expert interviews, which were recorded, transcribed and analysed through the empirical research method of qualitative content analysis (e.g. Mayring 2010). Three open-ended interviews were conducted either in English or German, ranging from 40 to 100 minutes in length. The goal was to interview both Israeli and European experts in EU-Israel relations and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One interview was conducted during an exchange semester in Israel in June 2017 and the other two experts were interviewed in Vienna in October and November 2017. The scholars whom I interviewed for this research are presented in Appendix B.

1.4. Structure

The analysis of the research question is divided between five chapters: firstly, the important term 'power' and its different aspects relevant for analysing international relations are discussed. Secondly, I would like to shed light on the main developments in European-Israeli relations since the foundation of the European Union in 1950, known as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and the establishment of the Israeli State at more or less the same time, namely in 1948. Thirdly, I will look at the EU's development into an international actor, its current role and influence in the international system. Therefore I will focus on the concept of 'Normative Power Europe' and its weaknesses. For this purpose, a number of exemplary situations and problems shall be described with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Fourthly, I discuss the EU's activities in Israel and Palestine that seem to have an important influence on the EU's perception by the two Middle-Eastern actors. Fifthly, the

EU's credibility as 'Normative Power Europe' was evaluated based on expert opinions and the three prior chapters of this thesis. Finally, I will discuss the findings and their relevance in the conclusion.

2. Terminology:

'Power' and 'Channels of Power' in International Relations

In order to show how the master's thesis is embedded theoretically, it is first necessary to define the term 'power' in international relations and as a second step to define 'channels of power', thus different ways in which one state can influence international politics and exert pressure on other states. Therefore, it can be claimed that the research topic is derived from an approach that stems from the very core of the discipline of political science. Lasswell and Kaplan claim that 'political science, as an empirical discipline, is the study of the shaping and sharing of power' (1950, p.xiv).

Generally, Wilbur W. White defines power in three different ways:

1. 'The authority or right of a government or state to act;
2. The ability to compel compliance;
3. Synonym for state, for example, a great power' (1947, p.233).

In this research, I will mainly deal with the second notion of power. Therefore, another more detailed definition of power by Klaus Knorr is very useful for this research: '[...] national power in interstate relations is the ability of nation-states to produce desired effects in the behaviour of other nation-states. However, a wide variety of conditions and means, non-coercive as well as coercive, may be available to a nation-state to produce such effects' (1986, p.325).

Three different concepts of 'channels of power' in world politics are essential to understand power relations and the idea of influence in international relations. The following table by Manners illustrates the different channels of civilian, military and normative power.

	Civilian	Military	Normative
<i>Carr</i>	Economic	Military	Opinion
<i>Galtung</i>	Remunerative	Punitive	Ideological
<i>Manners</i>	Ability to use civilian instruments	Ability to use military instruments	Ability to shape conceptions of 'normal'

Table 1: Civilian, Military and Normative Powers (Manners 2002, p.240).

Already in 1941, Edward Hallett Carr defined three different channels of power: economic power, military power, and power of opinion. In 1973, Johan Galtung added new aspects to these concepts (p.33-47). Finally, Ian Manners redefined the three channels of power by their ability or means to exert pressure on other states in international relations.

Civilian Power: In 1973, Galtung defined his concept of 'remunerative power' as 'the power of having goods to offer, a 'quid' in return for a 'quo'. [...] [O]ne is powerful because one has a carrot to offer in return for a service; salary for work, beads for signature on a scrap of paper, giving away a country or two, tractors for oil' (p.33). Galtung adds that 'remunerative power presupposes an element of *dependence*: only if one *needs* the goods offered will one extend the *quid* in return for the other party's *quo*' (p.35). Thus, while Carr believed that economic strength was mainly relevant when associated with military strength (1941, p. 145ff.), Galtung goes one step further and considers it an almost independent channel of power in international relations.

Combining the more recent concepts of Kenneth J. Twitchett and Hanns W. Maull, civilian power has three key features:

- 1) 'the centrality of economic power to achieve national goals
- 2) the primacy of diplomatic co-operation to solve international problems
- 3) the willingness to use legally-binding supranational institutions to achieve international progress' (Twitchett 1976, p.1-2; Maull 1990, p.92-93; quoted in Manners 2002, p.236-237).

In conclusion, the notion of civilian power has an entire economic and remunerative character and often works through diplomatic co-operation.

Military Power: According to Galtung, military or punitive power – as he called it – is 'the power of having 'bads' to offer, destruction; also called force, violence' and he went on to

assert that ‘one is powerful because one has a big stick ready if the object does not comply so that one can destroy him or his property’. Thus, *fear* is an important element for the concept of military power (Galtung 1973, p.33-35). Knorr defines military power as ‘the ability to affect the behavior of other nation-states through the actual or threatened exertion of force’ (1986, p.325). In 1941, Carr had explained military power in a more fundamental way: ‘The supreme importance of the military instrument lies in the fact that the ultima ratio of power in international relations is war. Every act of the state, in its power aspect, is directed to war, not as a desirable weapon, but as a weapon which it may require in the last resort to use’ (p.139). However, he also adds that ‘every great civilization of the past has enjoyed in its day a superiority of military power’ (p.140).

Normative Power: Combining Manners’ and Galtung’s definitions, normative power is the ability to exert power over opinion in international politics (Galtung 1973, p.33-34) and ‘the ability to shape conceptions of ‘normal’’ (Manners 2002, p.239). This notion assumes that ideas shape world politics in a fundamental way. Galtung further claims that ‘for ideological power to work, some kind of basic *submissiveness* to the power-wielder is presupposed – otherwise his ideas would find no resonance’(1973, p.35). Carr believes that ‘the art of persuasion’ has always been closely associated with political power, however, in modern times it has assumed an ever more important role in politics. That is due to the fact that ‘the number of those whose opinion is politically important’, thus the public, has vastly increased (Carr 1941, p.196ff.). In 1941, he could hardly have imagined how future technology and media would spur on this development. Manners and Whitman emphasize that the concept of normative power is also a result of the aspiration to add new thoughts to the debate on power in world politics and to move beyond the traditional perception of nation-states being the only player in the game (Manners and Whitman, 1998).

One additional theory on power shall, that was not yet illustrated in the table above, but is very much related, shall be mentioned: According to the theory of Joseph Nye from the late 1980s, soft power grows out of the ‘attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies’ and is defined as the ability to attract and persuade (Nye 2004, p.ix-xiii). Nye also coined the term ‘smart power’ as strategically combining hard and soft power in foreign policy (ibid., p.32).

In any case, it has to be emphasized that power relations in world politics underlie the principle of causal relations, as Robert A. Dahl concludes:

‘[...] intelligent action to bring about a result of some kind in a political system, such as a change in a law or a policy, a revolution, or a settlement of an international dispute, requires knowledge of how to produce or “cause” these results. In political action, as in other spheres of life, we try to produce the results we want by acting appropriately on the relevant causes. [...] power relations can be viewed as causal relations of a particular kind’ (Dahl 1986, p.406).

He further describes power relation as follows: ‘For the assertion “C has power over R,” one can substitute the assertion “C’s behaviour causes R’s behaviour”. If one can define the causal relation, one can define influence, power, or authority, and vice versa [...]’ (Dahl 1986, p.410). However, he also criticizes that sometimes ‘effects’ are described as outcomes of a specific action without sufficient proof how they have been caused or that they are merely one among many other factors that led to a certain situation or policy (Dahl 1986).

In addition, the term ‘autonomy’ in international relations as defined by Galtung is important to mention here because it is one approach that tries to countervail power and thus external influence on states. Galtung asserted that autonomy ‘can be seen as power-over-oneself, the ability to set goals that are one’s own, not goals one has been brainwashed into by others, *and* to pursue them’ (1973, p.33). Another approach to countervailing power is ‘balance of power’ which is what obtains when power is divided equally between two states, as Galtung further explained (1973, p.33).

For the present research, all three channels of power that have been explained above are relevant. More recently however, especially the concept of normative power is used to describe the current status of the EU. It will be discussed in the following chapters whether this kind of power is successful and relevant in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

3. A Timeline of EU-Israel Relations

3.1. Historical Background

Before starting to describe the EU's relationship with Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over time, a brief summary of the preliminary events leading up to the creation of the State of Israel and the conflict with the Palestinians is in order. The historical accounts 'Righteous Victims' by Benny Morris (1999) and 'Der Nahostkonflikt: Geschichte, Positionen, Perspektiven' (The Middle East Conflict: History, Positions, Perspectives) by Muriel Asseburg and Jan Busse (2016) will help to depict the more important phases in history.

A modern history of the conflict should begin in 1882, when Jewish immigration to Palestine, then under Ottoman control, started with the flight from anti-Jewish pogroms in the Russian Empire. In February 1896, Theodor Herzl published his book 'The Jewish State', in which he suggests the establishment of a Jewish state as an answer to European anti-Semitism. In August 1897, the Zionist demand for a 'Homeplace in Palestine' as an alternative to assimilation was voiced at the First Zionist Congress in Basel. The Hussein-McMahon Correspondence (1915/16), the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) and the Balfour Declaration (1917) had major implications for the Middle East concerning its partition between the great powers France and Great Britain. In 1922, Great Britain officially received a mandate by the League of Nations over the territory of Palestine.

Rumors that Jews would attempt to seize control of the Temple Mount in 1929 led to the Hebron-Massacre, in which Arabs killed 67 Jews. This brought the centuries-old Jewish presence in Hebron to an end and led to the formation of the Jewish paramilitary organization 'Haganah' which later would become the core of the Israeli Defense Forces. Between 1936 and 1939, an unsuccessful Arab revolt against the British Mandate took place. In 1946, the Jewish underground organization 'Irgun' bombed the headquarters of the British administration in Jerusalem. After increasing local tensions, the UN-General Assembly accepted the Partition Plan for Palestine (Resolution 181) in 1947. On May 14, 1948, Israel declared – in a hasty process – its independence from the UK and, hence, the establishment of a Jewish state. This resulted in the beginning of the first Israeli-Arab War ('War of Independence' or 'an-Nakba' = Arabic for 'the catastrophe'). In 1949, an armistice agreement between, on the one hand, Israel and, on the other hand, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria

was signed. In 1956, the Suez Crisis and thus the second Israeli-Arab War took place. In the coming years, two important Palestinian organizations were founded: The Foundation of the Movement for the Liberation of Palestine (Fatah, 1959) and the Foundation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO, 1964).⁴

Between November 5 and 10, 1967, the Six-Day-War or ‘an-Naksa’ (=Arabic for ‘the setback’), and thus the third Israeli-Arab War, took place. Subsequently, Resolution 242 was passed in the UN Security Council on November 22, 1967, which called for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from ‘territories occupied in the Six-Day-War’, and similarly called for respect of the sovereignty of all states in the area. After the Black September conflict in 1970, Jordan chased the PLO out of the country, which then fled to Lebanon. The Yom-Kippur War or October-/Ramadan War in 1973 was already the fourth Israel-Arab War and resulted in another dramatic defeat for the neighbouring Arab countries. After a speech by Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat in front of the Knesset⁵ (1977), and the Camp-David Negotiations (1978), Israel and Egypt finally signed a peace agreement in 1979. In 1982, Israel entered the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1989) which constituted the fifth Israeli-Arab-War. In 1987, the first Intifada⁶ began and Hamas, the militant offshoot of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, was founded. The exiled PLO declared Palestine independent and thus proclaimed a Palestinian state within the territory occupied by Israel since 1967. During the Second Gulf War (1990/1991), Yasser Arafat, the founder of Fatah and an already very important political figure, solidarised with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein who was fighting a war alongside Yemen against and invaded Kuwait, which in turn was backed by the US, the UK, France and Saudi Arabia.

In 1991, the Middle East Peace Conference took place in Madrid, followed by the Oslo I Agreement (Declaration of Principles, 1993). On February 25, 1994, the Jewish extremist Baruch Goldstein killed 29 Palestinians in the Cave of Patriarchs/the Mosque of Abraham in Hebron. In 1994, the Paris Protocol about Israeli-Palestinian economic relations was signed,

⁴ Fatah is a Palestinian nationalist political party and the largest faction of the confederated multi-party PLO. Fatah was previously active in revolutionary struggle closely associated with its founder Yasser Arafat until his death in 2004. Afterwards the party struggled with factionalism but has been able to retain control of the Palestinian National Authority, thus the Palestinian government in the West Bank. The PLO aimed at liberating Palestine through armed struggle. Until 1991 it was considered to be a terrorist organization by the United States and Israel - despite its observer status at the United Nations since 1974.

⁵ Knesset = The Israeli Parliament.

⁶ Intifada = Arabic for ‘shivering’, used as term to refer to the originally non-violent, later violent Palestinian uprising against Israel.

the Palestinian Authority (PA) was established, and the Israeli-Jordanian Peace Treaty was signed. The Oslo II Agreement (Interim Agreement) was put into effect in 1995. After these (relative) successful peace negotiations, the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by Jewish extremist Yigal Amir. Between December 1995 and January 1996, peace talks were held in Wye River (USA) between Israel and Syria but were eventually halted without any great success. In 1997, Israel and the PLO agreed on the Hebron-Protocol concerning partial withdrawal of Israeli forces from Hebron. The Wye River Memorandum (1998) between Israel and the PLO arranged for the realization of the Oslo II Agreement, however, its implementation remained unfinished. In 2000, the Israeli army retreated from South Lebanon. Shortly thereafter, and still in 2000, the Final Status Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians took place in Camp David, however, they ended without an agreement. On September 28, 2000, the second Intifada ('Al Aqsa Intifada') began.

In 2002, the Arab Peace Initiative was launched by the Arab League.⁷ The initiative called for a normalization of diplomatic relations between Arab states and Israel in exchange for Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian Territories, East Jerusalem, and a solution for the refugee problem. Shortly thereafter, Israel conducted the 3-month-long military operation 'Defensive Shield' in the West Bank, with its declared aim to eradicate 'terrorists', who were active in the still ongoing Intifada. Officially, for security reasons, Israel started to construct the West Bank security barrier in June 2002. In April 2003, the Middle East Quartet consisting of the USA, Russia, the EU, and the UN, presented the 'Roadmap for Peace' which was never implemented due to a deadlock in an early phase. In December 2003, the Geneva Initiative was introduced in order to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was based on precedent negotiations between the two parties and other actors. On November 11, 2004, Yasser Arafat died and Mahmud Abbas became his successor as president and chairman of Fatah and the PLO. In August 2005, Israel evacuated settlements and military bases in the Gaza Strip, as well as four isolated settlements in the West Bank (the mission is referred to as 'Israeli Disengagement from Gaza'). Then, the land, air and sea blockade of the coastal Palestinian territory, the Gaza Strip, by Israel and Egypt intensified. In January 2006, Hamas celebrated an election victory in the second Palestinian parliamentary elections. A military conflict between Israel and the Gaza Strip emerged from July to August of the same year. In the meantime, Israel conducted its second war with Lebanon (sixth Israeli-Arab War). In June

⁷ The Arab League was established in 1945 as an organization with its designated goal to draw closer together Arab states and co-ordinate collaboration among them. Nowadays it has 22 member states in and around North Africa, the Horn of Africa and Arabia.

2007, there was a civil-war-like conflict between Fatah and Hamas supporters in the Gaza Strip, with the result being the Hamas' takeover of power in Gaza, leading to the de facto division of the Palestinian territories into the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (governed by the PA). In November 2007, Israelis and Palestinians resumed peace negotiations in Annapolis (USA). Between December 2008 and January 2009, another military conflict took place between Israel and the Gaza Strip. In March 2010, Israeli troops stopped the 'Gaza Freedom Flotilla', a fleet of ships carrying humanitarian aid and construction materials with the intention of breaking the blockade of the Gaza Strip. Nine activists got killed on the Turkish ship 'Mavi Marmara' that belonged to the fleet.

On November 29, 2012, the Palestinian status at the UN was upgraded from 'observer entity' to 'non-member observer state'. In December 2012, yet another military conflict between Israel and the Gaza Strip took place – followed by another one in July/August 2014. In April 2015, the State of Palestine acceded to the International Criminal Court (ICC). On September 30, 2015, Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas emphasized in a speech at the UN General Assembly not to be bound any longer to the Oslo Agreements, seeing as Israel has acted against its obligations to which it is subjected according to the agreement on multiple occasions. On December 23, 2016, the USA abstained from voting on UNSC Resolution 2334 condemning Israeli settlements, thereby allowing the motion to pass. It was the first resolution to pass since 2009 regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and it labeled the Israeli settlements as violating international law. In February 2017, Israel passed a law that retroactively legalized about 4,000 settler homes built on Palestinian territory. In April 2017, Russia recognized West Jerusalem as the future capital of Israel and East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state, thus confirming its support of a two-state solution. In contrast, US President Trump declared in 2017 his willingness to accept a one-state solution, thus marking a change in decades-long US policy of advocating a two-state solution. On December 6, 2017, President Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and ordered the relocation of the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

3.2.EU Declarations on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:

‘The EU’s Formula for a Just Peace’

The EU has laid out its policy on the Middle East in a series of high-level official statements. It has issued declarations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since its foundation as the European Coal and Steel Community in 1950 and the establishment of the Israeli State at more or less the same time, namely 1948. The following section sheds light on the EU’s position towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the years and the main developments in European-Israeli relations.

Anders Persson’s analysis offers valuable insights in order to understand the EU’s current position on the conflict between Israel and Palestine. He defines six transformation stages of ‘the EU’s formula for a just peace’ between the years 1971 and 2009. The stages can be seen in Table 2.

1971	1973	1977	1980	1999	2009
Paris Declaration	EPC Middle East Decl.	EPC Middle East Decl.	Venice Declaration	Berlin Declaration	Council of the EU
No mention of the Palestinians as an explicit party to the conflict.	EC recognized the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.	EC took into account the need for a homeland for the Palestinian people .	EC recognized the Palestinians’ right to exercise fully their right to self-determination .	EU declares its explicit commitment to the creation of a Palestinian state .	EU recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

Table 2: The Transformation of EU’s Formula for a Just Peace, 1971-2009 (Persson 2013, p.141).

Persson demonstrates that the last major discursive shift of the EU’s position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state by the Council of the European Union, which occurred during the Swedish EU presidency in December 2009 (Persson 2013, p.141). With regard to the statements of US President Donald Trump, the EU reaffirmed its support for a two-state solution in 2018 (EU External Action 2018a).

In order to properly understand how the relationship between Israel and the EU developed over time, it is necessary to go over the most important events in the history of their

diplomatic relations in detail. Generally, the relations between Israel and the EU stretch back to the beginnings of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Political Cooperation (EPC) in the early 1970s (Gordon and Pardo 2015; Bouris 2014; Pardo and Peters 2010; Pardo 2013; Persson 2015b). Gordon and Pardo depict the most important stages of the EU's contribution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine: Already in 1971, the community adopted the 'Schuman document', a secret report that suggested the following six principles to shape the policy towards Israel (Pardo and Peters 2012, Doc. 2/14; Gordon and Pardo 2015, p.267-268):

- 1) The establishment of demilitarized zones with international military support;
- 2) Israel's withdrawal from occupied territories with minor border adjustments;
- 3) the internationalization of Jerusalem;
- 4) the postponement of a conclusive solution regarding the sovereignty of East Jerusalem;
- 5) a solution for the refugee problem: the choice for the Palestinian refugees of either returning to their home or being indemnified;
- 6) the approval of the Gunnar Jarring Mission, which refers to efforts undertaken by the UN Special Envoy for the Middle East Peace Process to negotiate the implementation of UN SC Resolution 242 on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Gordon and Pardo 2013, p.103).

According to Gordon and Pardo, the Schuman document presents an important landmark because it was the first common position on the Arab-Israeli conflicts that the community could agree upon and because the six principles would serve as the framework for later Community/Union declarations (2013, p.103). However, as mentioned above, the community neither recognised nor explicitly mentioned the Palestinians as a main party to the conflict (Persson 2013, p.141).

The first official and public declaration on the conflict was issued in 1973 by the European Community ('EPC Middle East Declaration') in Brussels, following the 1973 Yom Kippur War between Israel and the neighbouring Arab countries. Gordon and Pardo summarize that the declaration condemned acquiring territories by force, called on Israel to end its occupation of 'Arab land', declared the necessity to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of every state in the Middle East, and determined that the legitimate rights of

the Palestinians had to be taken into account ‘in order to secure a just and lasting peace to the conflict’ (2015, p.268; 2013, p.103). Thus, as Persson states, this was the first time that the EPC mentioned the term ‘Palestinians’, they were finally recognized as a party to the conflict and their rights were referred to as ‘legitimate’ (Persson 2015b, p.75). In addition, the fourth Arab-Israeli War and the subsequent oil crisis led to the initiation of the Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD) between the EEC and the Arab League, which was based mainly on the Arab policy of France. Gordon and Pardo write that statements of the EAD called to end the construction of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Territories and opposed unilateral initiatives that would change the status quo of Jerusalem (2013, p.103-104).

The European Community drafted a new declaration in London after the Israeli centre-right Likud party (= Hebrew for ‘Consolidation’) and Prime Minister Menachem Begin came into power in May 1977. Therein, the ‘EC took into account the need for a homeland for the Palestinian people’ (Persson 2013, p.141) and mentioned the existence of a Palestinian ‘national identity’ (Gordon and Pardo 2013, p.103-104). Interestingly, as Gordon and Pardo argue, the then nine member states used ‘language reminiscent of the November 1917 Balfour Declaration’ in the new declaration (2013, p.103-104). The 1917 Balfour Declaration was a declaration by the British government which supported the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, which was then ruled by the Ottoman Empire.

