

# THE EU AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

An analysis of EU policy and securitization

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## Abstract

For decades the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has a prominent place on the foreign policy agenda of the European Union. Existing literature on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the EU underscores that the breakdown of the peace process around 2000 led to a shift in the European approach. This thesis investigates if securitization played a role in the changed policy of the European Union relative to the conflict. By analyzing this, the debate about the concept of Normative Power Europe is also discussed. In order to give a representative view, the EU documentation concerning the timeframe of three significant events before 2000 and four after 2000 was analyzed. The framework of securitization was applied on the texts. The results of the analysis indicated that security played an increasing role in the EU policies towards the conflict. It is questionable though if we can speak of a real securitization process because of, among other things, the lack of Europe's concrete action in the conflict. The research also showed that that normative and security-based policy can be intertwined and that the EU's economic interests played a significant role as well.

## Introduction

For decades the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has a prominent place on the foreign policy agenda of the European Union (EU) and its precursor the European Community (EC). Since the 1970s, European leaders agreed on the need for Europe to play a clearly defined role in the peace process.<sup>1</sup> The resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be about support for Israel's right to security, while also facilitating the Palestinian right to national self-determination.<sup>2</sup> The EU's objective is 'a two-state solution with an independent, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbors'.<sup>3</sup>

After the Yom Kippur War in 1973 the EC- countries for the first time delivered a common statement in which they requested Israel to end the occupation of 'Arab land' and that the Palestinians had the right to express a national identity.<sup>4</sup> In 1980 the EC issued the Venice Declaration, the first common statement in which the EC-countries for the first time undeniably recognized the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.<sup>5</sup> Although the EU had a normative impact, it lacked the capacity to exert direct influence over the conflict. In the first decades of the conflict, Europe was mostly overshadowed by U.S. American involvement.<sup>6</sup> The Oslo Accords in 1993 and the following Oslo peace process changed to role of Europe in the peace process. As a result of the Oslo Accords, the EU became the main financier of the Palestinians state building project through which it acquired a direct and material interest in the peace process.<sup>7</sup> In 2000 the Oslo peace process collapsed after failing negotiations in Camp David in the USA and the subsequent breakout of the al-Aqsa *intifada* which led to an escalation of violence.<sup>8</sup> Fearing that the EU would lose its new-found political power in the region, the EU stressed the importance of a two-state solution and became more critical on Israeli policies, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territories of Gaza and the West Bank.<sup>9</sup> The EU became the Palestinian Authority's most steadfast international ally; however, their relationship came under increased stress and scrutiny from Israel following Hamas' victory in January 2006

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<sup>1</sup> With 'Europe' this thesis refers to the EU or its precursor the EC.

<sup>2</sup> Joel Peters, "Europe and the Israel-Palestinian Peace Process: The Urgency of Now," *European Security* 19, no.3 (2010): 511-29, 512.

<sup>3</sup> European Union External Action, "Middle East Peace Process," June 15, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Neve Gordon and Sharon Pardo, "Normative Power Europe Meets the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Springer* 13 (2015) 265-274, 268.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 269.

<sup>6</sup> Anders Persson, "Introduction: The Occupation at 50: Eu-Israel/Palestine Relations," *Middle East Critique* 27, no. 4, 317.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 318

<sup>8</sup> Rory Miller, "Troubled Neighbours: The EU and Israel," *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 4 (2006), 644.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

elections.<sup>10</sup> In 2019 Rafaella Del Sarto wrote that ‘Europe has failed — or has been unwilling — to recognize that “the peace process” is not merely facing temporary problems, given that 26 years have passed since the signing of the first Oslo Accord.’<sup>11</sup> However, despite the strained political relations between the EU and Israel, the bilateral trade and research cooperation in the scientific and high technology has remained strong.<sup>12</sup> It is the question how separated the economic and the political relations are.