In the 1980 Venice Declaration, the EC positions that had been formed step-by-step in the 1970s became manifest. The EC criticized Israel for its settlement policy, emphasizing that the settlements constitute ‘a serious obstacle to the peace process’ and that both the Israeli settlements and modifications in population and property in the Palestinian Territories are a violation of international law (Pardo and Peters 2012, Doc. 3/2). Gordon and Pardo assert that ‘the Venice Declaration paved the way to a stream of new declarations on the conflict, which became increasingly critical of Israeli policies and more forthright in their endorsement of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the right of the Palestinians to national self-determination’ (2015, p.268-269). They further claim that the discursive practices of the EC of issuing declarations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict facilitated the distinction between the moral EC ‘Us’ and the non-EC ‘Other’ (Israel) by highlighting the ‘Other’s’ moral shortcomings (2015, p.268-269). However, Harpaz and Shamir argue that the normative grounding of the Venice Declaration ‘aggravated negative Israeli perceptions of Europe,

thereby expanding Europe's legitimacy deficit in the eyes of Israel and undermining its normative status' as will be discussed further in chapter 5.5. of this thesis (2010, p.585).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews immigrated to Israel in the early 1990s. In 2011, they constituted around 15% of Israel's population of 7.7 million inhabitants. Gordon and Pardo state that the EC's position towards the settlement of Soviet Jews in Israel was two-folded, especially what concerned settlements in the Palestinian Territories (2013, p.104): On the one hand, the by then 12 EC member states supported the right of Soviet Jews to immigrate to Israel. On the other hand, the EC condemned the practice of the Israeli state that gave the new immigrants incentives to move to settlements over the 1949 Armistice border. The Europeans insisted that the Jewish right to Aliyah (=immigration to Israel) 'must not be implemented at the expense of the rights of the Palestinians in the occupied territories' (Pardo and Peters 2012, Doc. 3/16, p. 176–78). And with this stance, yet again, the EC increased its unpopularity among Israeli decision makers (Gordon and Pardo 2013, p.104).

The 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinians were initially considered by the EU as a success of its normative impact on Israel (Gordon and Cohen 2012; Gordon and Pardo 2015, p.269). Subsequently, the recently established EU signed Association Agreements with both the Israelis and the Palestinians. Gordon and Pardo reiterate that with this move the EU 'acquired a direct material interest in ensuring that progress was maintained in the Middle East Peace Process' (2013, p.104). However, the EU resumed its critique on the ongoing settlement expansion in the Palestinian Territories very soon (Gordon and Cohen 2012; Gordon and Pardo 2015, p.269).

At the European Council Meeting in Berlin in March 1999, the EU reaffirmed its support for Palestinian self-determination and explicitly declared its support for the creation of a Palestinian state. It called on both the Israelis and Palestinians to renounce 'any activity contrary to international law, including all settlement activity' (Pardo and Peters 2012, Doc. 4/21). According to Gordon and Pardo, this position was renewed at several other official meetings of the Council of Ministers thereafter (2015, p.269).

Muriel Asseburg asserts that the EU behaved relatively passive after the Oslo negotiations. Even though it did everything to support the ensuing peace process, the EU merely focused on

facilitating an environment that would ensure a ‘lasting peace in the region rather than contributing directly to a political solution between the conflicting parties’ (2003, p.11). Asseburg emphasizes that the EU thought that its support should, first and foremost, ‘be complementary and parallel to the political negotiations at the official level’ (ibid.). According to Asseburg, the EU only changed its approach, also noticeable in the 1999 council stance, after the collapse of the Oslo process and the second Intifada. She believes that with those setbacks, the EU finally ‘realized that its support for peace building and economic development cannot be effective in the absence of a genuine peace process’ (ibid.). That is why the EU assumed a more political role by means of crisis management and multilateral diplomacy. Gordon and Pardo state that following the demise of the peace process the EU has supported calls to organize another international conference in order to bring the two parties back to the negotiating table (2013, p.104). At the Seville Council of Ministers in 2002, the EU further defined its position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as follows:

‘The objective is an end to the occupation and the early establishment of a democratic, viable, peaceful and sovereign State of Palestine, on the basis of the 1967 borders, if necessary with minor adjustments agreed by the parties. The end result should be two states living side by side within secure and recognised borders enjoying normal relations with their neighbours’ (Pardo and Peters 2012, Doc. 4/32, p. 274–275).

During a speech in 2012, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, criticised the planned expansion of settlements in East Jerusalem and the E1 area which is mostly empty or Bedouin-inhabited land in the northeastern outskirts of the city over the 1949 Armistice border:

‘It should therefore come as no surprise that on Monday the EU expressed its deep dismay and strong opposition to Israeli plans, announced after the UNGA resolution of 29 November [2012], to expand settlements in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem and in particular plans to develop the so-called E1 area. The E1 plan, if implemented, would seriously undermine the prospects of a negotiated resolution of the conflict by jeopardizing the possibility of a contiguous and viable Palestinian state and of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states’ (European Commission 2012).

Nowadays, a comprehensive statement on the EU’s official position on the Middle East peace process, hence also the position on the Israeli settlement policy and the future of Jerusalem, can be found on the website of the EU’s External Action Program. The statement was

published on June 15, 2016. According to that statement, the EU is willing to work with its partners to re-launch peace negotiations, based on the following parameters:

- ‘An agreement on the borders of the two states, based on the 4 June 1967 lines with equivalent land swaps as may be agreed between the parties. The EU will recognize changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, only when agreed by the parties.
- Security arrangements that, for Palestinians, respect their sovereignty and show that the occupation is over; and, for Israelis, protect their security, prevent the resurgence of terrorism and deal effectively with security threats, including with new and vital threats in the region.
- A just, fair, agreed and realistic solution to the refugee question.
- Fulfilment of the aspirations of both parties for Jerusalem. A way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both states’ (EU External Action 2016a).

The EU considers Jerusalem as the future capital of both states. It further links the future of Jerusalem with additional illegal Israeli settlement building in East Jerusalem and emphasizes its institution building support on the Palestinian side:

- **‘Israeli settlements** in the occupied Palestinian territory: The EU has repeatedly confirmed its deep concern about accelerated settlement expansion in the West Bank including East Jerusalem. The EU considers that settlement building anywhere in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law, constitutes an obstacle to peace and threatens to make a two-state solution impossible.
- **Jerusalem:** The EU considers that the peace negotiations should include the resolution of all issues surrounding the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. The EU will not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties. The EU supports institution building work in East Jerusalem, notably in the areas of health, education and the judiciary’ (EU External Action 2016a).

Indeed, it seems the dispute over Jerusalem is the most difficult to resolve. Despite some pro-Palestinian demands, the EU statement also shows that the EU would accept whatever the

parties agree among them in order to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. Toviás supports this by stating: ‘The EU realizes that Jerusalem is the most difficult issue to be solved in the negotiations for peace. Hence, I think that the EU would go with whatever the parties agree among them’ (2017, personal communication).

Summing up, according to Ortega, the EU has always supported and participated in finding a peaceful solution of the conflict even when it turned into a crisis and open conflict after 2000 during the second intifada. He emphasizes that the Union has made great efforts to align its member states’ views and to come up with a common position and official statements in all its European Council meetings especially since 1999. Ortega further argues that the EU ‘has done everything it could to ensure that this common position is a balanced one, condemning any violence by either party and insisting on the resumption of negotiations’ (2003, p.53). Furthermore, Gordon and Pardo add that the EU has been consistent in its position towards the Israeli occupation and settlement expansion in the Palestinian Territories ever since the Schuman Document in 1971 considering them illegal under international law (2013, p.105). In addition, Gordon and Pardo add that EU Member States have never recognized the 1967 Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem and have instructed the Israeli government not to create ‘new facts on the ground’ time and again (ibid.). Thus, it seems clear that the EU’s stance on ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is and has been for a long time the establishment of a viable Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. In 2009, the Council of the EU under Swedish presidency finally issued a statement recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

In conclusion, it can be noticed that the EU Foreign Ministers and the European Council issued regular policy statements as part of a coordinated EU policy. However, it has to be acknowledged that the EU’s peaceful measures have not achieved any success.

4. The EU as an International Actor

The following section will deal with the EU's role as an international political actor and its behaviour in the Middle East context. Thereby, the secondary research question, namely what the EU's behaviour in the context of the Middle East tells us about its role as an international actor, shall be answered. Thus, the aim is to analyse the character of the EU and, especially, to what extent it can be considered a normative power.

For this purpose, it is first necessary to depict several dimensions of the EU as a political and international actor and then to analyse the EU as what has been described as 'Normative Power Europe'. This enfolds the history of Europe as a normative power, the value rationality, the normative principles and the diffusion of these norms, as will be explained later on. Afterwards, the use of 'Normative Power Europe' as a common foreign policy to support European integration will be discussed. Then, two weaknesses of the EU's foreign policy shall be described: On the one hand, the older concept of the 'Capability-Expectations Gap' by Christopher Hill and, on the other hand, the more recent concept of the 'Consensus-Expectations Gap' by Asle Toje. To illustrate the last concept, three cases in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be given as example. Eventually, the findings will be summarized in an interim conclusion.

4.1. General Assessment of the EU as a Political and International Actor

In 1991, Neumann and Welsh attempted to analyse the multiple identities of the European Community as 'the EC as Europe or the nucleus of Europe, Europe as a wider security community, Europe as a grouping of developed capitalist economies (OECD Europe), [and] Europe as an exclusive cultural entity' (Neumann and Welsh, 1991; quoted in Hill 1993, p.308). Nowadays, probably several more definitions could be added to their list. Recent publications define the EU as supranational union and, thus, a new type of political entity where negotiated power is delegated to a superior authority (the EU Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament) by the governments of its member states (Kiljunen 2004).

Hill denoted in 1993 six potential functions for the EC in international relations: as a superpower, as a regional pacifier, as a global intervener, as a mediator of conflicts, as a bridge between the rich and poor, and as a joint supervisor of the world economy (1993,

p.312-315). Which one is it to fulfill? Whichever task it is to be, Hill had something insightful to say about the role of the EC in world politics:

‘It may or may not be true that multipolarity provides more stability in the international system than bipolarity [...] in which case the development of a collective European diplomacy has served wider needs than its own, but EPC has certainly evolved because of a perceived need to provide an alternative view to that of the United States, both within the western world and on behalf of it [...] particularly where there seem to be possibilities of mediating dangerous conflicts between third states’ (Hill 1993, p.311-312).

Thus, he claimed that the EPC constituted an alternative view to that of the USA within and on behalf of the Western world. On this matter, Hill claimed that the EC had the most experience and the most influence in the area of mediation. Its member states have had relations with countries all over the planet and they have managed to put the period of decolonization behind them without too much long-term damage and hate and until the 1990s they were not perceived as a superpower or potential hegemon. Individual member states might have carried their ‘historical baggage’ but collectively they represented a new form of government and according to him they could claim to be neutral (Hill 1993, p. 313-314).

Furthermore, Hill argues that the EU embodies both ‘a subsystem of the international system as a whole’ and that the EU is ‘a system (i.e. not a single actor) which generates international relations - collectively, individually, economically, politically – rather than clear-cut European foreign policy as such’ (1993, p.322). Therefore it is reasonable to ask whether the EU has been able to define itself and its interests. According to the Toje, the EU has not been able to define itself properly, which makes self-interested behaviour, particularly finding common foreign policy goals, a difficult endeavor. However, Toje stresses that the EU attempts to define itself by certain values spelt out in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights which are perceived as universal by the EU itself, however, they are perceived as characteristic to European political behaviour by the outside world. Furthermore, he claims that higher EU officials often try to draw a *raison d’état* out of these values or claim that they replace the usual national interest in the EU (Toje 2008, p.126).

4.2. The EU as Normative Power Europe (NPE)

First introduced by Ian Manners (2002), ‘Normative Power Europe’ (henceforth referred to as ‘NPE’) is one concept by which scholars of international relations attempt to explain the role of the European Union in the world. This concept is especially important for the EU’s

relationship with the Middle East and Israel. That is why we will deal extensively with NPE in this section.

Initially, Hedley Bull claimed in 1982 that ‘Europe is not an actor in international affairs, and does not seem likely to become one’ (p.151). As time has shown, he could not have been more wrong. While some scholars might claim that the EU lacks ‘actorness’, as Hill underlines, it can be said that the presence of the EU can be noticed in most international organizations, in international economic relations, of course within the European Union member states and its neighbouring states, in developing countries and in the resolution of conflict situations around the world (1993, p. 308-309). Persson remarks that ‘most EU scholars, even many of those who are deeply critical of ‘Normative Power Europe’, seem to attach some kind of significance, however limited, to the EU as a normative power in world politics’ (2016, p.311). However, Bull’s statement must be recognized as a response to François Duchêne’s suggestion ten years earlier that progressive civilian power has replaced traditional military power as a means to exert influence on international relations (Duchêne 1972, 1973). Bull criticized the notion of civilian power for its ineffectiveness and lack of self-sufficiency in contrast to military power. He suggested that the EC should become more self-sufficient in defence and security. His vision, unimaginable during the 1980s within the context of the Cold War, was to turn the EC into a military power (Bull 1982). Manners argues that both Bull’s and Duchêne’s approaches are based on the nature of international relations during the Cold War period including the following three assumptions (2002, p. 238):

- 1) The nature of the nation-state was seen as fixed. Even though Duchêne tried to introduce a sense of common responsibility to international politics, he still relied on the idea of the international society while he overlooked the idea of a global civil society.
- 2) Direct physical power is essential. Both Duchêne and Bull relied on the idea that a strong physical power was needed.
- 3) National interest remains important.

The hidden connotation of both Bull and Duchêne is that European interests are paramount (Duchêne 1972, p.43; Bull 1982, p.157), thus limiting the focus to the concerns of the European audience, as Maull emphasizes (1990, p.92). Manners summarizes that these assumptions proved to be out-of-date with the final period of the Cold War: ‘However, the cold war [sic] which structured many of these assumptions ended with the internal collapse of

regimes across eastern Europe whose ideology was perceived as unsustainable by its leadership and citizens – by the collapse of norms rather than the power of force’ (2002, p.238). Thus, the end of the Cold War is also where Manners derives his claim from, that ideas and norms are more powerful than physical force. With this example, Manners shows that indeed norms are important and the EU does have an impact in world politics as a normative power.

In 2002, Ian Manners would argue that the changes in the international system provoked by the end of the Cold War would lead us to rethink the then accepted notions of military and civilian power in order to consider the EU’s normative power in international politics (p.236). Manners claims that ‘the concept of normative power represents a valuable addition to our understanding of the EU’s civilian and military power in world politics’ (p.236). As we will also see later on, he suggests that the EU possesses an extremely valuable and effective power since it has the ability to define what passes for ‘normal’ in world politics (Manners 2002, p.236). Therefore, Manners claims that the EU’s main power is the ‘power over opinion’ or ‘ideological power’ (2002).

4.2.1. The History and Development of ‘NPE’

In his articles in 1972 and 1973, when the EC had only been in existence for roughly two decades, Duchêne states that it represented a civilian power that had strong economic power but little armed force (1973). Decades later, Manners observes that ‘[Since] the defeat of the European Defence Community by the French National Assembly in 1954, the question of the EC assuming a military dimension had remained taboo until the signing of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) in 1991’ (2002, p.237). Furthermore, he remarks that with the change from the linear structure of the EC to the three-pillar structure of the EU it has also turned into a military power, since it was clear that the CFSP would eventually include a defence policy, as well (Manners 2002, p.237). However, as Hill emphasizes, the internal and external expectations were not met due to the inability to establish a common foreign policy and military for several more years (1993). At the end of the 1990s, there were several critical voices commenting on the militarization of the EU. Jan Zielonka voiced his concerns about the inclusion of a military mandate as it would weaken the EU’s unique character as a civilian international actor (1998, p.229). Karen E. Smith suggested that the militarization ‘would represent the culmination of a “statebuilding” project’ and thus harm Europe as a whole (2000, p.27).

In 1973, Duchêne first claimed the EC was using soft power instruments in order to achieve certain foreign policy goals. For that purpose the EC has positioned itself, as Duchêne predicted as early as 1973, as a ‘Normative Power’, advancing civilian values through reliance on mainly soft power instruments. Hill added in 1992 that, taking the example of the diplomatic efforts by the EU to solve the Yugoslavian imbroglio, it is much ‘easier and more natural for the EC to act diplomatically than to exert coercion, even economically’ (p. 313-314).

To conclude, let us take a look at a prediction of Duchêne in the year 1973: He predicted that while the actual military power of the Europe would decline, it would become a strong example of ‘a new stage of political civilization’ with the EU exerting internationally civilian forms of power (Duchêne 1973, p. 19; see also Kagan 2002 and Manners 2002).

Manners notes that it is a paradox, that Europe which once imperialistically ruled the world through military power, nowadays has found a way to set norms in world politics (2002, p.238). Relating to the findings of leading political scientists, Manners emphasizes that ‘the EU’s normative difference comes from its historical context, hybrid polity and political-legal constitution’ (ibid. p.240). He also suggests that the EU represents a new political form and that this is the normatively distinguished basis for its relations with the world (ibid. p.252). Harpaz and Shamis suggest that the transformation of the war-torn, Nazi Europe into the EC and later the EU, thus a completely new and advanced political system of peaceful integration, must be seen as success and that, indeed, the EU can be satisfied with this development (2010, p.581-582). Manners also rejects the accusation against the EU that its ambition to diffuse its ‘norms’ is in fact ‘cultural imperialism’, stating that the EU often stands up to other developed OECD states, e.g. the US and Japan (2002, p. 253). Further on we will see whether this is in fact the case with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

4.2.2. Value Rationality

There are different views on the motives behind the EU’s normative agenda among European Union scholars. As a central characteristic of NPE, Manners defines the EU’s value rationality. Thus, he claims that the EU does not use its normative power in order to achieve certain other goals (thus as a mean or instrument for something else), but to set normative standards is the goal itself. He further argues that this is the case because the European history and the legal constitution of the EU ‘pre-disposes it to act in a normative way’ (Manners

2002, p.242). According to Manners, that is also what makes the EU different to pre-existing political forms.

Toje supports Manners' thesis: He distinguishes between means/ends rationality and value rationality, 'both of which encourage certain behavioural patterns' (Toje 2008, p.126-127; see also Kaplan 1976, p.61-65). According to Toje, value rationality is based on 'reasons intrinsic to the actor'. Because in fact he wants to do good, no matter if there are prospects of success or not (see also Weber [1919] 1997, p.329). The idea is to make a statement or to set an example (Toje 2008, p.126-127). Toje claims that the trait of value rationality is what makes the EU's foreign policy unique in world politics: 'The EU will engage in 'constructive engagement' and 'critical dialogue' – even when these are not the most rational ways to achieve a given objective' (2008, p.126-127). Toje also has found that the EU favors to intervene with 'small-scale, low-intensity pre- and post-crises management' in less urgent crises in world politics since these issues seem to 'have a greater chance of being solved by political engagement and huge sums of money' (2008, p.126-127; see also Everts 2001, p.115).

As opposed to Manners, Harpaz and Shamis claim that the EU does use its normative power as instrument to achieve certain goals: They reiterate in 2010, that the EU 'has intensified its efforts' to position itself as NPE' (Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.579). They also claim that the EU as a civilian and normative power relies on soft power instruments (see also Nye 2004, p. 75-83; Duchene 1973, p.19-20). These instruments rely on cultural and political values and foreign policies and 'enable to obtain at times what it wishes through attraction, as opposed to force, coercion or payment' (Nye 2004; quoted in Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.582). Persson also argues that Manners was wrong to believe that the EU was not guided by Realpolitik and economic or security interests (2015a, p.3).

Harpaz and Shamis draw a picture of the motives of NPE and conclude, agreeing with the realist approach within international relations, that it is used to promote Europe's economic or geo-strategic interests compensating for the Union's hard-power deficit (2010, p.583). Along constructivist lines, Harpaz and Shamis claim, the motives of NPE may be explained as an attempt to create its own internal and external identity, to diffuse its values beyond its borders and to increase its own legitimacy as a political player in international relations (2010, p.583). The constructivist approach is also what Kagan refers to as 'tactics of the weak'. He argues,

the EU seems to attempt to diminish the strong political position of the US without exerting power itself, but ‘by appealing to its conscience’ (Kagan 2002, p. 7).

4.2.3. The EU’s Normative Principles

In 2002, Ian Manners determined the five core values or norms of the EU: the centrality of peace; the idea of liberty; democracy; rule of law; and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The following table shows the EU’s normative basis according to Manners:

<i>Founding Principles</i>	<i>Tasks and Objectives</i>	<i>Stable Institutions</i>	<i>Fundamental Rights</i>
Liberty	Social solidarity	Guarantee of democracy	Dignity
Democracy	Anti-discrimination	Rule of law	Freedoms
Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms	Sustainable development	Human rights	Equality
Rule of law		Protection of minorities	Solidarity
			Citizenship
			Justice
Treaty base – set out in art. 6 of the TEU	Treaty base – set out in arts. 2 of TEC and TEU, arts. 6 and 13 of TEC	Copenhagen criteria – set out in the conclusions of the June 1993 European Council	Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

Table 3: The EU’s Normative Basis (Manners 2002, p.243).

Manners depicts how the normative basis has been developed over the past 70 years through a series of declarations, treaties, policies, criteria and conditions (2002, p.242): Firstly, ‘the centrality of peace’ was found already in symbolic declarations such as that by Robert Schuman in 1950 and the preambles to the European Coal and Steel Treaty in 1951 and the TEC of 1957. Secondly, the idea of liberty was found in the preambles of the TEC and the TEU of 1991, and in art. 6 of the TEU. Thirdly, the norms democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms were expressed in the preamble and founding principles of the TEU, the development co-operation policy of the Community (TEC art. 177), the common foreign and security provisions of the Union (TEC art. 11), and the membership criteria adopted at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993 (See Manners

2002, p.242). Thus, as can be seen in the TEU, art.6, art. 11, and TEC, and TEC, art. 177, the EU is both founded on and has as its foreign and development policy objectives the consolidation of democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (TEU and TEC; quoted in Manners 2002).

Alston and Weiler argue that ‘a strong commitment to human rights is one of the principal characteristics of the European Union’ (1998, p.661). According to Manners, the EU’s underlying principles come closer to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) ‘than most other actors in world politics’ (2002, p.241). According to Leino, the concept of NPE places a heavy emphasis on the advancement of civilian values as a central element in EU foreign relations (2008, p. 262). Indeed, Merlingen et al., Clapham as well as Smith claim that the foreign and development policy objectives of consolidation of democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms can be seen in its relations with Member States and with the world (Merlingen et al. 2001; Clapham 1999; Smith 2001).

Manners detects four other ‘minor norms’ of the EU that can be found within the constitution and practices of the EU: social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance. However, these norms are contested with the last one even lacking formal expression in treaty form (2002, p. 242).

Manners summarizes how all of these norms have a clear, historical context and objective to them:

‘*Peace and liberty* were thus defining features of west European politics in the immediate postwar period. The norms of *democracy*, *rule of law* and *human rights* grew later when it was important to distinguish democratic western Europe from communist eastern Europe. These then became defining features of transition from communist rule in the immediate post-cold war period as the Copenhagen criteria demonstrate. The norm of the aspiration to *social solidarity* became an important counter-measure to the drive for liberalization in the Single European Act and economic and monetary union. The desire for *anti-discrimination* measures also arose from progressive social legislation and the concerns regarding racism and persecution of minorities in the early 1990s. The norm of *sustainable development* became important following the Rio Earth summit when it was included in the Treaty of Amsterdam. Finally the norm of *good governance* is becoming vital in the aftermath of the resignation of the Commission in 1999, the concern for double standards in pursuing the EU’s demands for democratic reforms in the central and eastern European countries, and the recognition of the role of governance in successful aid programmes’ (Manners 2002, p.243-244).

Thus, the norms must be seen as part of a historical development to defend and to justify other EU policies.

4.2.4. Norm Diffusion

Harpaz and Shamis remark that the EU often calls ‘upon its neighbours and trading partners to commit themselves to its normative agenda (2010, p.580; see also Whitman 1998; Gardner-Feldman 1999; Van Ham 2001; Manners 2002; Adler and Crawford 2004; Youngs 2004; Scheipers and Sicurelli 2007, p. 436; Dunne 2008). However, this is just one way how the EU tries to diffuse its norms. Manners lists six different forms of how EU norms are diffused inside and outside the EU:

- 1) *Contagion*: diffusion of norms results from the unintentional diffusion of ideas from the EU to other political actors.
- 2) *Informational diffusion* is the result of the range of strategic communications, such as new policy initiatives by the EU, and declaratory communications, such as initiatives from the presidency of the EU Council or the president of the Commission.
- 3) *Procedural diffusion* involves the institutionalization of a relationship between the EU and a third party, such as an inter-regional co-operation agreement, membership of an international organization or enlargement of the EU itself.
- 4) *Transference*: diffusion takes place when the EU exchanges goods, trade, aid or technical assistance with third parties through largely substantive or financial means.
- 5) *Overt diffusion* occurs as a result of the physical presence of the EU in third states and international organizations.
- 6) The final factor shaping norm diffusion is the *cultural filter* which affects the impact of international norms and political learning in third states and organizations leading to learning, adaptation or rejection of norms (Manners 2002, p.254).

Thus, there are a range of official and unofficial procedures how the EU’s norms are diffused within its own political institution, among its member states and in the rest of the world. Some of these forms of norm diffusion could be applied to EU-Israel relations as well.

4.3.Common Foreign Policy ‘NPE’ as Unifying Factor

When Manners established the concept of NPE in 2002, he emphasized that it has three components (2002, p. 252-253):

- 1) Ontological: The EU *can be conceptualized* as a norm-changing actor in world politics.
- 2) Positivist: The EU *acts* as norm-changer in world politics.
- 3) Normative: The EU *should* diffuse its norms into world politics.

However, a fourth, central component can be added to it:

- 4) Constructivist: The EU *attempts to act in a normative way* in order to increase its internal and external legitimacy and as a *raison d'être* (see also Manners 2002, p.244).

During the 1990s, some scholars focused on NPE as source of the EU's constructed supranational identity (Diez 1999; Nicolaïdis and Howse 2002; Scheipers and Sicurelli 2007). This has been influenced by a so called ‘Constructivist Turn’ in the International Relations discipline (see also Price and Reus-Smit 1998, p. 263). Adler and Crawford suggest that this constructivist literature views the EU's norm diffusion as ‘an endogenous, identity-forming process that may lead to transnational convergence of collective values, identities and interests of non-EU countries alongside those of the EU, while formulating and reinforcing the EU's own identity and legitimacy’ (2004, p.13). Scholars from the utilitarian school of thought, like Robert O. Keohane, think that while military actions tend to divide the EU Member States, human rights and environmental issues are a source of common European identity (2002, p.744).

Harpaz and Shamis agree that the concept of NPE and other constructivist perceptions of the EU help to facilitate the process of European integration (2010, p.583-584). According to them, ‘the European Security Strategy considers global responsibilities and ethical foreign policy as satisfying both the EU's normative and material (security) concerns’ (ibid., p.583-584). Harpaz and Shamis argue that the fact that the EU can claim the basis of their actions to be peace, democracy, human rights, etc. gives them a ‘distinctive normative foundation’ that facilitates the implementation of its integration agenda (ibid., p.582).

Manners argues that ‘the reinforcement and expansion of the norms identified here allows the EU to present and legitimate itself as being more than the sum of its parts’ (2002, p.244). Thus, it seems to help the EU to justify its activities and existence internally and externally.

That is probably very useful at this very moment in time. Ever since the economic program of the EU has no longer been supported as strongly as before (especially from within the EU), the Union is looking for another *raison d'être* and has found it in the defense of human rights and the attempt to uphold the above-mentioned norms in world politics. Manners describes how one solution to get the EU out of the crisis of confidence between 1992 and 1997 was 'to try strengthen the EU's commitment to human rights through the EC acceding to the ECHR' (2002, p.246). However, this attempt was blocked by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in 1992 which considered that the EU was not competent to 'adopt rules or conclude international agreements on human rights' (Commission 1996). Most recently, as Manners suggests, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union adopted at the Nice European Council in December 2000 is proof of the EU's continued aspiration for more legitimacy through the representation of fundamental norms in its policies (2002, p.244).

Thus, according to several scholars of international relations, the concept of NPE mainly serves the identity construction of the EU, not so much anything else. However, as Manners argues in his study about the EU's effort to fight for the worldwide abolition of the death penalty, it is not always the domestic audience whose attention the EU is trying to get. Especially in the case of the abolition, Manners concluded that the majority of EU citizens was not aware of the abolition campaign (2002, p.251). The Council of the EU admitted that in certain Member States 'the political decision towards abolition was not taken with the support of the majority of public opinion' (Council of EU 2000; quoted in Manners 2002). Therefore, this example undermines that the diffusion of human rights norms is solely for internal legitimation of the EU.

Gordon and Pardo conclude that it seems that 'NPE's primary role is *not* to change the situation in Israel/Palestine, but rather to influence the EU itself'. This assumption coincides with their conclusion that NPE might merely confer legitimacy to the EU itself, thus policies and statements concerning third countries are 'constitutive of European identity': 'In other words, the promotion of peace, stability, and progress in the Middle East is also part of an internal European identity-building process' (Gordon and Pardo 2013, p.113-115).

With regards to the Middle East, Gordon and Pardo find two remarkable things: First, the EU's position on the conflict between Israel and Palestine is strikingly consistent and, second, the discursive reiteration of the normative positions function both to exert pressure on external actors and to articulate the EU identity and self-representation towards the member states

(Gordon and Pardo 2015, p.269). However, they contradict themselves a little when they say later on in the same article that it serves mainly the construction of European identity. Their case study tries to show that NPE is above all a ‘practice of discursive representation’ which is not only intended to serve the EU’s external agenda but mainly its internal audience in order to give the impression of a consolidated union. They even perceive NPE as an ‘inward operating power’ (Gordon and Pardo 2015, p. 267; see also Diez 2005). They argue that ‘although NPE is presented as a central component of foreign policy, it is actually directed toward the ‘EU’s relations with its Member States’ and has little impact on the EU’s external policy’ (Gordon and Pardo 2013, p.102-103). They claim that the EU’s main function is to help construct a collective EU identity among its own citizens and it has very little impact on the human-rights-violating governments outside Europe and that human rights activists in the Arab world should not rely on the impact of the EU (ibid., p.102-103).

Gordon and Pardo remind us that only one month after the first official EC declaration on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which was issued in November 1973, in the aftermath of the 1973 War (Pardo and Peters 2012, Doc. 2/20), the nine EC Member States drafted a ‘Declaration on European Identity’. It becomes visible that the 1973 EPC Middle East Declaration was also directed at the European audience, setting a first landmark in common European external relations, which, from that moment on, would constitute European identity. The nine foreign ministers claimed in the declaration on 14 December 1973 in Copenhagen:

‘The European identity will evolve as a function of the dynamic construction of a United Europe. In their external relations, the Nine propose progressively to undertake the definition of their identity in relation to other countries or groups of countries. They believe that in so doing they will strengthen their own cohesion and contribute to the framing of a genuinely European foreign policy. They are convinced that building up this policy will help them to tackle with confidence and realism further stages in the construction of a United Europe thus making easier the proposed transformation of the whole complex of their relations into a European Union’ (European Communities 1973).

According to Hill and Smith, the ministers knew that as the European project progressed, it would take on a new position in the world, make statements on other regions such as the Middle East and that, again, would constitute its identity and make it a distinct actor in world politics (2000, p.94–95). Not surprisingly, the EC and its successor have issued various statements highlighting Europe’s view on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Territories following the November 1973 Middle East declaration (see also

Gordon and Pardo 2015, p.268).⁸ Helmut Krieger supports this claim by stating that the EU's most-recent declarations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would not only serve internal consolidation, however, the constitution of foreign policy principles always takes over a stabilizing function especially since the EU faces the continuous problem to establish a common foreign and defense policy (2017, personal communication). Adler and Crawford thus summarize, 'constructivism may also perceive normative power as an instrument utilized to socially construct an expanding pluralistic, security community' (2004, p. 13).

4.4. The Capability-Expectations Gap According to Christopher Hill

Another perspective that proves valuable for assessing the EU as an international actor is the concept of the capability-expectations gap by Christopher Hill. In 1993, he first depicted that there was a dangerous tension in EC foreign policy between its capabilities and the expectations it has imposed on itself. He further claimed that the only way to get rid of this tension was to either increase capabilities or decrease expectations. According to Hill, capabilities mean cohesiveness, resources and operational capacity (1993, p.322). Hill attempted to prove with the examples of the Gulf War, the Uruguay Round and Yugoslavian War (mid-1990s) that the EC was not (yet) an effective international actor 'in terms both of its capacity to produce collective decisions and its impact on events' (ibid., p.306). According to Hill, the EC did not exhibit 'actorness' (contrary to popular perceptions, see for example Allen and Smith 1990, p.20) because its foreign policy was only intergovernmental and merely the sum of what the member states decide. The popular perception of the EC as an international actor was rather an outside perception of the EU and focused on effects on psychological and operational environments of third parties, as Hill remarked (ibid., p. 308-309), but it did not make decisions nor did it act beyond that level. Already in 1987, Christopher Brewin illuminated on the paradox that while common sense and experience of third countries gave us the impression that the EC possessed 'actorness' and sovereignty, a detailed analysis of the EPC told us quite the opposite.

Hill agreed with Bull who already argued in 1982 that the development of a military component of the EU is necessary in order to face the challenges and tasks that the EU is expected to do. However, he added that 'if the Community does develop a military dimension,

⁸ Review section 3.2. of this master's thesis for further information on the following, official EU declarations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

it will have taken an immensely serious step towards transforming itself as an international actor and in consequence also external attitudes towards it' (Hill 1993, p.318).

Thus, Hill already mentioned that the EU has serious issues to find a consensus concerning their foreign policy. Asle Toje would later on expand this idea and establish the theory of a consensus-expectations gap that the EU is suffering from. Toje remarks that at the time of Hill's original paper, during the beginning of the 1990s, the future direction of the EU foreign and security policy had not been discussed extensively among EU Member States (2008, p.125). As we will see in the following section, this might have been because there was little consensus in fundamental questions.

4.5. The Consensus-Expectations Gap According to Asle Toje – Giving the Example of the EU's Reaction to the Darfur Crisis

After presenting and discussing the concept of the consensus-expectations gap by Asle Toje in general, a prominent example for it – the EU's reaction to the Darfur crisis – will be illustrated at the end of this section. In 2008, Toje argued that the capability-expectation gap has narrowed considerably ever since Hill established the claim in 1993. Toje claims in this respect that the EU has made a lot of progress in terms of resources and operational capacity but 'a gap between what the EU member-states are expected to do in the world and what they are actually able to agree upon persists' (2008, p.121). Toje considers the expectations the EU has imposed upon itself to be the aspirations that the EU Member States themselves have raised. Asseburg supports Toje's claim and remarks that the EU needs to overcome what she too depicts as a consensus problem in order to achieve the expectations that are made towards her and to back up its statements with political action (Asseburg 2003, p.24).

Krieger claims, as well, that it is the compromise among EU Member States with different interests that hinders the EU to act more decisively in its Common Foreign and Security Policy especially because it is merely a supranational system and not a federation (Krieger, personal communication). Bunzl supports this argument and states that in the case of each different EU member state, often historical factors play a role influencing its relation to the conflict, as well as its position and interests in the same. Therefore, the European Union does not act as one union, even though they are committed to a common foreign policy (Bunzl 2017, personal communication). Harpaz writes about the problems to reach a consensus in the EU concerning Israel, the settlements, and Jerusalem that 'the EU is not a generic, unitary entity and its Member States have different relations with Israel, due, *inter alia*, to their

different pasts' (2011, p. 1858). This will also be illustrated in section 4.6. about the different positions of EU Member States on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the following examples for the EU's consensus-expectations gap in the Middle East.

Toje argues that the main reason why the EU fails to deliver the foreign and security policies which are expected from it, is because of ineffective decision-making instruments at its disposal. New and different decision-making instruments are needed that could work even with dissent and that do not rely on consensus as it is now (Toje 2008, p. 121). On the issue of decision-making, Ortega concludes 'that unanimity as a preferred method of deciding the Union's foreign policy' hinders a strengthening of the CFSP in general and is an obstacle for greater engagement of the EU in order to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Ortega 2003, p.55). Especially regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it seems to be difficult to come up with a single voice and get the support of all EU Member States in order to impose (economic) sanctions. According to Ortega, that is the case because the EU Member States have different opinions on how to resolve the conflict. He recalls: 'The decision by the European Parliament, on 10 April 2002, adopted by a majority of 269 votes to 208 with 22 abstentions, advocating economic sanctions against both parties is perhaps proof of that.' (Ortega 2003, p.55)

Additionally, Toje claims that the United States is 'an often-forgotten factor' in the consensus-expectations gap: 'The partialness of EU foreign policies is partly a result of the services provided as well as the constraints imposed by the Union's leading ally. US security guarantees to Europe are far from unconditional' (Toje 2008, p.134). This claim has not been mentioned yet by Hill in his concept of the EU's capabilities-expectations gap.

Ortega brings forth another argument and suggests that the EU simply does not dare to find a common way and to intervene in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He claims that the EU underestimates its own capabilities and that its weakness is only apparent. By doing so, they harm their own position and the norms they have pledged themselves to respect (Ortega 2003, p.59).

In addition, Toje suggests that the consensus-expectations gap 'continue[s] to prevent the EU from engaging in effective crisis management, leaving the Europeans to continue making statements and setting examples – rather than actually shaping world affairs' (2008, p.139). According to Toje, the EU is neither a superpower, an effective global intervener nor does it play a good role as a mediator of conflicts. However, it has established itself and proven to be

effective as a regional pacifier, helping to bridge the gap between rich and poor and it is a joint supervisor of world economy (ibid., p. 138-139). Consequently, Toje poses the question which kind of power the EU should be. He evaluates two options of power basis for the EU's foreign policy: on one hand based on hard power and on the other hand based on interdependence (offering the promise of EU membership or as a corollary of small-scale pre- and post-crisis management) (ibid.). In conclusion, Toje emphasizes that 'EU foreign policies are generally less defined by what tools are most likely to meet a specific objective, and more by what tools can be agreed upon' (ibid., p.132).

Toje adds that 'the consensus-expectations gap is apparent in the EU approach to virtually all the great foreign policy questions of the day, from [...] the building of democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan, to curbing Iranian nuclear aspirations, Turkish accession and the handling of Russia' (2008, p.138). He underlines that 'it would be senseless to claim that all aspects of EU foreign policymaking can be understood from the vantage point of the consensus-expectations gap, [however] it is surprising how many can be' (Toje 2008, p.122).

The EU's Reaction to the Darfur Crisis

Aside from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Toje illustrates the consensus-expectations gap with another prominent example. He claims that the Darfur crisis (2003-present) shows how failing to link capabilities to objectives leads to the EU standing by while international crises and human rights violations take place (ibid., p.135-138): Since there was no consensus among EU Member States to intervene in Darfur, the EU went back to sponsoring peace talks and to applying measures that, as some EU diplomats found, were known to be ineffective (ibid., p.137). He found in a study that in 2003-2004 EU diplomats hoped that USA, Britain or even NATO would intervene in the conflict and dispatch a force to Darfur so the EU could engage 'constructively' (and selectively) on the fringes, as it had done during the 1999 Kosovo war (ibid., p.136). However, it became clear that the USA was not willing to dispatch a military mission to Darfur, but sought to drag in the EU as it called the human rights violations in Darfur a 'genocide' (ibid., p.136). Toje notes that after EU Member States had expressed their concerns regarding the Darfur crisis for the 54th time in 2007 the EU's outgoing Sudan envoy, Pekka Haavisto, stated in the online newspaper 'EU Observer' on May 2007, that the 'EU diplomacy is hamstrung by the lack of a coherent foreign policy in Brussels' (Rettman 2007; quoted in Toje 2008, p.137).

In conclusion, Toje argues that ‘the pattern seen over Darfur illustrates just how little headway the EU has made since the 1999 Kosovo conflict. Despite nearly a decade of institution-building and pooling of military capabilities, the manner in which the EU is acting is similar to how it responded to the deteriorating situation in the former Yugoslav region’ (Toje 2008, p.138). Therefore, he asserts that the EU lacks ‘cohesiveness, the capacity to make assertive collective decisions and stick to them’ (ibid., p.122). Clapham also depicts that the EU’s human rights policies lack consistency, coherence and credibility:

‘We have seen that the Union’s policy lacks coherence in a number of spheres: it criticizes the human rights record of States outside the Union, without acknowledging the human rights violations which take place within the Union; it treads softly with some countries where their capacity to react is greater than others; and it seems to have no benchmarks for comparing different countries’ human rights records’ (Clapham 1999, p.683).

Toje proceeds to claim that the CFSP being ‘governed by the twin precepts of intergouvernementalism and consensus’ is the main reason for this dilemma (Toje 2008, p.127-128). In fact, the 2004 Constitutional Treaty contains a proposal that suggests that EU member-states which possess the military capabilities and commitment be allowed to carry out missions in the name of the EU (ibid., p.133). Thus, there might have been a high chance to end the crisis especially considering that untrained guerillas would have proven no match for professional soldiers from EU Member States. Toje even states that since the beginning of the EPC and up until the Darfur crisis ‘foreign policy integration under the European Political Cooperation seemed of somewhat greater consequence in academic writings than in real-world affairs’ (ibid., p.122-123).

4.6.The Consensus-Expectations Gap in the Middle East: 3 Examples

According to Tovias, EU Member States can be divided into three main groups with regards to their position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (2017). This division is one among several reasons for the lack of consensus:

First, there are the big, conservative EU Member States such as Germany, France, the UK, Italy, Spain and Poland. It seems that for them, Realpolitik is very important, whereas their own considerations define their position. According to Tovias, these are the countries that determine the position of the EU concerning the future of Jerusalem, although the Brexit might have an influence insofar that France, Spain and Italy which are tougher on Israel regarding the settlements might lose an ally in the UK. Reversely, Germany and Poland which

are traditionally always more in favor of Israel will have ‘more weight’ without the UK (Tovias, personal communication).

Second, there are small but radical states such as Sweden and Denmark. They are pro-Palestinian and nowadays have rather marginal impact on the EU’s position on the settlements and the future of Jerusalem. They were among the first European states to denounce Israel’s occupation policies and question the nature of Israel’s intentions with respect to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Sweden first did so in 1987 on the eve of the first Intifada via strong statements at the United Nations and was then severely reprimanded by Israel’s then Ambassador to the UN, Benjamin Netanyahu (Utrikes Magasinet 2017). In 2014, Sweden took a move to officially recognize the State of Palestine (The Guardian 2014). Tovias remembers that ‘they were speculating that a domino effect would take place’, but instead the EU confirmed its position not to recognize Palestine at this stage. Since then, the diplomatic relations between Sweden and Israel are said to be tense (Tovias 2017, personal communication).

Third, there are several EU Member States that are more on the side of Israel and also go against the official EU position when it fits their interest. For example, the Czech Republic is considered Israel’s closest ally in the EU and recently in 2017 recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel – contrary to the EU’s decision not to recognize it (The New Arab 2017). Also Greece and Cyprus strengthened their economic ties with Israel over the gas fields in the Mediterranean Sea, hoping to attract more visitors and investments from Israel in order to lift their crisis-shaken economies (Reuters 2016). In 2016, both countries were strongly lobbied by Israel to veto against an official EU resolution that would criticize the Israeli settlement activity. However, both states eventually dropped their opposition (The Guardian 2016) which supports Tovias’ claim that the means of pressure are big on small EU Member States to stick to the official EU position (2017, personal communication).

Persson comments on this claim that one is mistaken to believe that the EU Member States cannot agree at all on how they would like to see the Israeli-Palestinian conflict be resolved. Rather, there is dissent on how to approach the conflict ‘on a more everyday and practical level, especially in crisis situations such as the 2006 Second Lebanon War, the 2008-2009 Gaza war, the 2011 Palestinian bid for statehood in the UN and more generally in sensitive matters related to Israel (Persson 2015a, p.2)’. Bunzl agrees with Persson that there is a consensus among EU Member States to oppose the Israeli occupation in the Palestinian

Territories. Moreover, some member states tend to be more repellent towards Israel or in favor of the Palestinians, and others less. He further acknowledges the recognition of the State of Palestine by Sweden as a shock for the Israelis and that the membership of Palestine in the UN, which was strongly advanced by certain EU Member States, might also have a strong effect on the further political development in the Middle East (Bunzl 2017, personal communication).