Existing literature on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the EU underscores that the breakdown of the peace process around 2000 led to a shift in the European approach.<sup>13</sup> This thesis will examine the theory of Joel Peters, a leading scholar on European involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to Peters, the European narrative shifted from one in terms of justice, rights and opportunity for the Palestinians to one of risk and danger to its own strategic concerns. He argues that before 2000, the European discourse towards the conflict was about Europe’s colonial and historical legacy and about addressing its self-identity as an actor on the global stage. Because Europe lacked instruments to directly affect the conflict, its role was mostly in terms of normative framing, and its main objectives concerned rights and justice. Since the collapse of the Oslo Accords and the increased violence since 2000, the conflict has increasingly been seen as a direct threat to European interests. The European approach on the conflict became ‘securitized’, in the fears that the conflict might ‘spill over’.<sup>14</sup> Peters writes: ‘Europe is increasingly looking at the conflict as constituting a direct threat to Europe’s global, regional and, above all, its domestic security concerns’. This situation created a sense of urgency for accomplishing a two-state solution before the Israelis and Palestinians would lose faith.<sup>15</sup>

Peters argument seems plausible, however his research lacks historical sources to support his claim. Moreover, he is not clear about what ‘securitization’ implies and in what sense the European policy became securitized. In addition, Peters does not apply the tools from the securitization theory from the Copenhagen school to his sources. As a consequence, it is not evident if and how the securitization process is happening in EU policy towards the conflict. The aim of this thesis is to illuminate how the EU policy changed through a more

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<sup>10</sup> Miller, “Troubled Neighbours: The EU and Israel.”

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 655.

<sup>13</sup> Neve Gordon and Sharon Pardo, “Normative Power Europe Meets the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” *Springer* 13 (2015): 265–74; Haim Yacobi and David Newman, “The EU and the Israel-Palestine Conflict,” in *The European Union and Border Conflicts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Rory Miller, “Troubled Neighbours: The EU and Israel,” *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 4 (2006): 642–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537120600889894>.

<sup>14</sup> Peters, “Europe and the Israel–Palestinian Peace Process: The Urgency of Now.”

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 526.

comprehensive case study research using primary sources. Therefore, this paper will test Peters' theory and answers the research question: did securitization play a role in the changed policy of the European Union relative to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

By testing Peters argument, this thesis also endeavors to contribute to the debate about the concept of Normative Power Europe. This concept is frequently discussed by scholars who write about Europe and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>16</sup> The concept 'normative power' framed by political scientist Ian Manners describes the EU's attempts to export the normative 'European Model' of peace through economic integration and the pursuance of democracy, human rights, etc., to world politics.<sup>17</sup> Peters claims that Europe had a normative function before 2000 but that this changed into a security policy. Guy Harpaz and Asaf Shamis, scholars in the field of normative power, argue that in recent years, the EU still sought to negotiate normative power in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, the lack of any concrete action against Israel -which would support the stirring normative proclamations- discredited the normative power of Europe.<sup>18</sup> It is interesting to analyze this relationship between the securitization process and the normative power of Europe.

Peters' argument is interesting and relevant given that the EU policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has not been analyzed often in the scope of the securitization theory. Most literature on this topic focusses on the normative power perspective of the EU.<sup>19</sup> Researchers who write about securitization and the conflict largely have focused on the securitization process of the Israeli government.<sup>20</sup> In spite of its relevancy, the methodology of Peters' study is not adequately to explain the alleged securitization of the EU's policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This paper tries to contribute to Peters' study by using a more precise

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<sup>16</sup> Guy Harpaz and Asaf Shamis, "Normative Power Europe and the State of Israel: An Illegitimate Eutopia," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48, no. 3 (June 2010); Gordon and Pardo, "Normative Power Europe Meets the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict"; Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?\*", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (June 2002): 235–58; Persson, "Shaping Discourse and Setting Examples: Normative Power Europe Can Work in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict"; Del Sarto, "Stuck in the Logic of Oslo: Europe and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict."

<sup>17</sup> Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?".

<sup>18</sup> Harpaz and Shamis, "Normative Power Europe and the State of Israel: An Illegitimate Eutopia," 602.

<sup>19</sup> For example; Michael E. Smith, *Europe's Foreign and Security Policy: The Institutionalization of Cooperation* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Guy Harpaz and Asaf Shamis, "Normative Power Europe and the State of Israel: An Illegitimate Eutopia," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48, no. 3 (June 2010): 579–616; Neve Gordon and Sharon Pardo, "Normative Power Europe Meets the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Springer* 13 (2015): 265–74; Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?\*", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (June 2002): 235–58; Anders Persson, "Shaping Discourse and Setting Examples: Normative Power Europe Can Work in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 55, no. 6 (2017): 1415–31, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12578>; Raffaella A. Del Sarto, "Stuck in the Logic of Oslo: Europe and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *The Middle East Journal* 73, no. 3 (2019): 376–96; Rory Miller, "Troubled Neighbours: The EU and Israel," *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 4 (2006): 642–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537120600889894>.

<sup>20</sup> For example: Uriel Abulof, "Deep Securitization and Israel's 'Demographic Demon'", *International Political Sociology*, Volume 8, Issue 4 (December 2014), 396–415; Olesker, Ronnie. "National Identity and Securitization in Israel." *Ethnicities* 14, no. 3 (June 2014): 371–91; Halper, Jeff. *War Against the People: Israel, the Palestinians and Global Pacification*. London: Pluto Press, 2015. Accessed June 10, 2020. doi:10.2307/j.ctt183pct7; *Human and Water Security in Israel and Jordan*. Springerbriefs in Environment, Security, Development and Peace Ser. 3. New York: Springer, 2012.

framework. It will provide a more in-depth explanation of securitization, and later apply this concept to varied EU documents on the conflict.

This thesis will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter will be the theoretical framework, explaining the concepts of securitization and what the main factors behind a securitization process. Furthermore, this chapter will explain what the concept ‘normative power’ means and how relevant literature connects it to the policies of the EU.

The second chapter of this thesis contains the bulk of the analysis. In order to give a representative view, this thesis will analyze the EU documentation concerning the timeframe of three significant events before 2000 and four after 2000. These two periods of time have been chosen because Peters’ theory suggests that there are differences between those periods. The events before 2000 will encompass the Venice declaration (1980), the Oslo Accords (1993) and the Barcelona process (1995). These events have been selected because despite the little impact the EU had over global politics during these years, the EU played a relatively big role in shaping these events. The events after 2000 will include the years of the second *intifada* (2000-2005), the Hamas election (2006), the EU Council meeting about the Israeli settlements in 2009 and ‘Operation protective edge’/ the last Gaza war in 2014. These events ultimately shed light on the new challenges Europe was facing concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The EU documents used for this research can be found in the official online database of the EU and in a primary sources publication by Pardo and Peters with more than 200 EU documents on the topic.<sup>21</sup> In analyzing these documents, this thesis will focus on the extent to which a normative- and human rights perspective is operating as well as the degree to which a security perspective can be discerned. In order to do this, the framework of securitization will be applied on the texts. Further explanation of this frameworks will follow in the following chapters. The third chapter will be a summary of the findings of the analysis of chapter two.