In the following sections, I will depict three historic examples indicating the EU's problematic consensus-expectation gap in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These examples are useful to understand the EU's current involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian context. The EU's official position, the consensus-expectations gap and the EU's double standards will become evident in the case of the recognition of Jerusalem as capital of Israel, the recognition of the State of Palestine and the EU's sanction plans towards Israel.

4.6.1. Case 1: The Future of Jerusalem

Despite a very clear-cut, official EU statement on their website which has been explained earlier, the EU's position on the future of Jerusalem is less consistent than it might appear from their website. Interestingly, when it comes to the future of Jerusalem, there seem to be more differences in opinion among EU Member States than on the issue of the settlements. Tovias connects these differences back to different religious backgrounds/practices in EU countries: While there are some countries in Europe that are predominantly catholic (Spain, Italy), there are those who are protestant (Sweden, Denmark) and others that are very secular (France). In general, Tovias asserts that catholic countries prefer to see their holy sites guarded by Israel, which they view as a more stable and reliable partner. Furthermore, he claims that in any case 'the EU will want to make sure that in a peace agreement access to these Christian sites is guaranteed by whoever is sovereign on that part of Jerusalem (Tovias 2017, personal communication)'.

Thus for example, in 1999 when Germany held the presidency, the EU affirmed to support the internationalization of Jerusalem in accordance with the 1947 UN Partition Plan with Jerusalem being a 'Corpus Separatum' (= Latin for 'separated body/entity') under international control (Foundation for Middle East Peace 1999). Tovias states that at the beginning of any future negotiation on Jerusalem, the more catholic countries like Spain and Italy probably would argue for again for a Corpus Separatum – above all because the Holy See would like to see that happen. But according to Tovias, Swedes or Danes would most

likely oppose that saying it is a complication for the whole peace process (Tovias 2017, personal communication). That is why ever since 1999, there have been two different solutions for Jerusalem on the EU's table: a special international status for Greater Jerusalem and a partition of the city between two sovereign entities.

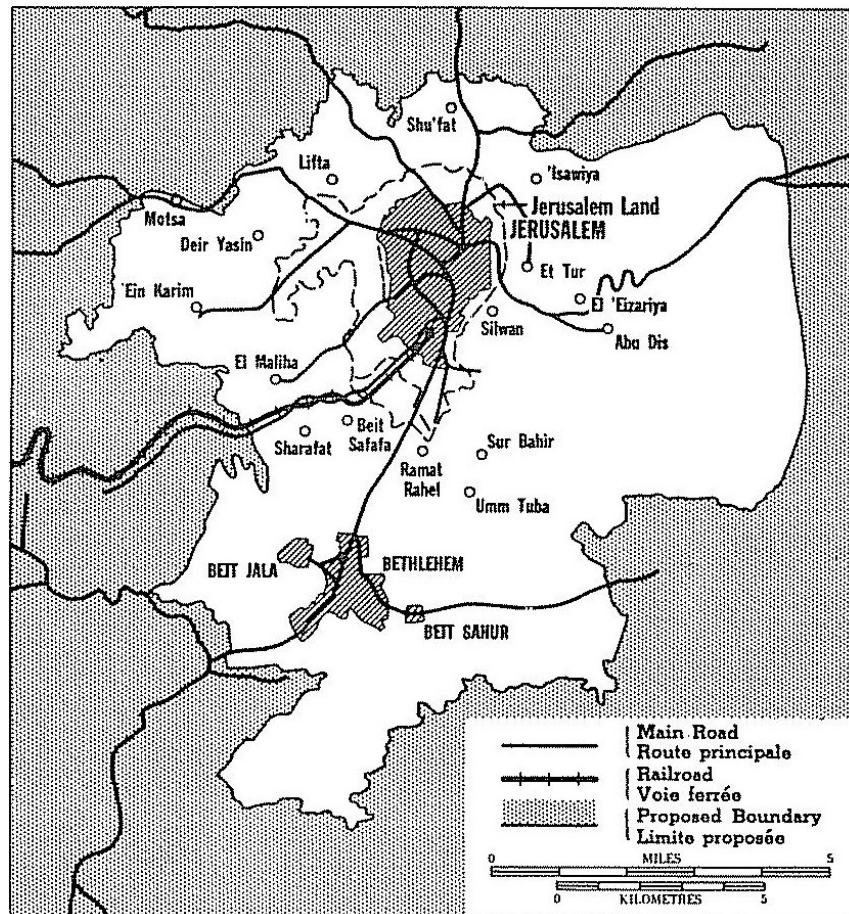


Illustration 1: Map of the Corpus Separatum intended for Jerusalem (Wikipedia 2018a).

Consular representation in Jerusalem is another diplomatic way that EU countries confirm their stance. There are several EU Member States represented in the city, such as Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Bicchi remarks that they form part of the traditional 'hard core' of consular representations in Jerusalem, which predated the Six-Day War in 1967. They also belong to the 'Consular Corps of the Corpus Separatum' which is composed of nine states, including Turkey, the USA and the Holy See as well (Bicchi 2016, p.467). Bicchi notes that 'it has been an act of political resistance [against the illegal Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories] that European diplomatic representations still exist in Jerusalem, targeting representation not in Israel but instead in those territories (Jerusalem,

but also Gaza, Golan Heights and West Bank) over which the Europeans have not unanimously recognized a clear source of sovereignty' (ibid.).

In conclusion, Krieger states that the question of the recognition of Jerusalem as capital of Israel is a perfect example for the clench between single-state interest and the common EU policy and interests. He claims that despite the fact that the issue of Jerusalem should be solved through a number of Security Council Resolutions, not all EU Member States comply with the outcome of e.g. the 1980 UNSC Resolution 478, because it does not match with their own agenda (Krieger 2017, personal communication).

4.6.2. Case 2: Sweden's Recognition of the State of Palestine

In 2014, Sweden took a move to officially recognize the State of Palestine (The Guardian 2014). Toviaas remembers that 'they were speculating that a domino effect would take place', but instead the EU confirmed its position not to recognize Palestine at this stage. Since then, diplomatic relations between Sweden and Israel are said to be tense (Toviaas 2017, personal communication). Persson describes the most significant stages of Sweden's recognition of Palestine: In October 2014, Sweden's left-wing government attempted to set a precedent in the EU by recognizing the State of Palestine. In fact, several other EU Member States had already recognized Palestine when they were still part of the Soviet Union (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria) or before they joined the EU (Malta, Cyprus). Now, pro-Palestinian groups in (Western) Europe hoped their governments would follow Sweden's lead. However, no other EU country has followed so far and Sweden's recognition had little to no consequences for the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Despite this, Persson argues that there is hope that other important actors in the Middle East might eventually follow Sweden's lead because they have also done so in the past, when certain new policies were seen as less controversial (Persson 2015a, p.1; Persson 2015b:91). In this respect, Persson suggests:

'[T]he EU and individual European countries have a significant normative and legitimizing power in the conflict. Swedish and European diplomacy have historically paved the way for new policy departures in the conflict, which were later adopted by others, including by the Israelis and Palestinians themselves, when they were seen as less controversial. It remains to be seen whether other states, inside and outside of Europe, will follow Sweden's recognition of Palestine. If the historical record is any guide, the answer is yes. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has already lasted for well over a century. If no Palestinian state is established, it will probably go on for another 100

years. Preventing this was the basic logic behind the Swedish government's decision to recognize Palestine.' (Persson 2015a, p.4)

In conclusion, the case of Sweden's recognition of Palestine illustrates, as well, the different positions that are present within the EU and that a brave move by a single member state does not automatically mean other member states will follow their lead. Thus, the consensus-expectations gap is evident also in this case.

4.6.3. Case 3: Sanctions on Israel

As a third example for the EU's consensus-expectations gap in the context of the Middle East, one can look at EU sanctions on Israel.

Krieger states that the EU would have a range of different instruments to punish Israel for its human rights violations, one of them being proper sanctions (2017, personal communication). However, he claims that they are not willing to use them. According to Tovias, there is a consensus-expectations gap regarding what sanctions the EU should put on Israel. There are member states that are willing to evoke sanctions (e.g. Sweden) and there are member states that consider this an unthinkable measure (e.g. the Czech Republic) (Tovias 2017, personal communication). However, he thinks that the 'Holocaust-effect' is slowly but steadily wearing out and that in some decades Israel might be treated or even sanctioned more harshly than it is being treated right now: 'The Europeans, after the Americans, are the last group of countries that count and that support – at times – can support Israel diplomatically. [However] in theory, the Europeans could come to a point where they could officially pose sanctions here' (Tovias 2017, personal communication). Therefore, Tovias believes that the EU currently has in fact mainly leverage on the Palestinians – because the EU is their main donor - and not primarily on Israel (ibid.).

In conclusion, Tovias emphasizes again that there is more divergence of opinion on the future of Jerusalem than on the settlements in the EU community: 'On the settlements, I think that there is a perception that this endangers the two-state solution and this is a generalized perception. Nobody buys the Israeli view that one thing has nothing to do with the other. [...] Even the Czechs, which are supposed to be the 'champions of Israel'. I don't think they would buy this' (Tovias 2017, personal communication). He adds that there might be differences among the EU states regarding what type of counteraction the EU should take regarding new

settlements. Some states would be prepared to evoke sanctions, but there are others who are not willing to consider this option (Tovias 2017, personal communication).

4.7. Interim Conclusion

This section has shown the different identities and functions of the EU as an international actor. It seems that the Union's identity and role have not been that well defined by itself, nevertheless it plays an important and influential role in current international relations. For the past several decades, the EU has been trying to position itself as a normative power. Therefore, Manners' concept of 'Normative Power Europe' has been explained. The EU has experienced a long history of developing into a normative power in international relations. It has tried to base its foreign policy goals on values, rather than national interest, as other states usually do. The most important of these values are the centrality of peace, the idea of liberty, democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. These values or norms are being diffused within the EU system, among EU Member States, but also outside the EU. This mechanism is one of the central pillars upon which the EU bases its legitimacy. Clearly, the common foreign policy serves as a unifying factor for the Union. However, it has been shown that there are two points of criticism regarding the EU's international role. On one hand, the capability-expectations gap presented by Hill has been valuable for the past and remains to be an obstacle to an effective EU foreign policy. On the other hand, the consensus-expectations gap proposed by Toje is highly relevant for today's EU foreign policy attempts, as the example of the EU's reaction on the Darfur crisis and three examples related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have shown.

In the next section, I will analyse the relevance of the concept of 'Normative Power Europe' and its effectiveness in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The knowledge obtained in the previous chapters will be applied again.

5. The EU in Israel and the Palestinian Territories

In this chapter, the EU's presence and activities in Israel and the Palestinian Territories shall be discussed. First, the different EU institutions in Israel and the Palestinian Territories will be presented in order to understand the EU's institutional presence and activities in the region. Second, the EU's political and diplomatic engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict shall be discussed. Third, the EU's engagement as main financial donor in the Palestinian Territories is explained. Fourth, the perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over time by the EU will be demonstrated. Fifth, the EU's image in Israel and the Palestinian Territories shall be put into relation with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Finally, I will reflect on the findings again in a short interim conclusion.

5.1.EU Institutions in Israel and the Palestinian Territories

In order to understand both the role and the impact of the European Union in Israel and the Palestinian Territories it is beneficial to analyse the different EU institutions that are currently present in the area. This is because all of them are - just like other actors - creating facts on the ground.

First of all, the Delegation of the European Union to Israel was officially opened in 1981 as a Delegation of the European Commission in Tel Aviv (Ramat Gan). With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1 December 2009, the Delegation represents the European Union as a whole in Israel. Its mission is to represent the European Union in Israel and to present the EU's positions and interests to the Government of Israel with the overall goal of advancing relations between the EU and Israel. Currently, Ambassador Emanuele Giaufret is the Head of Delegation (Delegation of the EU to Israel 2018).

Secondly, the Office of the European Union Representative - West Bank, Gaza Strip, UNRWA (formerly known as ECTAO) was established in 1994, in the context of the Oslo Accords. Its mission is to develop EU assistance to the Palestinians and to contribute to building institutions for a future Palestinian State. The body has offices in Gaza and Jerusalem (European Union Representative [West Bank and Gaza Strip, UNRWA] 2016). Ralph Tarraf is currently the European Union Representative in Jerusalem.

Furthermore, the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for the Middle East Peace Process is appointed by the Council of the EU. The EUSR works towards the resumption of meaningful negotiations with the aim of achieving a comprehensive peace agreement based

on a two-state solution. The EUSR works in close contact with all major players, including the parties to the conflict, members of the Quartet, Arab states and relevant regional bodies (EU External Action 2016b). Fernando Gentilini has been EUSR for the Middle East Peace Process since 15 April 2015.

The European Union Border Assistance Mission at the Rafah Crossing Point (EUBAM Rafah) was launched on November 24, 2005, to monitor the operations of the border crossing point between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. The mission has been suspended since 2007 after Hamas came into power in Gaza (EU External Action 2018b).

Fifth, the European Union Police Mission in the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS) is the second Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission dedicated to help building a Palestinian institutional capacity. Created in January 2006 and based in Ramallah, EUPOL COPPS contributes to the establishment of sustainable and effective policing arrangements, advises Palestinian counterparts on criminal justice and rule of law related aspects under Palestinian ownership and supports the establishment of an efficient Palestinian criminal and judiciary system (EU External Action 2017).

Finally, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) has a permanent office in Jerusalem and a sub-office in Gaza. The European Union's mandate to ECHO is to provide emergency assistance and relief to the victims of natural disasters or armed conflict outside the EU. The aid is intended to go directly to those in distress, irrespective of race, religion or political convictions. ECHO's task is to ensure goods and services get to crisis zones fast (European Commission 2017).

5.2. The EU's Political Activities in Israel and the Palestinian Territories

Concerning the outreach of EU foreign policy, more recently, as Persson states, 'Israel is one of the countries outside of the EU where 'Normative Power Europe' has received great attention' (2016, p.311). Harpaz and Shamis add that 'in the early 1990s the EU attempted to assume an increasingly active political role in the Middle East' (2010, p.585). The reason for this is, according to the two scholars, the termination of the cold war, the adoption of the CFSP and the EU's agenda 'to translate economic might into political influence' (ibid.). Harpaz and Shamis describe how the different bilateral and regional instruments to influence the Mediterranean (the EU-Israeli Association Agreement, the Barcelona Process, the European Neighbourhood Policy etc.) demonstrate how the EU is trying to enhance its

actorness, to advance its material interests in the region and, thus eventually also, to establish itself as a normative power (ibid., p.587).

Along with Russia, the UN and the US, the EU participates in the Middle East Quartet. The Quartet was established in 2002 as a reaction to the escalation of the conflict in the Middle East and aims ‘to help mediate Middle East peace negotiations and to support Palestinian economic development and institution-building in preparation for eventual statehood’ (Office of the Quartet 2018). With the members being the USA, Russia, the UN and the EU, it comprises national, international and supranational entities. High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini currently represents the EU at Quartet meetings and conducts dialogue with third countries on the Middle East Peace Process. Tovias emphasizes that ‘in theory, they [the Middle East Quartet] are coordinating their position’ (Tovias 2017, personal communication), however in reality it seems to be different. Bunzl also emphasizes that the Quartet has proposed various declarations to which Israel did not abide. Even though the declarations might serve as a point of reference for other states and confer legitimacy for certain claims, the implementation is missing. He further asserts that up until today, the USA plays by far the most important role in the Middle East, despite the fact that Russia and Saudi Arabia have become more influential especially since the war in Syria started. Israel is especially dependent on US support in a broad range of areas: military, finance, economy, politics and culture (Bunzl 2017, personal communication). Thus, what concerns the Middle East Quartet, the EU is not very influential after all.

However, the EU’s influence should not be underestimated according to Asseburg as they have been able to offer a distinct kind of dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians:

‘From the beginning of the Oslo process, the EU was able to offer additional forums for dialogue and contact between the parties, often away from the limelight of international attention but nevertheless with an impact that should not be ignored. Most importantly, the EU and its member states have extensively supported ‘track-two diplomacy’ – the results of which have already fed into negotiations and have been or will in the future be essential in the search for creative solutions on issues such as Jerusalem.’ (Asseburg 2003, p.22)

Therefore, Asseburg takes a more positivist stance on the EU’s influence on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. She emphasizes that the EU has contributed to resolving day-to-day problems between the parties to the conflict, for example the establishment of an EU-Israeli Joint Dialogue in order ‘to overcome (Israeli) obstacles to economic development in the

Palestinian territories' (Asseburg 2003, p.22). Bunzl adds that the EU has contributed to the Madrid conference, the Oslo negotiations and the negotiations in Taba in a positive way, unfortunately none of these negotiations were successful to resolve the conflict. However, he claims the negotiations in Taba were the most successful attempt to come to an agreement between Israel and the PLO which the EU seemed to support and be willing to fund financially (Bunzl 2017, personal communication).

Yet Asseburg emphasizes both effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Special and its Special Representative to the Middle East Peace Process:

'Particularly, the introduction of the office of High Representative has contributed to giving a greater visibility to the EU's CFSP towards the region. [...] However, this has not helped the EU to gain acceptance by both parties to the conflict as a respected third party. In particular, it has not helped to overcome the deep mistrust of Israeli policy-makers, as well as the Israeli public, with regard to Europe's motivations and perceived one-sided pro-Arab stance. European representatives have been repeatedly rebuffed by the Israeli government and have not always been allowed to meet the Palestinian president or Palestinian officials. The Muqataa compound [former headquarter of the PLO and used as the office of Yasser Arafat] was once shelled even while the EU Special Envoy was visiting President Arafat' (Asseburg 2003, p.23).

This problem of acceptance of EU officials could also be seen in 2017 when German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel was heavily criticized by the Israeli government because he met with pro-Palestinian NGOs in Israel (Haaretz 2017b).

Other than the Quartet, the EU's potential impact in Israel and Palestine could be considered as high since it is the first trading partner of Israel and the main donor to the Palestinians (as seen in section 5.3. and section 5.5.). However, Bunzl insists that despite its great economic and normative influence in Israel and the Palestinian Territories, the EU cannot be considered an independently intervening actor in the Middle East (2017, personal communication). Among others, this can be seen looking at the skirmish around EU-financed NGO's in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. According to Bunzl, the EU-financed work of NGOs in Israel and the Palestinian Territories is positive but not very effective and, indeed, they disturb the Israeli government which is hysterical about them. That creates another point of conflict between the EU and Israel (ibid.). Bunzl informs that EU-financed projects in the Palestinian Territories and Gaza are being destroyed by the Israeli military without any major protests or

reaction by the EU (ibid.; see also The Electronic Intifada 2017). Additionally, Bunzl is astonished that even though every suggestion by the EU concerning a settlement freeze is neglected by Israel, it does not lead to a worsening of the relations between the EU and Israel (2017, personal communication).

The lack of diplomatic consequences towards Israel is probably also due to an increasing EU interest in Israeli technology. Currently, Tovias claims that there is a lot of European interest to invest into Israel, especially in its military development. He remarks that more recently, the EU Member States have realized that Israel is a 'high-tech El Dorado' and they are investing increasingly in the country. The newly risen interest by the EU in Israeli weapons and defense solutions needs to be considered as political interest, too.⁹ Tovias remarks: 'Concerning drones, everybody is using drones and they are buying it from here. Spain, as far as I know, has been buying from here. So the security cooperation with Israel is increasing because of well development. [...] This is in favour of Israel' (Tovias 2017, personal communication). Indeed, the German Defense Ministry was also planning to lease Israeli-made armed drones again in 2017 (Reuters 2017). Hence, there is increased security cooperation and military investments between Israel and the EU.

In addition, Asseburg emphasizes that the prospects for EU-Israeli diplomatic relations, in contrast to their economic relations, are not too bright. She claims that European officials are frustrated about the lack of progress towards a two state arrangement. They consider the two-state solution an arrangement in which the interests of both states would be realized in the best way possible. As well as that, the financial support has proven to be little effective, despite the fact that high sums of taxpayers' money have been invested into Palestine. Asseburg finds that, in recent years, the EU has tried to engage ever more in managing the conflict and in organizing peace initiatives and conferences, e.g. the European engagement for conflict management in Gaza. However, these efforts have been obstructed by the lack of intra-Palestinian reconciliation and Israel's and Egypt's unwillingness to lift the blockade. Furthermore, Europeans have increased their efforts in order to keep the two-state solution as an option, for example by preventing further fragmentation of the Palestinian territory through Israel settlements (Asseburg 2015, p.8-10). Asseburg further asserts that European companies are likely to divest from Israeli enterprises operating in the Palestinian Territories. This will most likely be seen as antagonistic measure by the Israeli governments and will be objected

⁹ It has to be mentioned that Israel also significantly increased its weapons arsenal from EU manufacturers over the past ten years. It currently amounts to 75 million Euro (see Sunday Express 2017).

with dismissing all such measures and criticism of Israeli policies as being driven by anti-Semitic or anti-Israeli motives, above all, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, a global campaign calling for different forms of boycott against Israel in support of the Palestinians. Thus, as Asseburg states, tensions between the EU and Israel are likely to increase further (2015b, p.8-10).

It seems that the EU is willing and able to participate constructively in peace negotiations and conferences, but when it comes to further actions it has been relatively passive and hoped for actions by the US or the Quartet. Silvestri describes the division of labour between the EU and the US in the Middle East as follows: '[...] during major crises generally the United States was welcome to use its military force, with the backing of its allies, while the EU supplemented the necessary 'stabilising' investments and/ or presence and good offices' (Silvestri 2003, p.47).

5.3. The EU's Donor Activities

Another channel of EU influence is its practical and financial support for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The EU is the largest donor to the Palestinians and thus logically also 'creating facts on the ground' (Asseburg 2003, p.12). In recent years, the combined contribution of the European Commission and EU Member States has reached €1 billion per year in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) (EU External Action 2016a). On the ground, the assistance is managed by the Office of the EU Representative for the West Bank and Gaza Strip in East Jerusalem. The humanitarian assistance is managed by the ECHO office in Jerusalem (see also section 5.1.). For over a decade, the EU has placed a major focus on empowering the Palestinian Authority through institution building and governance work. Tovias suggests that the EU could use this as means of pressure against the Palestinians in peace negotiations - while the USA could use their leverage against the Israelis - in order to reach concessions from both sides (2017, personal communication). When asked about the Israelis' perception of the EU considering that they are the biggest donor to the Palestinians, Tovias answers: 'On the one hand, the Israelis don't like the EU positions, they prefer the Americans. On the other hand, they know that the EU has a lot of money - in theory, if they want to help. And the experience is that the EU has had a positive effect on the relative stability of the West Bank. This is recognized even here' (ibid.). Thus, especially because of its donor activities in the West Bank, the EU is reserving itself a legitimate seat at the negotiation table.

In addition, Gordon and Pardo assert that EU Member States and non-governmental donors are the main funders of human rights organizations in Israel. The figures in the table below suggest that the Israeli NGOs are dependent on financial support from European donors and especially the human rights organizations focusing on the Palestinian Territories (in the table called ‘Occupied Territories’) would not exist without the European financial support:

Total	Israel	Occupied Territories	Year
\$6,098,150 87%	\$3,851,510 76%	\$2,246,640 96%	2008
\$6,810,106 80%	\$4,390,743 65%	\$2,419,362 91%	2009

Note. The NGOs used for the sample are PCATI: Public Committee Against Torture in Israel; Rabbis for Human Rights; Physicians for Human Rights, Israel; B'tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories; Adallah: The Legal Center for the Arab Minority in Israel; HaMoked: Center for the Defense of the Individual; Bimkom: Planners for Planning Rights; Women Lawyers for Social Justice.

Table 4: European Donations to Israeli Human Rights NGOs by Area of Focus (Gordon and Pardo 2013, p.112).

As can be seen in Table 4, the EU contributed 87 percent of all funding to human rights NGOs in Israel in 2008, and 96 percent of the funding to organizations that focus on Israel’s policies that violate human rights in the Palestinian Territories. The overall percentage of European donations slightly declined in 2009. However, according to the study by Gordon and Pardo, European donors still provided 80 percent of funding to all human rights organizations in Israel and 91 percent of the funding to NGOs concentrating on the Palestinian Territories (2013, p.113).

According to Harpaz and Jacobsen, the funding of Israeli human rights organizations is a central instrument to strengthen the influence of NPE in Israel and they claim that it could be understood as a way of indirect external governance, intending to advance the concept of NPE, operating through local entities (2017, p.259; see also Schimmelfennig, 2012, 658–660; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009, 805–807). Harpaz and Jacobsen summarize that ‘[t]he EU’s financing of foreign NGOs can be characterized within this broad context as a subtle, non-traditional, financial-based model of external governance, conducted through transnational channels, operating vis-a-vis non-state actors, as opposed to the more traditional, inter-governmental international relations channels’ (Kacowicz 2012; quoted in Harpaz and Jacobsen 2017, p.259).

Nevertheless, according to Gordon and Pardo, the impact of these donor activities on diffusing the five core EU norms was marginal, especially since it was limited mainly to the

Israeli non-governmental sector. There have been only two exceptions; the implementation of ROO (Rules of Origin) and the publication of the 2013 guidelines prohibiting the allocation of funds to Israeli entities in the Palestinian Territories. Yet again, the ROO and the guidelines ‘did not alter Israeli government practices’ but they have ‘spurred incremental change within the corporate and financial sectors in Europe’ which have started ‘to pressure Israel through divestment strategies’ (Gordon and Pardo 2015, p.271; Gordon and Pardo 2015). In contrast, norms related to the Association Agreement’s economic and educational components have been institutionalized in Israel. Thus, it becomes clear that trade and education norms have been diffused through institutionalized, official Israeli channels, the diffusion of the five core norms of the EU has been consigned mainly to NGOs whose impact on Israeli legislation and policies has been minor, as Gordon and Pardo summarize (2015, p.271). Asseburg agrees with Gordon and Pardo that the EU’s donor activities have not had any positive effect on the ground and that this is due to the continuation of the Israeli occupation – besides mismanagement and corruption by the PA itself: The PA has not been able to become independent from EU financial support and the donations have not been able to balance economic losses due to Israeli border closures. According to Asseburg, ‘[i]n its future policy planning the EU should be aware that sustainable development and peace building in the Palestinian territories can only effectively take place once a political settlement has been reached’ (Asseburg 2003, p.15).

Israeli critics of the EU’s engagement as a donor in Israel claim that among others the EU’s activities undermine Israel’s security (NGO Monitor 2013), damage its position in international organizations (Steinberg, 2012, p.82ff.) and foster violence (NGO Monitor 2013). However, Harpaz and Jacobsen claim that the NGOs that criticize and counteract the EU funding are associated with the Israeli Right and are, as well, funded by individual donors or corporations above all from the US (2017, p.260). Tovias emphasizes that ‘there is foreign funding all over the place here’ (2017, personal communication). Thus, Israeli NGOs that try to counteract the EU funding have considerable double standards.

5.4. The Perception of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict by the EU and Its Member States

In the beginning and to a certain extent up until now, European criticism towards Israel was mainly focused on the occupation of land that was occupied by Israel after 1967, according to Bunzl. That is due to the fact that there used to be a positive bias in favor of Israel after the

Holocaust. He further claims that this is also why the first Arab-Israeli War in 1948, or Israeli War of Independence, was not sufficiently noticed by Europe (Bunzl 2017, personal communication).

Bunzl states that the EU has not been able to recognize that Israel has been conducting undemocratic settler colonialism since its establishment as a state. He believes that the Europeans have illusions about the democratic system of Israel. In fact, the settler colonialism that has replaced indigenous populations with an invasive settler society is not the result of parliamentary voting, but it is essential to the project of the State of Israel. According to Bunzl, this has to be discussed much more extensively in Europe (2017, personal communication).

Bunzl identifies another major misjudgment and misbelief by the EU that seems to assume that the peace process is dependent on the Palestinians. He clarifies that in fact it does not matter whether the Palestinians cooperate or not; or if Hamas or Fatah is ruling the Palestinian territories. According to Bunzl, everything is in the hands of the Israeli state - that is especially in the last years trying to prevent any kind of Palestinian political independence on the historical territory of Eretz Israel¹⁰ - and the US - where Israel has huge capacities to take influence (2017, personal communication).

Friedemann Büttner notes that the Palestinian problem has moved in the EU's perception from being a refugee problem subordinated to territorial and other security issues, to occupying a position at the very center stage of any possible conflict resolution regarding peace in the Middle East (2003, p.146). However, as has been mentioned earlier, Persson adds that the positive reassessment of the EU on the Palestinians' role in the conflict also had negative repercussions for the EU's relations with the Israelis: 'More than anything else, these declarations had consequences for the EU's relations with the Israelis as they cemented an already problematic relationship by adding weight to the existing Israeli mistrust and skepticism towards EU involvement in the conflict' (Persson 2013, p.144-145).

Tovias emphasizes that nowadays the EU's reaction concerning new settlements in the Palestinian Territories depends very much on the international situation:

¹⁰ 'Eretz Israel' refers to the historical 'Land of Israel' that was mentioned in the Hebrew Bible and the Bible, the land where Jewish religious law is believed to have prevailed at some point in history. The geographical extension of this area in the southern Levant is uncertain.

‘It is clear that the EU has a tendency to stress its annoyance more when the media focuses on what the government of Israel is doing [then in times of crisis in Europe and when the media therefore does not focus on events in the Middle East]. So they are being told in Europe by NGOs or whoever ‘do something!’. And when the international situation means that they are busy with hundred other things, they let go. This is being used by Israel, of course, to continue, progressively, to do settlements. [...] Increasingly it seems that this matter of one more settlement is like nothing compared to all the other things. Israel understands this very well and the EU understands this very well. The outcry which normally is starting at the level of the public opinion and then filters up to the governments, the outcry is less. Because also the public opinion in Europe is very much inward looking in recent years’ (Tovias 2017, personal communication).

Tovias claims that the supreme time of ‘sermonizing’ Israel by the EU was between 1995 and 2001 when everybody wanted to enter the EU. He observes that the sermon went down especially after 9/11: ‘Then [in the eyes of the EU] the fault of what was happening here was equally distributed between Israel and the Palestinians’ (Tovias 2017, personal communication). He concludes that the last normative times of the EU were between the years 2000 and 2008, when the economic situation in the EU was still stable and the Arab Spring had not started yet. In 2003, the Eurobarometer poll of 7,500 EU residents found that 59 per cent deemed Israel ‘a threat to peace in the world’. Europeans viewed Israel as the number one threat to world peace, ahead of Iran and North Korea (The Telegraph 2003). According to Tovias, this is proof of one of the last flare-ups of the EU’s normative times, because then came the 2008 economic crisis which took precedence over everything else: ‘You could bet there are people who blame now Greece of [sic] everything wrong instead of Israel.. and refugees, etc’ (Tovias 2017, personal communication). Therefore, Tovias suggests that the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict nowadays seems to have a symbolic value for the EU rather than a normative or humanitarian value like it used to have considering all the other maybe even bigger crises in the Middle East. He adds that EU-funded NGOs in Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territories must have been anxious about this development as it could eventually lead to less funding being sent their way (ibid.).

Tovias suggests that the EU no longer has a normative influence: ‘I think the normative time has passed, by and large. I think they had their occasion. Normative times were when everything was fine. Between 2000 and 2008 and then it has gone down completely’ (Tovias 2017, personal communication). Thus, the general observation seems to be that the EU’s engagement as normative power in the Middle East has diminished over the years.

To sum up different statements of expert scholars, there is a tendency to assess the EU perception of the conflict as one with a bias favorable to the Palestinians, however the European public does not focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict anymore due to other (internal) crises in recent years.

5.5.The Perception of the EU by Israelis and Palestinians

Related to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Harpaz and Shamis attempt to demonstrate that the concept of NPE has in certain ways been a cause of Europe's external legitimacy deficit, especially when the images of how the EU perceives itself and how it is perceived by others diverge strongly (2010, p.580). They claim that even though the concept of NPE might serve as internal legitimacy factor to boost European integration, externally it might adversely affect the EU's legitimacy and therefore be counter-productive in promoting the diffusion of the EU's norms and the normative-political agenda especially in the Middle East (ibid., p.599).

Therefore, in this section I will deal with the perception of the EU by Israelis and Palestinians. The EU's image in Israel will be treated more extensively as it is more relevant with regards to the Israeli unreadiness of adopting policies and norms suggested by the EU concerning the conflict. However, according to Bunzl, both the Israelis and the Palestinians tend to look at the support of the European Union as tactical advantage. Thus, how the Europeans can be used to strengthen or justify one's own position (Bunzl 2017, personal communication).

5.5.1. Israelis

With regard to the Israeli perception of the EU, Harpaz and Shamis state that it is hard to draw an exact image of the EU in Israel. According to the researchers, studies on the EU's image in Israel are scarce and one-dimensional (only Pardo 2009 offers a wider perspective). Therefore they have tried to paint a more profound picture with an article that concentrates on Israel's political establishment and socio-political elite by using various sources. They find that 'Israel's historical approach to NPE can be characterized as oscillating between feelings of admiration and of belonging and those of bitter cynicism and resentment' (Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.588). They emphasize that there is not one single perception of the EU in Israel and that is due to the complex and varied nature of the Israeli society: 'Such image may differ along socioeconomic, religious or national-ethnic lines and vary from one context to the

other (for example, the Israeli political establishment, the Israeli bureaucracy, socio-political elite, the media, organized civil society or the Israeli masses)' (ibid., p.581).

Therefore, I will take key issues related to the EU and analyse the Israelis' image of the EU with regard to these topics in the following section in order to show why Israelis are not readily open to adopt the EU's policies suggestions and norms. The key issues presented here to reveal the EU's image in Israel are: a) the memory of the Holocaust and its influence, b) the role of the Israeli media, c) the EU's political contribution as a mediator to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, d) the difference between (political) cultures, e) the economic relations and the accession to the EU and f) cultural belonging.

a) The Memory of the Holocaust:

According to Harpaz, the Israeli public and the political establishment associate the EU with the Jewish persecution during the Holocaust, and see contemporary EU critique as a continuation of anti-semitism and as a threat to their existence. Bunzl mentions an Israel saying that constitutes the Israeli perception of the world and which is seen as a natural condition by many Israelis: 'Kol ha'olam negdenu' (= Hebrew for 'All the world is against us') (Bunzl 2017, personal communication). In line with these assessments goes the 2004 Dahaf survey of Israeli public opinion which found that 64 percent of Israeli respondents agreed with the claim that the EU statements toward Israel demonstrate 'anti-Semitic attitudes thinly disguised as moral principles' (Dahaf 2004; quoted in Pardo 2010, p.65-66).

Thus, this trauma influences foreign and security politics and constitutes a collective Israeli anxiety complex. It results in the frequent Israeli narrative that the EU's current critical statements and policies towards Israel reveal European double standards, immorality and contemporary European anti-Semitism (Harpaz 2011, p.1865-1866).

b) The Role of the Israeli Media:

According to a study by Pardo in 2010, the public perception of the EU as an anti-Semitic entity is stimulated by Israeli media:

'[The] representation of the EU as an antisemitic entity received the third largest share of media attention- 13 percent of all news items. [...] Regarding the frequency with which news items on the Shoah and European antisemitism appeared, some of the foreign news editors and journalists of these dailies admitted that the decision to report extensively on antisemitic incidents in Europe

and on the Shoah stemmed from the fact that "antisemitism and the Shoah sell newspapers in Israel' (Pardo 2010, p.73).

Harpaz again emphasizes that the Israeli media both reflect and constitute European-Israeli dialogue and public images. That is mainly due to language barriers, little knowledge of the EU and a lack of understanding of EU processes by their journalists, as well as exaggerations of topics related to Israel:

‘Major challenges that the EU faces, especially those presented by Muslim immigration, are magnified out of proportion and are portrayed as existential threats to the EU. The limited Israeli coverage of Europe which does exist is egocentric, focused on the Israeli prism of European news (for example, the effect of the euro on the Israeli economy or the ability of Israelis to obtain a European passport due to accession of Eastern Member States). European events, initiatives and leaders are judged mostly on the basis of their approach towards Israel’ (Harpaz 2011, p.1870-1872).

Harpaz goes as far as saying that media and politics try to manipulate the image of the EU as anti-Semitic in order to limit ‘the range of possible European responses and policy options’ and this represents again a top-to bottom measure of political framing in order to advance certain political goals by the ruling elite. The Israeli anxiety complex is being used to justify non-compromising, anti-European intervention policies. Krebs and Jackson called this ‘rhetorical coercion’ (Krebs and Jackson 2007, p.39ff.).

c) Political Contribution as a Mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process:

Pardo makes the important observation that ‘Europe has rarely been seen in a positive light’ (2010, p. 63). Harpaz and Shamis state that this results in the unwillingness of Israelis to allow the EU to contribute politically to Israel and the Middle East (2010, p.590). According to Pardo, the perception of the EU by Israelis is that the positions of the EU are hostile to Israeli policies and concerns. Especially the 1980 Venice Declaration was seen like that because it recognized the Palestinians’ right to exercise their right to self-determination (Pardo 2010, p. 64). The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated in 2004 that the EU’s support of the Palestinian position ‘raises doubts as to the ability of the EU to contribute anything constructive to the diplomatic process’ (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004; quoted in Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.602). Bunzl also assumes that the Israeli public opinion might be similar to the government’s position towards the EU, thus antagonistic (Bunzl 2017, personal communication).

Harpaz and Shamis argue that ‘throughout the years EU–Israeli relations have witnessed numerous events in which political policies wrapped in a strong normative agenda proved to be ineffective or counter-productive’ (2010, p.599-600). Giving the example of the 1980 Venice Declaration, they explain how the EU’s approach to justify its positions by such norms as peace (Article 2 and 10), human rights (Article 4) and the right of self-determination (Article 6) ‘struck a sensitive chord in Israel’ (ibid.). According to Harpaz and Shamis, this harmed the EU’s position as a mediator in the conflict leading Israeli politicians to discredit European intervention and its declared norms: ‘Thus, the EEC’s, high-profile, bold normative framework, which dictated and justified the Venice Declaration, did not enhance Europe’s ability to contribute effectively to the pacific settlement of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, but rather increased its legitimacy deficit [...]’ (ibid.).

In addition, Harpaz and Shamis claim that Israelis perceive the EU as duplicitous because they ask Israel to accept territorial compromises while relying on the five mentioned norms, that results in the fact that the EU is seen as illegitimate normative player (2010, p.590). Harpaz points out that most forms of European interventions in the Middle East are perceived negatively (2011, p.1878). The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) and Pardo found that in 2007 the EU’s involvement in the peace process was seen by almost 70 percent of Israelis as detrimental to the peace process (KAS and Pardo 2007, p. 17). In 2009, the same respondents were asked again whereby only 34 percent felt that EU involvement in the region in recent years had hindered progress in the peace process. Only 9 percent of the participants said that they preferred the EU, rather than the US, to be involved in the peace process (Pardo 2010, p.64).

Merely, the Israeli civil society seems to perceive the EU as clearly positive. Pardo has interviewed Israeli NGOs that perceive the EU as an advanced example for a democratic system and ‘the global defender of human rights and as an independent global power’ (2010, p.70-71).

d) Differences between (Political) Cultures:

One reason why the Israeli mistrust and negative image of the EU persist in Israel could also be a lack of contact between the two societies. Harpaz analysed that ‘ordinary Europeans and Israelis simply do not routinely interact other than for superficial contact. [...] Little

meaningful dialogue is conducted by European policymakers with the Israeli masses or with the ordinary Israeli' (2011, p.1863). However, where there is dialogue, the EU 'finds itself in the unenviable position of being perceived as a paternalistic preacher' (Harpaz 2011, p.1863). That is also why 'too few Israelis are familiar with the successes of the EU neo-functionalist model of peaceful cooperation based on regional economic integration and of the potential applicability of that model to other parts of the world, including the Middle East' (ibid., p.1863-1864). Another factor is the lack of Israeli public recognition of the EU's importance for Israel's prosperity:

'[...] very few Israelis are cognisant of the impressive economic and trade figures governing EU-Israeli relations, of the degree of EU-Israeli cooperation in research, of Israel's participation in the Galileo Project of support by the European Investment Bank for projects in which Israel participates or of the useful role played by the EU in the aftermaths of the Second Lebanon War (2006) and of Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza (2009)' (Harpaz 2011, p.1863-1864).

According to Harpaz, many Europeans have little knowledge about Israel and misunderstand the causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the lack of contact (2011, p.1863-1864). According to Harpaz and Shamis, there are basic misunderstandings between the EU and Israel. What is seen as a democratic success in the EU is perceived as irrelevant by Israel. However, 'this state of affairs, in turn, makes it difficult for most Israelis to fully understand the heavy reliance of the EU on civilian, peaceful means to tackle conflicts over territories and security and to want to imitate the European normative model' (Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.591). According to Harpaz, the EU's approach to tackle issues in the Middle East with peaceful means is dismissed by many Israelis as unrealistic and naïve when applied to the Middle East. In the Israelis' view, Israeli-Palestinian relations are a zero-sum game and thus EU support for the Palestinians is an antagonistic measure to Israel (Harpaz 2011, p.1875). In this vein, as Persson depicts, Israeli researchers (among them e.g. Sharon Pardo) tend to conceptualize NPE mainly through the diffusion of the EU's core norms depicted by Manners and consequently notice little Israeli understanding or openness for EU norms (2016, p.312).

Harpaz further explains this perception of the EU by Israelis with constructivist theories. He claims that the anti-European bias of the Israeli public influences state policies in a bottom-up process since political actors are looking for public legitimization. According to him, it is the public that 'sets the contours for Israeli political anti-European pronouncements' (Harpaz 2011, p.1878-1879). Collective meaning, interpretations and assumptions about the world shape identities, interests and the conduct of political agents. Thus, he emphasizes the EU-

Israel relations are not harmed merely by top-to-bottom processes as it is often expected (Harpaz 2011, p.1878-1879). Generally, Harpaz and other scientists describe EU-Israeli relations as ‘growing malaise’ that gets worse with any interaction. Again, this observation seems to prove constructivist theories. According to him, unconstructive dialogue is not only caused by negative attributes but also causes these factors to shape EU-Israel relations (Harpaz 2011, p. 1859).

e) Economic Relations and Accession to the EU:

In turn, the economic relations between the EU and Israel are indeed appreciated by many Israelis. Harpaz and Shamis found that despite the rejection of political involvement of the EU in the Middle East, the majority of Israelis would like to see Israel accede to the EU due to economic considerations (2010, p.595). Interestingly, the same KAS and Pardo study from the year 2009 mentioned above showed a huge majority of 69 percent of Israeli respondents being either strongly in support of or somewhat in support of the opinion that Israel should accede to the EU (Pardo 2010, p.65-66).

However, the prospects of EU accession according to scholars of international relations are not too good. In this vein, Pardo reminds the Israeli public that if Israel wants to accede to the EU, it is necessary to overcome the (mis)perceptions and images of the EU (2010, p.73). Pardo gives different examples why Israel and the EU currently do not match with each other, above all Israel’s definition as a Jewish state which would be a sharp contradiction to ‘the EU’s guiding principle of an open and unified space’ (ibid., p.68-69). According to Bunzl, the economic cooperation only brings advantages for the Israelis. It is one of the largest weapon-exporting countries in the world, specialized in security devices. Thus, there is a lot of economic interest in Israel by the EU. This is not the case with other states in the Middle East, except for the petrol-exporting countries (Bunzl 2017, personal communication). Concerning accession to the EU, Bunzl reports that despite the fact that many Israelis would like to see the EU accede to the EU, Israel would have troubles to comply with the EU norms and human rights which EU Member States have to ratify and should uphold. Even though accession to the EU would bring many benefits for Israel, the main reason why the idea has not become true is because it would make the continuation of the Zionist colonialism, oppression and occupation impossible (Bunzl 2017, personal communication).

f) Cultural Belonging:

Last but not least, EU countries are in many cases connected to one's family history and nowadays popular tourist destinations (Bunzl 2017, personal communication). There is a popular saying: Israel is not part of Europe, but it is from Europe. Following the EU enlargement in January 2007, about 40 percent of Israeli citizens are now able to obtain EU citizenship on the basis of their country of birth or that of their parents and grandparents (see also Pardo 2010, p.65-66).