## Theoretical framework

### Securitization theory

The notion of ‘securitization’ is the work of a group of scholars commonly referred to as the ‘Copenhagen School’. The most important figures in this ‘school’ are Barry Buzan and Ole Waever. They have introduced a new framework for analysis to answer the question of what is and what is not a security issue. Security as a concept is about ‘when an issue is represented as

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<sup>21</sup> S. Pardo and J. Peters, *Israel and the European Union: A Documentary History* (Lexington Books, 2012).

posing an *existential threat* to the survival of a referent object'.<sup>22</sup> The Copenhagen School defines 'referent object' as 'that to which one can point and say, "It has to survive, therefore it is necessary to..."'<sup>23</sup> The referent object is often a state which is existentially threatened. The way we can distinguish an existential threat is by the level of response it generates. When an issue is successfully presented as an existential threat it legitimizes the use of extraordinary measures and the issue receives a certain degree of urgency. Authorities can claim more power than they usually do, or confine rights and liberties that might otherwise apply to its citizens. Thus, the securitization process is successful when an issue becomes a security issue which makes it justifiable to use exceptional political measures that go beyond normal political practices.<sup>24</sup>

Besides the concepts 'referent object' and 'existential threat', 'speech act' is another important concept within the security theory. A securitizing speech act is the act of 'saying security' in relation to an issue. By speaking of an issue as a security issue it becomes one. Waever writes that 'By saying it [security] something is done'. For a speech act to be successful it has to be done by someone with authority, in the right context and according to certain conventions. The perpetrator of the security speech act has to convince a relevant audience of an existential threat adequate to have substantial political effects.<sup>25</sup> In order for securitization to work, the audience has to accept a threat as credible.<sup>26</sup>

To answer the main question of this thesis and to test Peters' argument that the EU policies became securitized, the securitization theory from the Copenhagen School will be used as an analytical tool. For the analysis, the EU documents will be examined on three conditions for a securitization process to happen. These are the 'referent object', the 'existential threat' and the 'speech act'.

## Normative power

The main goal of this thesis is to analyze if and how securitization is happening concerning the EU policy. However, by doing so, something can be said about the normative role of Europe. 'Normative Power Europe' (NPE) has become a central theme in the disciplines of European

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<sup>22</sup> Columbia Peoples and Nick Vaughan-Williams, *Critical Security Studies, An Introduction.*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 93.

<sup>23</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 36.

<sup>24</sup> Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, *Critical Security Studies, An Introduction*, 93-94.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 94-95

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 96



integration and international relations.<sup>27</sup> Also regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

According to scholar Ian Manners, the international role/identity of the EU can be seen in the light of normative power. Besides the representation of the EU as military- or civilian power, ‘the ability of the EU to shape conceptions of ‘normal’ in international relations needs to be given much greater attention’, according to Manners.<sup>28</sup> The EU attempts to export the normative ‘European Model’ outside of Europe.<sup>29</sup> As stated by Manners the EU developed series of declarations, treaties, policies and conditions that developed a broad normative basis in which five ‘core’ norms can be identified. Namely, peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law and human rights.<sup>30</sup>

Within this school of thought, a growing number of scholars write about the normative role of Europe in world politics as a source of constructing its identity and legitimacy.<sup>31</sup> Scholars Harpaz and Shamis claim that ‘there is a discrepancy between the EU’s self-representation as Normative Power and the manner in which NPE is perceived by the “other”’.<sup>32</sup> Gordon and Pardo write that the EU’s normative position regarding the conflict has a gap between the normative position and the actual diffusion of the five core norms. This is among other things, because of the detachment of EU’s normative sphere in the conflict and the economic interests regarding Israel.<sup>33</sup> The EU’s normative stance is merely rhetoric because other norms and interests, like economic interests, stop the EU from *acting* in a normative way.<sup>34</sup>

Del Sarto has another approach to the topic as she believes that ‘EU policy is not ‘normative’ in the sense that its main objectives are the export of democracy and respect for human rights’. The EU only acts in a cost-efficient way to secure its main interests; namely, stability in its periphery. These main interests are security and economic interests.<sup>35</sup> Altogether, when the role of security in the EU policies is being analyzed, the debate about normative power will also be involved.

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<sup>27</sup> Harpaz and Shamis, “Normative Power Europe and the State of Israel: An Illegitimate EUtopia,” 580.