Despite this, in the KAS and Pardo survey in 2009, 69 percent of those who were polled said that they felt that culturally, Israel shared more with America than with Europe (quoted in Pardo 2010, p.65-66). In the Dahaf 2004 survey of Israeli public opinion, above two-thirds of respondents thought relations with the US are more important than relations with the EU (ibid.). Pardo adds that the common Israeli perception that good diplomatic relations with the EU are not necessary is very harmful for Israel (Pardo 2010, p.68-69). Surprisingly, the Israeli public seems to understand that the EU is an increasingly important political actor. In an Israeli survey conducted by Pardo in 2010, Israeli interviewees placed the EU and France in fourth place on the list of global superpowers after the US, China, Russia and Germany – with expectations that the EU would even move to the third place within the following decade (Pardo 2010, p.63). According to the KAS and Pardo 2009 survey, France and Germany are the EU Member States with the best image in Israel and there are even wishes that Germany would be more dominant within the EU (Pardo 2010, p.71-72).

To conclude, Harpaz and Shamis distinguish 'three different kind of approaches in contemporary Israeli politics regarding the role that NPE plays and should play in the Middle East: the Antagonist Approach, the Ideological-Supportive Approach and the Pragmatic Approach' (2010, p.591). The above-mentioned images of the EU with regard to the explained key issues illustrate these approaches. Often they are very intertwined, as another analysis of Israeli media found that the EU was framed both as 'a marginal economic power with an anti-Jewish character' and paradoxically also as 'a powerful political system' (Pardo 2010, p.72). To improve its image and the openness to policy proposals in Israeli society, Asseburg suggests that the EU should engage in public diplomacy, explaining the European stance and convictions, accompanied by consequent policies, in order to change its public image in Israel and to arrive at a resolution of the conflict (Asseburg 2003, p.26).

5.5.2. Palestinians

To present the contrast to the Israeli perception of the EU, the Palestinians' image of the EU will be commented on. However, this will be a very brief statement since the Palestinians – as explained earlier in the introduction – are not the party that principally opposes the diffusion of norms or policy change, unlike Israel, and thus they are not the main topic of this master's thesis. Rather, the Palestinians participate in a range of EU-funded projects targeted at improving the compliance with human rights, good governance etc.

According to Pace, the EU has long been perceived as a 'force for good' since it is the main donor to the Palestinian state (2010, p.3). That is also thanks to a lot of EU projects and positive advertisement in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Müller and Zahda show 'that local stakeholders — which participate in various EU-sponsored training and capacity-building programs — display considerable support for liberal peacebuilding norms' (2018, p.119). Yet, they also mention that perceived discrepancies between the EU's peacebuilding rhetoric and its activities in the Palestinian Territories have undermined the potential of the EU's liberal peacebuilding model in the eyes of the Palestinians (ibid.).

In addition, with the prolongation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and other wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the positive perception of the EU among the Palestinian public seems to fade away. In the same vein, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership between Palestine and the EU is perceived:

'The first 10 years, under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) (1995–2005), proved ineffective in significantly changing the situation on the ground. Despite some initial progress in changing some structures (political and economic) at some levels (state and inter-state), the EU's structurally-oriented foreign policy alone failed to anchor a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians – in need of a traditional conflict-resolution strategy as well' (Al-Fattal 2010, p.i).

Pace therefore voices the following advice towards the EU: 'EU actors need to question whether the EU is really interested in democracy building in the Middle East, or whether its priority is diplomatic mediation and alliance-building' (Pace 2010, p.3).

5.6. Interim Conclusion

Institutionally, the EU is well represented in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. It tries to engage with both parties to the conflict to resolve it. However, this has not been very effective. Currently, it seems the European public interest in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has decreased due to other events in Europe itself and around the globe. Therefore, there seems to be little political pressure from the EU's side on Israel. Instead, the EU and Israel are improving their cooperation on military and security issues. All these factors seem to contribute to the fact that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process has stagnated. Clearly, the EU also faces difficulties to position itself as a mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process due to its negative perception in Israel.

In the next chapter the impact of the EU on the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict shall be discussed, taking into consideration all that has been mentioned so far.

6. The EU's Impact on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

In the following chapter I will outline different scientific views on what the EU has actually been able to achieve with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Therefore, I will first discuss the ability to shape the notion of 'The Acceptable' in international relations that has been attributed to the EU. Secondly, the EU's impact 'on the ground' in Israel and the Palestinian Territories shall be analysed. Thirdly, the diffusion of the norms proposed by the concept of NPE and possible obstacles will be looked at. Then, the discrepancy between the EU's normative and economic activities shall be illustrated with the help of a comparison of political events and historic trade agreements. Afterwards, the claim that the EU is using its normative position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict merely to achieve other goals will be looked into. Last but not least, a short outlook on future trends of the EU's role in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process shall be given on the basis of scholars of international relations.

This chapter will show that according to constructivist theory, the EU (NPE) has considerable potential to influence yet it fails to use this potential in practice. Despite the fact, that the EU has tried to diffuse its norms in the Middle East, it has not been successful in this aim. However, its efforts have not been without consequences. While on the one hand there are positive achievements of NPE, on the other hand negative impact of NPE related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be observed as well.

6.1. Shaping the Notion of 'The Acceptable':

Theory of Social Constructivism

According to some scholars of EU-Israel relations, NPE defines the range of 'acceptable' policy options in international politics through its normative influence (see Manners 2002, p.236).

Therefore constructivist theory by Alexander Wendt (1992) is useful to research international relations. Ulbert explains that through the constructivist approach, international relations can be analysed in their historical context and processes of change can be better investigated than with realist approaches (2005, p.15). Because in fact, she states, interests and identities of actors cannot be considered to be given but rather develop in a process (Ulbert 2005, p.18). Also Gu contemplates how reality is socially constructed and refers to Alexander Wendt's concepts of procedural thinking. She emphasizes that when states meet each other and interact

on the international level, they produce ‘intersubjective knowledge’ (Wendt used to call it ‘pool of knowledge each has about the other’, p.405) which is based on signals, interpretations and reactions (Gu 2010, p.235-236). Gu adds that social (inter-state) learning in the end results in the creation of ‘social configurations’, thus ‘the rules of the game’ (Cohen 1980) in international relations (Gu 2010, p.238; see also Ulbert 2005, p.11). Ideas, intersubjective knowledge and social configurations are thus, according to Gu and Wendt, the guidelines for how states behave towards each other (Gu 2010, p.240), not power or power distribution as realist scholars of international relations would claim. Furthermore, Ulbert unambiguously links constructivist theory with the concept of normative power by claiming that ideas always have an inherent normative dimension that either offer or limit certain options of behaviour for political actors (2005, p.14).

Thus, Harpaz remarks that ‘Social Constructivism [...] perceives social interaction as an instrument that assists in defining what is considered as a legitimate truth claim (the ‘logic of appropriateness’)’ (2011, p.1879). Moreover, he emphasizes that the public opinion constrains politicians and offers them only a certain range of policy options that is considered to be acceptable for a particular situation:

‘[...] identities, interests and conduct are socially constructed by collective meaning, interpretations and assumptions about IR [International Relations]. Public dialogue and resultant public conventions may both enable and constrain politicians, providing them with a menu of what the public perceives as acceptable and unacceptable, legitimate and illegitimate, normative or nonnormative, thereby framing and limiting the range of alternative policy options’ (Harpaz 2011, p.1862).

Manners even argues that ‘the ability to define what passes for ‘normal’ in world politics is, ultimately, the greatest power of all’ (2002, p.252-253).

Applying this idea to the EU, Persson likewise argues that ‘the EU is a significant normative and legitimizing power in the conflict’ and that ‘it can collectively legitimize or delegitimize many features of international affairs’. That is because it is the largest alliance of liberal democracies in the world and many other states follow their lead in the different international institutions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Persson 2015b, p.151). He further quotes an unnamed Israeli official who stated in 2011: ‘Europe is vital because Europe is the key to international legitimacy. The U.S. is the key to the effective exercise of power, but the U.S. cannot confer legitimacy’ (Persson 2015a, p.3). Susser confirms that even Israel itself refers

to the EU, plus a number of other liberal democracies including the US, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Japan, Australia and New Zealand as the ‘moral majority’ of states in international affairs (2012, p.11). Persson adds that the support of this group of states is essential for Israel, because, on one hand, it wants to belong to this group of liberal democracies and, on the other hand, many other countries support the Palestinians and not them. According to him, the 2013 issue of EU guidelines against the settlements is one of the most significant EU actions since the 1980 Venice Declaration. Furthermore, the best example of, as Persson mentions, the EU’s normative power in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians was the EU’s role in the 2011 and 2012 Palestinian bids for statehood at the UN. More recently, he claims the ‘differentiation strategy’ is another one: The EU, among other countries, attempts to set a new norm ‘in differentiating between the democratic and internationally recognized Israel within the 1967 borders, and the non-democratic and non-recognized Israel, which consists of the occupied territories controlled by Israel since 1967’ (Persson 2016, p.312-313).

However, Krieger objects that the ability to shape the notion of the acceptable and to delegitimize is not relevant. He claims that this ability has no actual influence on the resolution of the conflict, because in the end only concrete political decisions to continue political and economic cooperation are relevant and decide whether these normative statements are significant at all (Krieger 2017, personal communication). Smith also calls to focus rather on what the EU does, than what the EU is or claims in statements (2005).

Yet, the theory of social constructivism cannot be completely forgotten when studying this issue. Harpaz summarizes why:

‘According to Constructivism, States must not be perceived as structurally or exogenously given, as neo-realists argue, but rather as constructed by historically contingent socio-political interactions; the material world is shaped not exclusively by physical reality but also by human action, reaction and interaction, which are themselves dependent on dynamic normative and epistemic collective knowledge and interpretations of the material world. The key structures of States should thus not be seen as merely material but rather intersubjective. It is social communication that allows such intersubjectivity to exist and persist. Language and discourse are thus one component of the foundation of the social construction of knowledge, reality, identity and ideology. Collective knowledge, acquired through social interactions, may constitute the identity of the actors and define the basic rules of the game according to which they interact, thereby serving as an engine for socio-political action and change’ (Harpaz 2011, p.1859-1860).

In this sense, we need to continue to observe whether the normative statements of the EU will have any impact on the outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Hill says what is important to keep in mind about world politics in general:

‘[...] analysts can make judgements about the importance of the Community in the international system, and the world’s other major actors certainly have views on what the EC should and should not contribute to the functioning of the whole. [...] But we can assume that within the international states system some actors have identifiable presence, to the extent that certain things would either not have occurred, or would have been done very differently, without their existence’ (Hill 1993, p.310).

6.2.The Credibility of ‘NPE’ in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

There are several points that need to be criticized regarding the behaviour of the European Union in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Above all, it can be said that NPE does not live up to the potential suggested by constructivism. That is because the EU has not deployed its full potential in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. NPE proves less significance and norm-setting capacity in practice than what it could, according to the theory. The following section will discuss this problem.

First of all, Krieger suggests that the EU is too passive regarding the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip even though Israel does not properly define its borders and this actually undermines core European concepts of the nation state. That is because any critical statement on the Israeli occupation or the occupational structures is not welcome (Krieger 2017, personal communication). Also Tovias mentions the fact that Israel does not define its borders which serves its expansion policies. The EU rejects the Israeli position that the negotiations between Israel and Palestine have been suspended since Oslo and that the outcome of negotiations as well as the destiny of the land and border is unknown. Despite that, the Israeli government abuses the idea that its future borders are not well defined in order to expand its settlements in the West Bank (Tovias 2017, personal communication).

Gordon and Pardo emphasize that the increasing number of settlements in the Palestinian Territories over the last 30 years prove that the EU’s ‘discursive reiterations about the illegality of the settlement project and its detrimental effect on the Middle East peace process have had no tangible impact on the ground’ (2015, p.269-270). Gordon found that in 1977,

only a decade after the Israeli occupation began, already 38 settlements existed in the West Bank - that is one third of today's number (Gordon 2008). In 1991, at the beginning of the Madrid peace talks and when Israel officially accepted the 'land for peace' formula, there were 89,000 settlers in the West Bank (excluding east Jerusalem). Despite this, 20 years later, the number had more than tripled, reaching 311,000 settlers in the year 2010 as Gordon and Cohen find (2012).

According to Ortega, the European Union has adopted the technique of 'declaratory policies' facing a conflict situation it was not willing to confront within the framework of an international intervention:

'In the 1990s, the Union spelt out a very clear vision of a resolution of the conflict based on the existence of two states and a negotiated and not unilateral solution. When, however, it had to support this political approach in the face of an escalation of violence on both sides that made a negotiated solution almost impossible, the EU was incapable of doing so. The European Union was thus not sufficiently steadfast in defending the idea of a significant international intervention, in which it would have an important role to play' (Ortega 2003, p. 54).

Ortega calls on the EU to engage more with regards to political aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and not only on economic matters - even if it is not in line with the position of the US (Ortega 2003, p. 54).

Many scholars accuse the EU that its activities with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are ambivalent. On the one hand, Asseburg confirms that the EU's statements declarations have developed into a very consistent and precise position. In comparison with US policies on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 'EU declarations have been much more concise, progressive and unified – whereas different US government bodies and administrations have expressed different positions on the status of Jerusalem, the Palestinian territories, etc.' (Asseburg 2003, p. 21-22). Asseburg even compliments the EU for this achievement and mentions the most important historic steps:

'The EU can take pride in its very consistent declaratory policy on Palestinian self-determination and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict The European standpoint has developed consistently from Venice (1980) and Cardiff (1998) to Berlin (1999) becoming ever more outspoken and well-expressed while being firmly based in international law. Lately, the EU has also developed a clearer outlook as to the question of what a final settlement should look like and the principles it should be based on. According to the EU declaration of Seville (June 2002) a permanent solution

should be based on the 1967 borders, rather than just referring to the controversial Security Council Resolution 242' (Asseburg 2003, p. 21).

On the other hand, Asseburg harshly criticizes that the EU's statements and declarations are not sufficiently matched with concrete or symbolic policies with regard to the illegality of occupation, settlement construction and the annexation of East Jerusalem. In this context, she also mentions the frequent situation of European politicians bowing to Israeli pressure not to meet with Palestinian officials in East Jerusalem (Asseburg 2003, p. 21-22).

Indeed, Harpaz and Shamis point out that Hill's 1993 capability-expectations gap is still relevant to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They suggest that the EU would need to confront Israel with instruments of both positive and negative conditionality: 'It could offer Israel a generous economic package in consideration for Israel's commitment to halt construction, and it could concurrently threaten to freeze negotiations with Israel intended to upgrade economic relations under the ENP, if Israel acts differently' (Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.602-604). But instead they fail to do so and reinforce the image of NPE as 'merely declaratory'. As a result, this inactiveness affects the EU's legitimacy as mediator in the Middle East:

'Europe's continuous inability to employ instruments of both positive and negative conditionality contributed to the widespread perception in Israel and elsewhere that the EU's policies reflect the lowest common denominator and that the EU excels in words and preaching and not in actions. [...] This perception of Normative, 'declaratory Europe' also permeates the non-political sphere, including Israeli literature. The EU's declarations, policies and practices, when overlaid with critical normative rhetoric or justifications, are perceived in Israel as judgemental and unbalanced, but at the same time feeble and timorous, thereby exposing the EU to allegations of a capability-expectations gap' (Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.602-604).

However, it has to be admitted that despite the declaratory character of the EU's critique it still has some influence on Israel. As seen earlier, Bunzl asserts that the Israeli government is frequently irritated by what the EU is doing, but it does not lead the Israelis to behave like the EU wants them to. Yet, he assumes that the EU might still hope that their statements exert some pressure on Israel and that they eventually will do what the EU tells them (2017, personal communication).

Furthermore, Asseburg supports the claim that the EU has had no tangible impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She also denotes a capabilities-expectations gap that leads the EU to be merely a partner in crisis intervention not norm setting or a conflict mediator:

‘[...] the EU has not had any tangible impact on the one conflict that it has prided itself on for having progressive positions for the last 35 years and in which it is heavily invested, i.e., the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Thus, rather than proving themselves as effective democracy promoters or a stabilizing force in the southern Mediterranean, Europeans have been largely reduced to ad hoc partners in crisis interventions of multinational alliances and to shouldering parts of the humanitarian fallout of violence and war’ (Asseburg 2014, p.1).

Asseburg writes about the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) weaknesses in the Israeli-Palestinian context. She finds that the EU has been absent in concrete approaches dealing with violent conflict and non-state actors. If at all, military interventions were initiatives by (either the US or) individual EU Member States and are characterized to form only short-term solutions:

‘Military interventions or military support for specific forces in these conflicts have been mostly ad-hoc security fixes driven by the US or by individual EU member states rather than being a result of joint European strategizing and planning, which would have taken into account and addressed regional side effects’ (Asseburg 2014, p.3).

She proceeds that CSDP measures ‘cannot not have a stabilizing effect in environments of severe conflict’ as they are focused on post-conflict interventions. The EU Border Assistance Mission Rafah is an example for this problem:

‘The European Union Border Assistance Mission Rafah has been suspended since mid-2007, and it is very doubtful that it will receive a new mandate that would allow the Europeans to effectively contribute to ending the Gaza blockade – as proposed by an E3 [UK, France and Germany] initiative in the summer of 2014 – unless Europeans were to revive and assume a much more active role in negotiations about a durable ceasefire’ (Asseburg 2014, p.3).

According to Asseburg, the EU has not played a central role in mediation of regional conflicts in the past though there are a few recent exceptions: the E3’s (UK, France and Germany’s) involvement in negotiations with Iran on the Iran nuclear deal; an EU mediation between Tunisia’s political forces; ‘and the failed, yet important attempts by the High Representative and her team to bridge the gaps between the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and the Muslim Brotherhood after the July 2013 coup in Egypt’ (Asseburg 2014, p.3).

In conclusion, Harpaz and Shamis predict that the EU will never achieve external legitimacy, 'if the EU's normative aspirations are high on rhetoric but low on delivery' (2010, p.604). As Bunzl claims, it can also be assumed that European efforts sometimes even result in Israel acting the opposite way of how the EU would want them to (antagonistic) (2017, personal communication).

6.3.EU Norm Diffusion in Israel, the Palestinian Territories and the Israeli Government's Countering

In order to further evaluate the EU's contribution to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is necessary to discuss whether the EU has contributed to the diffusion of human rights, democracy, equality and its other essential norms listed in section 4.2.3. as NPE, in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Overall, most authors do not see any successful norms diffusion taking place, as I will discuss as follows.

Tovias differentiates the NPE's norms diffusion in the pre- and post-9/11 times. As already mentioned earlier, he observes that the EU sermon on Israel went down after 9/11 when fear of terrorism came to the forefront of Western thought:

'You sermonize someone when you have on the one hand values that you are supposed to respect and that the other should respect as well, and of course that you are the first to respect. Now, when all this is pressured by the fact that there [are] events happening that require from you a quick reaction, this thing is put aside and you start behaving not according to your own values. So you lose a lot of influence you think you were having' (Tovias 2017, personal communication).

Thus, the EU lost normative influence on Israel when it had to face other challenges and did not respect its own norms anymore. Furthermore, Tovias assumes that the EU is 'influencing' Israel through NGOs because EU Member States are either directly or indirectly funding them. However, he assumes that this influence might have also diminished after 9/11 due to less NGO funding from the EU (2017, personal communication).

However, Magen (2012) and Del Sarto (2014) have found that none of the five norms defined earlier have been diffused successfully to Israel, not even before 9/11. Instead, what has been diffused are economic norms on institutional and educational levels, e.g. as part of the Association Agreement with the EU. Michelle Pace (2007) also found that the EU's

normative power has been ineffective so far. Nathalie Tocci (2005) emphasizes the gap between the EU's statements and the Union's policy on the ground.

Furthermore, Gordon and Pardo state that there is 'no evidence of norm diffusion from the EU to Israel' despite the fact that the EU has consistently tried to halt the Israeli settlement project over four decades (2013, p.113-115). According to Krieger, the five norms of the EU do not play any role in Israel's political reality when it comes to the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The negative image of the EU in Israel and the repellent attitude of the current Israeli government also hinder the norm diffusion, as will be discussed later in section 6.3. Hence, Krieger claims there is no impact of NPE on Israel and he also warns to speak about 'exertion of influence' because all the EU statements since the Venice Declaration have not entailed anything (Krieger 2017, personal communication). The financing of NGOs by the EU and several development agencies of its member states aims to strengthen a pluralistic civil society in Israel and the Palestinian Territories, but by no means can be considered a one-dimensional, deterministic exertion of influence. Additionally, it cannot be said that it is aimed at changing governmental behaviour (*ibid.*).

Krieger adds that the EU would have very different, more influential means at their disposal to remind Israel of its obligations according to international and human rights law. One of them, of course, would be proper sanctions against the State of Israel (Krieger 2017, personal communication). On the basis of the economic relations between the EU – or certain EU Member States – and Israel it becomes evident that human rights violations, norms of international law, occupational structures, emergency and military law in the Palestinian Territories remain without consequences and therefore are not relevant, after all (*ibid.*). He depicts the historic relation between the EU and Israel even as a 'strategic structure of alliance' (*ibid.*). Thus, the issue for Krieger is not that the EU is non-credible and inconsistent as so called NPE, but that the EU and especially certain EU Member States are officially cooperating with a state that violates human rights and international law.

Another claim brought forward by Krieger is that the activities and development funds of the EU and other actors such as the World Bank following the peace process in the 1990s have in fact been partly responsible for financing the Israeli structure of occupation in the Palestinian Territories. While it financed the building of Palestinian institutions such as the PA, it also hindered the creation of a new social setting which would empower the Palestinians to form a viable state. Thus, this counts against a positive influence or contribution of the EU (as

Normative Power Europe) to the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. Krieger even opposes the whole idea that the EU could have any normative power at all arguing that it is a complete contradiction to fund an occupation structure that contravenes international law while dictating human rights based on human rights declarations (Krieger 2017, personal communication).

Bunzl hints to a common saying in Israel that goes as follows: Take the money and abstain from the advice. He supports Krieger's claim that the EU funding – indirectly – supports the Israeli occupation structure because the Palestinians are dependent from the Union's funding in a range of areas, e.g. social, economic and cultural institutions. As well as that, EU financial support for the PA is linked to the PA's support of the peace process. For the same reason, Bunzl defines the PA as non-democratic because it does not live off of the taxes of the Palestinian population but off the donations from the EU. This results in a 'problem of legitimization' of the PA vis-à-vis the Palestinian population (Bunzl 2017, personal communication). It seems that, as Bunzl states, the peace-process is more about the process than about peace. Thus, he concludes that the European influence leads to the fact that the PA takes care to maintain calm and stability and to continue with the peace process (ibid.). That is probably one of the reasons why, according to Krieger, in fact nothing has taken place that could be called a proper peace process because it lacked the fundamental elements of a peace process (2017, personal communication). It seems that EU donations function on the Palestinian side as a solution of the symptoms, but prevent a treatment of the causes.

In addition, Tovias relates to Krieger's and Bunzl's idea of how the EU is indirectly funding the structure of occupation in the West Bank by keeping the political and economic situation in the West Bank relatively stable. This stability is also one of the reasons why some Israelis favor EU intervention in the Palestinian Territories, but at the same time they do not take EU criticism seriously because it does not have military weight (Tovias 2017, personal communication).

To draw this argument even further, Asseburg confirms that the EU has been building a sort of failed state in the Palestinian Territories:

'[...] the Palestinian political system is characterized by the prevalence of informal institutional arrangements and clientélism, by authoritarian government practices and human rights abuses, and by an inflated and inefficient public sector in which funds are misused. It is also characterised by

the lack of influence of the elected representatives, transparency and accountability, checks and balances, the rule of law, and an effective monopoly of power' (Asseburg 2003, p.18-19).

Therefore, she calls upon the EU to acknowledge its responsibility for the shortcomings in Palestinian institution-building:

'[...] due to its primary interest in short-term stability and the continuity of the Oslo process, the EU has supported Arafat as the strong and reliable Palestinian partner in the peace process in spite his authoritarian tendencies, his human rights abuses and the lack of popular participation – as long as he efficiently crushed opposition to the peace process. The EU has also focused a significant amount of its aid on the technical and material details of institution-building, rather than on its content. It has insisted again and again on the PA's financial transparency and accountability with regard to the use of EU aid, but it has done so much less vigorously with regard to a democratic decision-making process, local elections or the rule of law' (Asseburg 2003, p.18-19).

Thus, Asseburg, as well, brings the argument that the EU has contributed to the failure of establishing a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel and therefore of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

But not only is there no diffusion of the EU norms in Israel, there is also no diffusion of the norms into the economic sphere in the EU itself, thus the EU's economic policy decisions. Gordon and Pardo claim 'that within the EU itself there is no diffusion from the normative political stance to the EU's economic interests' and depict this as the substantial problem that influences the EU's normative foreign policy's impact. In a 2013 article, Gordon and Pardo hint to the gap between the EU's normative opposition to the occupation, Israel's expanding settlement project and the EU's foreign trade policy (p.100).

Bunzl emphasizes that he believes that the EU has had almost no influence on Israel despite its continued declarations since 1967. There is only a symbolic influence, as it is able to discredit Israel and as a counter measure Israel tries to improve its image in the world. However, Israel does not succeed in that anymore which has led to a relative political isolation of Israel. Nevertheless, he claims – by quoting the first prime minister of Israel, David Ben Gurion, – that Israel does not care too much about its image in the UN (Bunzl 2017, personal communication).

The Israeli Governments' Countering of Norm Diffusion

The impact of the Israeli image of the EU's activities should also not be forgotten as it gives additional insight into why the EU is having problems to diffuse its values in Israel. Indeed, there is a rejectionist behaviour on the Israeli side stemming from perceptions about the EU that were explained earlier in section 5.5.1.

Of course, the Israeli government contributes to the diffusion problem in a great manner. According to Asseburg, the 34th Israeli government, which was sworn in with the narrowest majority possible (61 Members of Knesset) in 2015 represents, a major obstacle for the establishment of a more democratic and pro-EU State of Israel, thus also an obstacle to the diffusion of EU norms. She hints to three political consequences that were to be expected from 'coalition negotiations and the set-up of the current government and its parties' priorities' (Asseburg 2015, p.3):

- 1) 'Further restrictions to liberal democracy;
- 2) a strengthening of the Jewish over the democratic identity of the state; and
- 3) the rolling back of measures adopted under the 'sharing the burden' approach advanced mainly by Yair Lapid in the previous government' (ibid.).

She further states that these consequences question democratic and human rights norms which Israel and Europe allegedly share at least on paper (Asseburg 2015, p.3). It has become evident that all of these consequences occurred and the government of Prime Minister Netanyahu increasingly tries to silence any critical voice. Bunzl points at the demonization of the BDS movement by the Israeli government. He claims that there are huge campaigns in the US and elsewhere to battle against BDS supporters. According to Bunzl, NGOs that are critical of Israel do have an impact since they criticize the occupation and the government's violating policies, e.g. Breaking the Silence, BDS and 'Justice for Palestine' groups at universities in the US. However, the Israeli propaganda Hasbara (= Hebrew for 'the explanation') does everything to improve the image of Israel in the world and to silence any criticism. Bunzl reports that Hasbara is a huge enterprise with scholars and think-tanks officially supported and institutionalized by the Israeli government that attempts to discredit any critical commentary by activists of all kinds of areas (2017, personal communication). Thus, Hasbara can be seen as Israeli countermeasure to any normative criticism to improve Israel's image in the world.

As Asseburg describes, this way of taking influence and shaping the Israeli state as anti-democratic also affects foreign-funded human rights NGOs (Asseburg 2015, p.4; see the draft bill advanced by Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu in June 2015). She depicts that a 'Jewish nation state bill' would severely restrict the rights of Arab-Israelis if agreed upon by all coalition partners (ibid.). Asseburg tries to give a comprehensive outlook for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process (from the perspective of the year 2015) considering the influence of the policies of the current Israeli government. She asserts that Israel-PA relations have worsened after both leaderships have come to the conclusion 'that negotiations would not lead to any (acceptable) conflict settlement' and they have both started to take unilateral steps in order to advance their own positions. Asseburg believes that 'a new round of serious peace negotiations is unlikely to occur' and would not lead to a meaningful agreement on final status issues between the PA and the current Israeli government (2015, p.7). Therefore, any possible mediator's role must be considered to be very limited. According to Ortega this has been evident in former peace negotiations:

'History shows that even the most influential actor, the United States, cannot impose its viewpoint in every instance. The beginning of the peace process in 1991 was accompanied by strong pressure from the United States on both parties that bore fruit only because of other factors. The same applied to the role of 'facilitator' played by Norway at the Oslo accords in 1993. The dispute is so firmly rooted in the past, so difficult to rationales and experienced in such an acute way by the parties involved that external actors must be under no illusion as to the extent of their influence. That applies especially to the European Union, since it is very much a newcomer on the international scene, lacks self-confidence and its mediation is not readily acceptable to both parties' (Ortega 2003, p. 60).

Furthermore, Ortega adds that the EU or any other mediator can offer their help facilitating negotiations and searching for a peaceful solution, however they cannot impose anything on the parties. However, he continues to state that if Israel and the PA choose not to arrive at an agreement, the EU should increase the pressure on both sides (Ortega 2003, p.61).

6.4. The Norms-Interests Gap and EU-Israeli Trade Agreements

According to Gordon and Pardo, there is an enormous gap between the EU's normative position and EU-Israeli trade relations. This is what will be discussed in this section as norms-interests gap.

Youngs claims that strategic interests and norms cannot be easily distinguished (2004). However, Gordon and Pardo state that the concept of NPE ‘can only be upheld by and through this separation, since the separation is the reason all of the EU members are willing to subscribe to the normative standpoint and it enables the Union to speak with a single voice and uphold a clear message informed by principles of democracy and human rights’ (2013, p.113-115). According to Gordon and Pardo, it is exactly the separation of economic and normative spheres that is a precondition for (the functioning of) NPE: ‘[...] NPE is not ‘a contradiction in terms’, it is based on a separation which serves as the condition of possibility of NPE. The normative/economic split is, in other words, the major engine that drives NPE and that which [sic] enables it to operate unabated’ (Gordon and Pardo 2015, p.271). It could be claimed that, otherwise, the consensus-expectations would be even wider in the EU concerning the stance on Israel and other world regions.

Above all, as Gordon and Pardo summarize, the gap shows that NPE does not have any influence on the rest of the EU’s own foreign policy:

‘The Israeli case underscores that EU foreign policy is not dictated by the Union’s normative position, but rather by the trade interests of the Member States (and other factors like military concerns). Considering that repressive regimes have been known to carry out extensive trade with Europe, it seems that the regime type as well as regime practices will have little, if any, impact on EU’s policy toward it’ (Gordon and Pardo 2013, p.113-115).

Gordon and Pardo have studied the double standards of the EU when it comes to its economic relationship with Israel:

‘The EU not only recognizes the economic importance and impact of the trade agreements it signs but also claims to use them in order to advance political goals. And yet, as the Israeli case and numerous other case studies suggest [...], one would be hard pressed to identify a connection between EU’s normative position and its economic policies’ (Gordon and Pardo 2015, p.270).

Harpaz and Shamis give an overview of how well the economic relations between Israel and the EU are:

‘[...] Israel maintains close scientific, technological and cultural ties with the EU and its Member States. Israelis are avid consumers of European culture and goods, Europe has long been Israel’s preferred tourist destination, and the EU is Israel’s chief trading partner. In 2007 the total reciprocal trade between Israel and the EU was of nearly \$29 billion and between January and

June 2009 of nearly \$12.5 billion. During the latter period 31 per cent of Israel's exports (excluding diamonds) were destined for EU countries while 37 per cent of its imports (excluding diamonds) came from EU countries. Moreover, since the early 1990s, Israeli investment in east European countries that joined the EU in 2004 and in 2007 has swelled considerably. Many Israeli entrepreneurs are investing substantial funds in real-estate and infrastructure ventures in countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania' (Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.596).

As mentioned earlier, Krieger emphasizes that the EU policies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are marked by enormous contradictions resulting from diverging interests among EU Member States but also within the EU institutions themselves (Krieger 2017, personal communication). Also Gordon and Pardo claim that the EU has diverse interests, and only some are related to Manners' five core norms and they often conflict with each other (2015, p.272). Therefore, they disagree with Manners that the normative basis of the EU 'predisposes it to act in a normative way in world politics' (Manners 2002, p.252). Studies by Wood and Zimmerman try to show how the promotion of human rights values and political norms is subordinate to economic interests of EU Member States.

Nonetheless, as Gordon and Pardo conclude, the fact that the economic sphere and the normative sphere are completely cut off from each other does not help to diffuse the norms mentioned by Manners, thus the gap helps to explain NPE's weakness:

'It enables EU members to promote and cultivate trade relations with countries that violate human rights, and while this can, of course, benefit the economies of the member states, it does little to enhance the diffusion of the five core norms underscored by Manners (2002). [...] the EU espouses many kinds of norms, some of which better coincide with the economic interests of the member states, and therefore are more readily diffused, while others are in conflict with the economic interests, and consequently their diffusion is hampered' (Gordon and Pardo 2015, p.266).

EU-Israeli Trade Agreements

Another aspect to be considered in understanding the EU's impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is EU-Israel economic relations. As explained, they have been almost completely detached from the political situation in the Middle East and not shown any meaningful sanctions in times of violation of agreements by Israel. In order to prove these arguments

brought forward earlier, trade agreements between the EU and Israel will be looked at in their historical context.

Pardo describes in detail the continuous but increasingly unsuccessful Israeli efforts to accede to the European Union (2013, p.912-913). In 1957 the Israeli political leadership considered full economic and political membership in the European Economic Community (EEC), but their ambitions were received with reservation. Interestingly, David Ben-Gurion, the then prime minister, found very reconciliatory words about the EEC when Gideon Rafael became the fourth foreign ambassador to be accredited by the European institutions to the EEC. Rafael reports that Ben-Gurion was already passionate about forging close relations with the EEC. With a potential accession in mind, Ben-Gurion instructed Rafael: 'Tell the Europeans that they have inherited their spiritual values from that little but enduring people which you are going to represent among them [...]. We have not only horrible memories of the recent past in common, but also a bright future ahead of us' (Rafael 1981, p. 100). Because the Israeli idea did not find very welcome ears in the EEC, a year later in 1958, Israel started to advocate for an 'associate member' status, thus downgrading from its original request. In 1964 the then EC and Israel signed a three-year non-preferential trade agreement which developed into a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 1975 and into a full association agreement in 1995. Another trade agreement followed in 1975. Certain scholars argue that the EC then did not sign any further trade agreement with Israel until the 1995 Association Agreement due to the EC's dissatisfaction with the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the expansion of Israeli settlements and other Israeli policies that violate human rights (Bouris 2014; Dosenrode and Stubkjær 2002; Pardo and Peters 2010). However, according to Gordon and Pardo it must be mentioned that 'during this 20-year period, the EC did not sign a new trade framework with any of the other Mediterranean countries and indeed with most other countries around the world with which it had signed agreements in the 1970s' (2015, p.270). They found that only after the Treaty of Maastricht entered into force in 1993 - and thus also the formation of the EU - new trade agreements were negotiated. In 1995, the start of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (,Barcelona Process') advanced and regulated the upgrade of trade agreements with the Mediterranean partners. Meanwhile, Israel's former accession ambitions had totally 'died' and been replaced by mere association aspirations. These association ambitions with the EU were further met in 2008 when the parties agreed to intensify their relations and 'upgrade' them within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

Pardo clarifies that negotiations surrounding Israel's accession to the EU might have slowed down in the moments of a stagnating peace process and attacks on the Palestinians (e.g. after Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip in 2008-09), however the economic trade relations remained well even in dire times (2013, p.912-913). When looking at historic trade agreements and the peace process, Gordon and Pardo find that the economic trade regulations were always independent from human rights considerations: '[...] the relation between political developments on the Israeli-Palestinian front and the upgrade of an EC-Israeli trade agreement is merely coincidental' (Gordon and Pardo 2015, p.270). Thus, improved trade agreements were, if at all only by coincidence, happening after political improvements for Palestinians stemming from Israeli state decisions:

'[...] during the first decade after the 1967 War, as the community formulated its normative position vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there is no evidence that trade agreements it signed are in any way affected by the community's dissatisfaction with Israel's policies in OT' (Gordon and Pardo 2015, p.270).

Gordon and Pardo prove that 'the EU went ahead with deepening trade relations with Israel even in the absence of peace talks and the continued expansion of settlement construction' (2013, p. 107-109). Economic numbers underline their argument: 'In terms of numbers, from 2002 until the global economic crisis of 2008, exports from Israel to the EU surged from \$7.88 to \$17.79 billion while imports from the EU to Israel also rose from \$13.91 billion in 2002 to \$22.51 billion in 2008' (Gordon and Pardo 2013, p. 107-109). Thus, trade numbers between the EU and Israel increased despite a worsening of the political situation.

The only time the EU adopted some kind of sanctions was the Rules of Origin (ROO) in 1995 as part of the Association Agreement. However, Gordon and Pardo point out that the 'negative conditionality designed to encourage Israel to change its policies in the Occupied Territories [...] have had no tangible impact on trade between the EU and Israel' (Pardo 2013, p.109-112). They consider the ROO and the suspension of the upgrade process following the 2008-2009 Gaza War as insufficient measures, officially not even called sanctions, against the State of Israel. ROO involve the identification of the origin or the 'nationality' of a product for customs purposes. These 'nationalities' are divided into two-types: non-preferential and preferential. Goods produced in West Bank settlements and the Golan Heights are therefore considered to be from non-preferential origin and do not fulfill the criteria allowing preferential rates of duty to be claimed. Gordon and Pardo prove that the impact of the

implementation of the ROO since 1995 on the Israeli industry in the Palestinian Territories and on Israel's economy is negligible (2013, p.109-112):

‘Of the 136 companies that export goods from the Occupied Territories to the EU, only 35 have headquarters in the Occupied Territories, while the rest have headquarters in Israel and a few in Europe. Since many of the companies based in the Occupied Territories also have outlets or plants inside Israel (at times, in fact, the manufacturing process of the exported good takes place in both Israel and the Occupied Territories), they can use their Israeli address for purposes of exporting settlement goods to Europe and thus bypass the ROO’ (Gordon and Pardo 2013, p.109-112).

The suspension of the intended upgrade process of EU-Israeli relations after the Gaza War in 2008-2009 could also have had an impact on trade relations between the two parties, according to Gordon and Pardo. However, they assert that looking at trade figures, the suspension of the upgrade was inconsequential. This can be seen in the following figure:

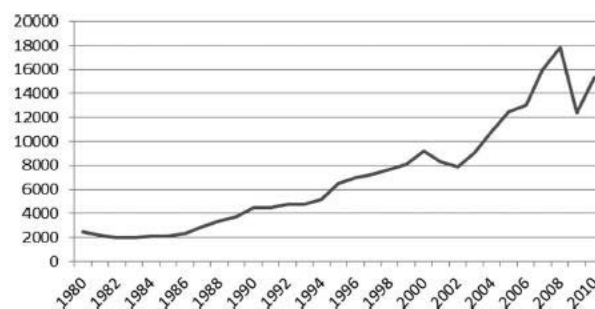


Figure 1: Israel's Exports to the EU (in Millions of Dollars) (Gordon and Pardo 2013, p. 112).

‘As Figure 2 [here Figure 1; see above] shows, the ENP acted as a catalyst in boosting EU-Israeli trade relations until the 2008 economic crisis, which led to a sharp decline in trade. [...] Moreover, trade rebounded already in 2010. Since trade numbers always reflect a certain time lag, its rapid revival in 2010 corroborates the claim that Israel's 2008–2009 winter offensive in the Gaza Strip had no influence on European trade relations with Israel’ (Gordon and Pardo 2013, p.109-112).

Therefore, Gordon and Pardo emphasize that these two cases of negative conditionality - which are often used to prove the normative power of the EU - have had no real effect on EU-Israeli trade (2013, p.109-112). In the meantime, Israel continues to be one of the EU's strongest trading partners in the Euro-Mediterranean area. It seems that from the side of the EU, economic interest is big enough for close trade relations, but norm compliance by Israel is not sufficient to support an accession on the part of the EU. However, it should be clear that

the good trade relations also undermine the effectiveness of any norm diffusion because there is no pressure exerted on Israel.

6.5. 'NPE' as a Discursive Instrument

Considering what has been illustrated in the previous sections of this chapter, the thought arises that the EU's normative statements on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict might have the only function to keep up the image - at least to a certain extent - of an international political actor that bases its policy decisions on humanitarian and democratic norms.

Krieger claims that the EU does that in order to cover up other policies contravening these same norms. He thinks that Normative Power Europe is just a discursive instrument and the EU does not have any normative power after all. He asserts that NPE is an idealistic version of normative power, but it is not represented in the actual political baseline of the EU (Krieger 2017, personal communication). Tocci supports Krieger's claim, that the normative position of the EU is merely a rhetorical device looking at the gap between the EU's normative goals and its conduct on the ground in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (2005). Krieger argues that this discursive instrument is aimed at times to explain but also at times to cover the real political and economic policies on global level (2017, personal communication). The aim or purpose of this discursive instrument according to Krieger is to completely cover up different behaviour contravening the idealistic norms set out within the concept of NPE (*ibid.*).

Hence, Krieger's idea about the discursive instrument also touches the concept of constructivism as he emphasizes that the discursive instrument NPE frames foreign policy baselines in a completely different way than what they actually are. That is the case especially regarding the EU statements and its actual foreign and economic policies in the Israeli-Palestinian context (Krieger 2017, personal communication). In the last 50 years, Krieger states, the real policies were completely different than the discursive position of the EU with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (*ibid.*). This has also become evident in the preceding chapters of this thesis. According to Krieger, framing the EU as a normative power is therefore not about 'staging it as force of peace outwards' (*ibid.*), but it might be much more about presenting it as a normative power for its internal audience. He illustrates that the idea of the EU as a force of peace is being staged at socio-cultural and political-diplomatic level (*ibid.*).

Also Tovias emphasizes that there is strategic thinking in the EU concerning its foreign policies with the Mediterranean and it is related to the discursive instrument explained earlier. Following the Arab Spring, he claims the EU has started to act much more strategically than based on its norms: ‘So as to ask in Egypt to make governmental changes, they have decided not to fiddle around for the moment’ (Tovias 2017, personal communication). He assumes that the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has symbolic value to Europe but increasingly less a humanitarian value as in the past. That is because the EU has realized that there are a number of humanitarian catastrophes happening all around it and that it cannot change much about it (Tovias 2017, personal communication).

6.6.Democracy in Israel

However, Krieger and Tovias argue that a much more fundamental question needs to be posed: Does the EU really need to diffuse its norms in Israel in order to achieve a more democratic Israel state and to end the occupation? It should not remain undisputed whether external involvement is needed in order to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

According to Krieger, Israeli NGOs are perfectly able to fight for democracy themselves and he condemns the euro-centric bias that ‘our’ values need to be spread all over the world. He emphasizes that in Israel, as well as in the rest of the world, there are also critical voices active in different kinds of movements that oppose the establishment:

‘Israeli NGOs do not need the EU in order to realize what is happening in Ramallah, Jenin or Hebron. Israeli NGOs do not need the EU in order to see what is happening concerning the migration and asylum policy of the Israel state. They do not need the EU in order to see what is happening in Israeli prisons and so forth’ (Krieger 2017, personal communication).

He insists that ‘the EU does not have a monopoly on the issue of human rights violations or the observation of international law’ (Krieger 2017, personal communication). Tovias supports the thesis brought forward by Krieger that NGOs might be funded by foreign development agencies or private philanthropists, but that doesn’t mean that Israelis do not strive for democratic improvements themselves (2017, personal communication). Again, the problem is the Israeli government: Tovias claims that the Israeli government wants to neutralize the influence of NGOs that work (in)directly against the occupation, e.g. B’Tselem (ibid.). Tovias reminds us of the German foreign minister’s visit to Israel in 2017. According to him, the diplomatic tensions between the two countries almost escalated because Sigmar Gabriel visited the pro-Palestinian NGO B’Tselem in Israel (ibid.). Krieger mentions the

game between the EU and Israel concerning B'Tselem, too, and remarks that this incident was used by the Israeli government to further delegitimize certain NGOs. However, he assures that the incident did not seriously upset EU-Israel relations, since the economic and political cooperation between the EU and Israel remained untouched. Krieger adds that Israeli NGOs do seek the attention of an international audience in its asymmetric fight with the Israeli government, due to security considerations among other. However, he concludes that this is not a phenomena characteristic to Israeli NGOs but can be found in countries such as Russia and Hungary (Krieger 2017, personal communication).

6.7.Outlook and Recent EU Interventions

In conclusion, the question arises what the prospects for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are and to what extent the EU should be involved in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in the future. Most scholars seem to be in favor of a changed but intensified engagement of the EU as shall be explained in this section.

To begin with, Bunzl believes that a democratic state that guarantees equal rights to the Palestinians and that includes both the territory of Israel and Palestine is not realistic. Especially, since the Israeli Right aims at the complete opposite: to annex the West Bank, to not give the Palestinians rights and to drive them out of the land (Bunzl 2017, personal communication).

Furthermore, Bunzl believes that improvement in Israeli-Palestinian relations does not occur through making concessions but it has happened usually after conflicts. For example, the Intifada or the October War led to changes. The idea that when Israel and Palestine cooperate everything will work out seems to be an illusion (Bunzl 2017, personal communication). According to him, only shocks influence the situation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But these shocks could also come from outside, for example from the EU. Bunzl assumes that the October War in 1973 led to the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement and the visit of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in Israel. Furthermore, the first Intifada has led or contributed to the Oslo negotiations. Bunzl assumes that if the Palestinians would be able to come to an agreement between Fatah and Hamas and form a common government, it would lead to a new conflict and a new stage in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Because the EU would probably support the government, but Israel would not do so (ibid.).

According to Asseburg and Busse, it seems very unlikely that the Israel-Palestinian conflict can be resolved without intensified international involvement and mediation since both parties to the conflict are not able to meet at eye level due to the Israeli predominance. The international community would need to prepare the agenda for negotiations, present a solution for the refugee problem and make concessions concerning security in both countries (Asseburg and Busse 2016, p. 117-118). Asseburg suggests that the EU will need to assume more responsibility within the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in order to prevent spill-over effects and to resolve the conflict in the future. The most important step will be to update the CFSP in order to face the challenges that lie ahead:

‘In the face of an ever more reluctant and intervention-averse US government, Europeans will have to assume greater responsibility for stabilization in their immediate neighborhood – not least because they are the ones directly affected by spillover effects of the region’s violent conflicts. This also means that Europeans do not have the choice to only back the “good performers,” as some observers have suggested. [...] In order to have a tangible positive impact, Europeans will have to revisit their priorities, address the underlying assumptions of their approaches, interlink Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and ENP instruments, and strengthen their diplomatic and conflict-prevention capacities’ (Asseburg 2014, p.3-4).

In any case, according to Asseburg, a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict needs to be based on the rule of law:

‘It should be a collective concern of the international community to uphold the rule of law, without discrimination or preference, to safeguard the universality and indivisibility of human rights and the respect for the principles of the UN Charter. If the West wants to be credible with regards to the propagation and dissemination of such norms and values, it will have to align its actions with its declaratory positions. It should also be aware that a sustainable peace settlement in the Middle East cannot be built on impunity, stark injustice, or continued domination. Such awareness should translate, amongst others, into a) consistent policies on dealing with produce from Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, b) a clear stance supporting thorough and independent investigations of violations of humanitarian law and human rights committed by all sides during the Gaza war 2008/2009 as demanded by the so-called Goldstone Report, and c) policies consistent with the 2004 ICJ legal opinion on the course of the separation barrier in the West Bank’ (Asseburg 2010, p.5-6).

Concerning the needed extent of the EU’s involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, most scholars conform with each other that it should be increased. Harpaz and

Shamis state that ‘the EU should intervene in the Middle East and such intervention should be normatively oriented’ (2010, p.608). Yet, Ortega wonders whether the EU is in fact able to contribute to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

‘While it is clear that the Union should contribute to resolution of the conflict, it remains to be seen if it can, and whether it has the necessary means. The Union could make a contribution if it had the political will to do so, since it could employ three types of instruments: diplomatic, economic and military’ (Ortega 2003, p.57-58).

Indeed, Bunzl asserts that parts of the EU know that Israel will not make peace by itself and that it will need to exert more pressure on Israel in order to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (2017, personal communication). He further argues that the recent admission of the State of Palestine into the ICC is perceived as new hope by the Palestinians and as threat by Israel because it might lead to the situation that Palestinians could bring Israeli politicians to court in Den Haag (ibid.).

Harpaz and Shamis also suggest that the EU should become more active. That would as well help to prevent the self-delegitimization of the European Union:

‘The EU should not content itself with a self-contained, inward-looking, normative agenda based on a Kantian normative criterion. Such course of action may forge an excessively rigid distinction between ‘us’ (the Europeans) and ‘them’ (non-Europeans), thereby operating as a segregating force, creating a Fortress Normative Europe and diminishing the relevance and effectiveness of EU external policies’ (Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.604).

The authors further specify that the EU should replace its discursive politics with concrete and constructive assistance:

‘Moreover, the excessive reliance by the EU on declaratory-normative diplomacy could be mitigated and to some extent camouflaged with concrete and constructive assistance, gradually replacing its ‘calling for’, ‘urging’ and ‘inviting’ declaratory diplomacy (see Biscop, 2007, p. 85) with hard-thought, well-balanced practical solutions and assistance [...]. The EU’s normative agenda should be backed with effective, down-to-earth practical assistance and with a shrewd use of instruments of positive and negative conditionality, thereby narrowing the gap between its rhetoric and actions. Thus, for example, the EU should render more visible its extensive economic relations with Israel, thereby enhancing the overall positive Israeli Economic Approach to it. In its declarations, policies and practices, the EU should find the optimal balance between *realpolitik* and morals, between idealism and realism and between rhetoric and substance. The pursuit of

these proposed courses of action may contribute to the promotion of a more legitimate and hence effective external Normative Europe, which will hopefully serve as a significant normative actor in the Middle East' (Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.606).

Having said this, Krieger confirms that the EU would indeed have measures to remind the Israeli state of its international obligations already now if it decides to do so (2017, personal communication).

Nonetheless, in order to confront the allegations that EU's criticism of the Israeli occupation is caused by an again prevailing European anti-Semitism, Harpaz and Shamis recommend that 'the EU should develop [...] a more low-key, cautious, conscious, self-reflective, politically and historically sensitive notion of Normative Europe towards Middle East politics in general, and towards Israel, in particular' (2010, p.605).

Bunzl observes a new development that is also of interest for the future: There are new coalitions being formed between the European Right and the Israeli Right due to a common goal which is to oppose Islam and Muslims. This could eventually influence the relationship between Israel and Europe. Currently, the Jewish communities in Europe still oppose the right wing movements due to their anti-Semitic history, e.g. the Jewish community in Austria vs FPÖ (Bunzl 2017, personal communication). But it remains to be seen what this association will eventually lead to.

Moisi reflects on the future role of the EU: 'The moral authority that Europe is able to establish in the Middle East tomorrow will help to define its international role in the decades to come far beyond the region itself' (Moisi 2003, p.32).

Recent EU Interventions – A More Active Role?

According to Pardo, recent engagements by the EU with peace missions 'established a precedent' which reflects 'the EU's increasing importance as an actor on the global stage' (2010, p.64). Pardo mentions the examples of the EU involvement in reaching a ceasefire deal that successfully ended the 2008-2009 Gaza War; the EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah; and the military involvement of several EU Member States in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) that increased the EU's involvement in the Middle East in the field of security: 'These missions, and their acceptance by Israel, mark a significant step forward for Israeli-European relations, insofar as they established a precedent whereby the EU had been

afforded a responsibility in the 'hard security' sphere' (Pardo 2010, p.64-65). Pardo emphasizes that since the EU has acted differently in the 2006 Second Lebanon War, the Iranian nuclear crisis and the 2009 Cast Lead operation in Gaza this 'may prove that the EU is committed to playing an international role' (ibid., p.69).

Harpaz and Shamis support Pardo's thesis and give a detailed description on how the EU has acted differently in two of the three conflicts mentioned above. During the armed conflict between Israel and the Lebanese Hezbollah in 2006, the European Union 'criticized both parties for violating international law but avoided too harsh normative preaching' (Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.606). Furthermore it refrained from merely making declaratory statements:

'Instead of repeating its excessive reliance on declaratory diplomacy, the EU succeeded in forming and displaying a proactive, relatively unified, down-to-earth stance, committing large numbers of soldiers from important Member States to the UNFIL Force and assisting the Lebanon economic reconstruction' (Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.606-607).

According to Biscop, this may be seen as proof that the EU is increasing its political-military commitment and strategic actorness in the Middle East (2007, p. 78). Schmid confirms that the EU's behaviour has effectively improved its credibility as a political-strategic player in the eyes of the Israelis (2007, pp. 101, 119–122). Gordon and Pardo, referring to the Israeli-Hamas conflict of 2008-09, agree with this argument:

'The President of the European Council, the President of France, the Chancellor of Germany and the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain gathered in a united manner in the Israeli Prime Minister's official residence, to express in front of the cameras Europe's support of the nascent and shaky ceasefire and of the peace process. Europe's unitary commitment to assist in meeting Gaza's humanitarian needs and in fighting military arms trafficking and smuggling to Gaza displayed a more proactive, constructive and balanced approach, enabling European leaders such as Nicholas Sarkozy and special Envoy of the Quartet to the Middle East, Tony Blair, to contribute to the efforts to promote the ceasefire' (Harpaz and Shamis 2010, p.606-607).

According to Harpaz and Shamis, this approach was welcomed by the then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert who praised the European intervention as 'impressive support for the State of Israel' (2010, p.606-607). Indeed, the above mentioned events might have been an exception to the rule, but they could also show a new way of dealing with conflict situations by the EU. Only future will tell.

7. Conclusion

This master's thesis has dealt with the question how the EU's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be evaluated and, in particular, to what extent the measures taken by the EU to exert pressure on Israel have had an impact on Israel to end its occupation of the Palestinian Territories. On the one hand, this question is important in order to enhance the EU's work as a mediator in the conflict and, on the other hand, to draw conclusions for the EU's foreign policy in general.

First, this research has found that the EU has assumed different positions towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ever since it emerged arising great attention in the 1950s. Therefore, the historical background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, among them most importantly the creation of the state of Israel, has been described. I have examined the most important EU declarations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, the EU's involvement must be seen in the context of its role as an international political actor.

Subsequently, it has been argued that the EU has developed into a normative power in world politics and that its decisions are based on values instead of interests. It has been discussed by which normative principles the EU is perceived to be guided and how it tries to diffuse these norms inside and outside the EU. In this master's thesis I have argued that this concept of 'Normative Power Europe' helps to unify the EU and to legitimize its foreign policies. However, historically the notion of a 'Normative Power Europe' seems to have two considerable weaknesses. On the one hand, a striking gap between the EU's capabilities and the expectations towards the EU to perform their normative aspirations can be identified (Hill). On the other hand, a gap between what the EU is able to agree upon and what is expected from the EU weakens its normative standpoint (Toje). Three case studies related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were discussed in order to illustrate this consensus-expectations gap that is still very relevant in this context. For example, this research has found that the EU's position clearly foresees Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. However, some member states diverge in their position due to their own considerations. Thus, the EU Member States' position is not that unified. Especially, since some catholic member states would prefer to see their 'Holy City' under international administration, thus as a *Corpus Separatum*.

Furthermore, I have examined the EU's involvement in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. I considered the question of how the EU is trying to influence the facts on the ground with its political and donor activities. It has become evident that the EU has great economic influence on the Palestinians due to its position as main financial supporter of the PA and the Palestinians. Therefore, in peace negotiations they have leverage on the Palestinians to make concessions. Yet, it seems that they have very little political influence on Israel in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process regardless of their economic influence. This is despite the fact that the EU has tried to engage itself as a mediator since several decades. Crises in other countries around the world and within Europe, above all the war in Syria and fear of terrorism, have contributed to the decrease of public interest in Europe resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I closely examined the perception of the EU by Israelis and by Palestinians and how the EU's image in both states might affect the EU's role as a mediator. In the case of the Israelis, the EU struggles to position itself as a legitimate mediator due to its anti-Semitic past which is often brought up by the media and politicians in order to achieve their own goals. In addition, the EU has had difficulties to position itself as an essential player (despite important economic relations) due to the omnipresent protector of Israel, the US. With regards to the Palestinians, despite its positive image due to its donor activities the EU is losing credibility the longer the conflict lasts.

Finally, I examined the actual impact of the EU on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I drew attention to the impact of the EU as normative power with regards to its ability to define what is acceptable in world politics. For this purpose, it is helpful to apply the theory of social constructivism (Wendt) to NPE and its relations with other countries, especially Israel. However, an analysis of the actual activities to halt the construction of Israeli settlements, prohibit human rights violations and end the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has shown that the EU's statements are merely declaratory and lack consequences on the Israeli side. The thesis has even illustrated that the EU contributes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a negative way due to the funding of the PA which hinders the development of fully-fledged democratic and autonomous institutions in Palestine. Moreover, the thesis demonstrated that the essential norms proclaimed by the EU have not been diffused successfully in Israel. Though, when analysing this I have pointed out that, firstly, one should not forget the countering of the Israeli government to norm diffusion as it has been substantial. Especially since the current government is doing everything to silence criticism. Secondly, it is necessary to understand that critical voices do exist in Israel as much as in any

other country and it is not dependent on the EU's support to achieve a more democratic society.

As opposed to the theory of NPE, there is a wide gap between the EU's rhetoric statements and its economic policies with Israel that are strongly driven by material interests not by proclaimed norms. For this purpose, the historic EU-Israeli trade agreements were analysed and contrasted with the political process of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I have shown that EU decisions to strengthen economic ties with Israel were not at all based on the EU's proclaimed normative principles as trade upgrades were often also negotiated in times of tough political and diplomatic situations. Thus, it can be said that the EU's normative principles with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are nothing but a rhetorical instrument to cover up its unwillingness to engage with concrete measures and to frame itself as a unique entity with high values despite its contrasting economic policies.

Only a few recent interventions exist where the EU has transformed its statements into concrete actions in Israel and Palestine. This might hint to a more active role of the EU in the future. However, currently there is little evidence of a positive influence of the EU in Israel and the Palestinian Territories concerning Israel's rights violating policies. Therefore, a future outlook of the EU's engagement to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian/contribute constructively to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process is not very bright unless the EU transforms its normative declarations into concrete policies.

The thesis has answered the research question how the EU's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be evaluated. It has found that despite the fact that the EU has attempted to influence the Israeli-Palestinian peace process based on its normative principles with a vast number of normative statements, it has done little to transform the rhetoric into concrete measures and interventions. Therefore, the impact of the EU on Israel to end the occupation and its rights violating policies has been very limited. That, of course is due to several internal and external factors. Historically, the predecessors of the EU lacked capabilities to confront the Israelis and other conflicts in the world. Nowadays, it seems the EU's inability to agree on concrete measures, its inactiveness in front of emerging crises and the conduct of discrepant economic policies are the main obstacles to influence Israel in line with its normative principles and to enhance its position as a mediator in the conflict.

Referring to the research question through which channels the EU has tried to exert pressure on Israel (or to support the Palestinian state building process) it can be said that they have merely used two of the range of possible options. The two being, on the one hand, the issuance of declarations and official statements on the illegality of Israeli policies and, on the other hand, the funding of pro-Palestinian in Israel and organizations and infrastructure in the Palestinian Territories. Yet, it could have used trade politics, sanctions, norm diffusion, mediation in peace conferences and other activities as channels to influence the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a way that it would be resolved faster. However, the European Union has failed to do so.

Further research should prove the findings of this thesis. In addition, suggestions about what measures the EU should take to improve the outcome of its involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process need to be made. However, the thesis has opened up many more questions. It is desirable to study specific time periods of EU-Israel relations and analyse the EU's behaviour in detail. What have European member states done in the course of time with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? How much do their political baselines differ from the US' in the context of Israel and Palestine? Who is responsible for what? Will the Brexit influence the EU's position on the future of Jerusalem and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in general as the UK have always played an important role as supporter of the Palestinians? Whose EU Member State's position will become stronger? Last but not least, with many other (internal) crises, is the public interest in the EU to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict really fading away? These are research questions that need to be answered in the future.

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Appendices

A. Structural Evolution of the European Union

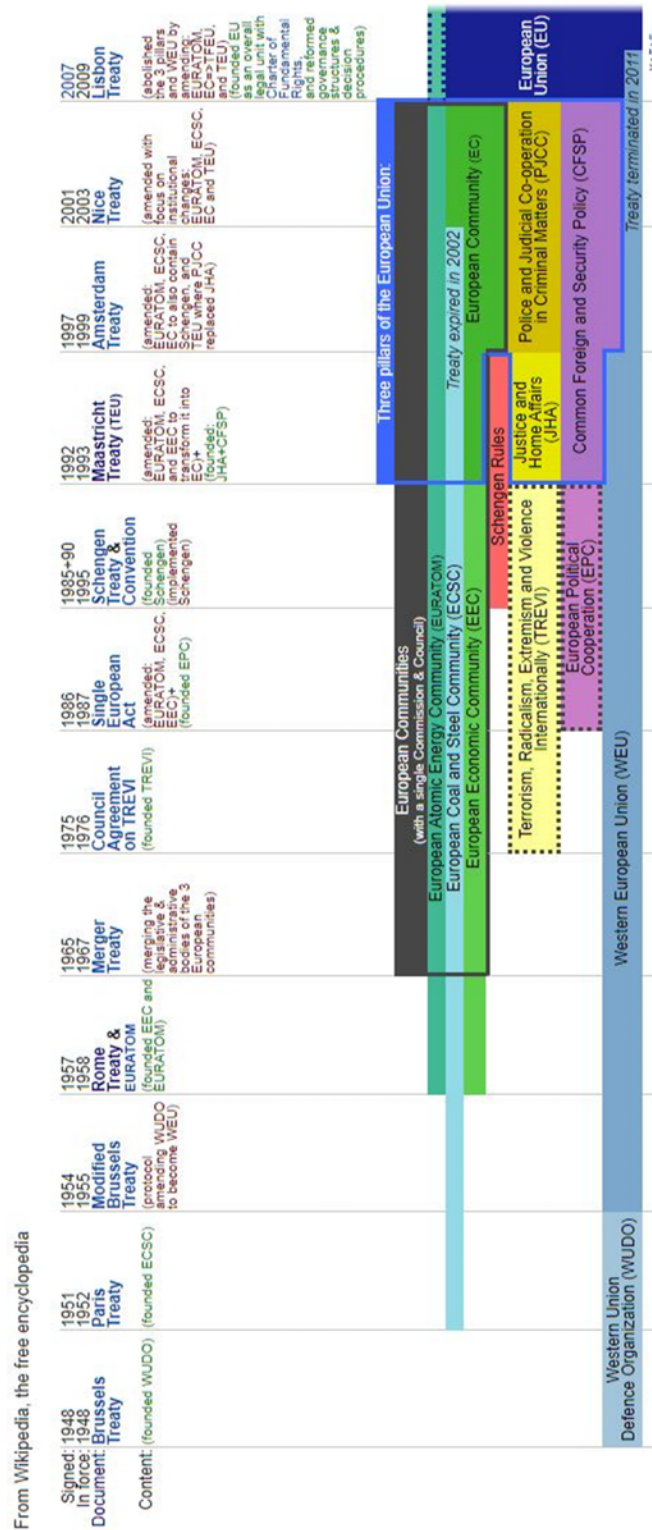


Illustration 2: Structural Evolution of the European Union (Wikipedia 2018b).

B. Presentation of Interviewees

The first interview partner, **Alfred Tovias**, is a Professor Emeritus of the Department of International Relations of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Former Chairman of the same Department from 2010 through 2012, he currently holds the EU-sponsored Jean Monnet Chair on External Economic Relations of the EU and is President of the Israeli Association for the Study of European Integration (IASI). He is an active participant in Israeli governmental committee meetings in which he plays a strategic consulting role.

The second interviewee, **Helmut Krieger**, is a lecturer of social sciences at the Department of Development Studies at the University of Vienna. He also gives public lectures on behalf of the Austrian Oriental Society (ÖOG). Since 2007, he has been a consultant for the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC), mainly focusing on the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Other fields of research are gender relations and political Islam in the Arab-Islamic world, critical state theory and postcolonial theory development.

The third interview partner, **John Bunzl**, is an Austrian political scientist and Middle East expert. He has taught at universities in Innsbruck, Salzburg and Vienna and is currently a senior fellow at the Austrian Institute for International Politics (OII). In 2009, John Bunzl and Farid Hafez received the Bruno-Kreisky-Prize for their book 'Islamophobie in Österreich' (Islamophobia in Austria).