<sup>28</sup> Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?,” 238-239.

<sup>29</sup> Harpaz and Shamis, “Normative Power Europe and the State of Israel: An Illegitimate EUtopia,” 582.

<sup>30</sup> Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?,” 242.

<sup>31</sup> Harpaz and Shamis, “Normative Power Europe and the State of Israel: An Illegitimate EUtopia.”

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Gordon and Pardo, “Normative Power Europe Meets the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” 267.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>35</sup> Del Sarto, “Stuck in the Logic of Oslo: Europe and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” 391.

## Analysis of the EU-documents

### Events before 2000

#### Venice declaration

As a result of the growing tensions in the Israeli-Arab conflict the EC decided in 1980 to ‘work in a more concrete way towards peace’. In 1980 the EC issued the Venice Declaration which focused on the need for justice and the assertion of Palestinian rights and which was increasingly critical of Israeli policies.<sup>36</sup> It declared the entitlement of all countries in the area to live in peace, the Palestinian right to self-determination, freedom of access to Jerusalem for everyone and an end to the Israeli territorial occupation and settlements.<sup>37</sup> Europe considered Israel’s control over the territories and the settlements there illegal under international law.<sup>38</sup> One of the main goals was to also include the Palestinians in the peace process.<sup>39</sup>

Besides, the Venice Declaration is often seen to be about developing a European common foreign policy and the intention of the EU to become a bigger player next to the US.<sup>40</sup> European countries, and later the EU, have often been overshadowed by American involvement.<sup>41</sup> Although Europe lacked capacity to directly influence the conflict, it helped establish a normative framing for its resolution. Europe wanted to create peace and stability which would also create opportunities for regional economic development and prosperity for the Middle East.<sup>42</sup>

The declaration was not well-received by Israel.<sup>43</sup> The growing distrust of Israel due the declaration did not advance Europe’s role in the peace process. Israel had a more positive approach towards the far more pro-Israeli US, which is differently than the EC, regarded as its main ally.<sup>44</sup>

In the Venice Declaration, there was no reference to clear existential threats for Europe. However, it was said that it ‘agreed that growing tensions affecting this region constitute a serious danger and render a comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict more necessary

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 269.

<sup>37</sup> European Council, “Venice Declaration,” June 13, 1980.

<sup>38</sup> Del Sarto, “Stuck in the Logic of Oslo: Europe and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” 379.

<sup>39</sup> European Council, “Venice Declaration,” June 13, 1980.

<sup>40</sup> Peters, “Europe and the Israel–Palestinian Peace Process: The Urgency of Now,” 513.

<sup>41</sup> Anders Persson, “Introduction: The Occupation at 50: Eu-Israel/Palestine Relations,” *Middle East Critique* 27, no. 4, 317.

<sup>42</sup> Peters, “Europe and the Israel–Palestinian Peace Process: The Urgency of Now,” 515.

<sup>43</sup> Haim Yacobi and David Newman, “The EU and the Israel-Palestine Conflict,” in *The European Union and Border Conflicts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 182.

<sup>44</sup> Yacobi and Newman, “The EU and the Israel-Palestine Conflict,” 201.

and pressing than ever.’ The ‘threat’, which is not necessarily an existential threat, consists of the ever-growing tensions between Israel and Palestine. The main objective of the EC was to settle the conflict in the Middle East. The declaration stressed the obstacles to achieve the main goals, such as that ‘they are deeply convinced that the Israeli settlements constitute a serious obstacle to the peace process in the Middle East’.

Despite the danger being stressed in the Venice declaration, it cannot be said that there was a speech act done to frame the situation in terms of a security issue. There was no clear existential threat mentioned which would acquire any extreme measures. The main objectives of the EC seemed to be ‘the recognition and implementation of the two principles universally accepted by the international community’ and rights for the Palestinians.<sup>45</sup> The European approach in the Venice Declaration seemed to be more about implementing European norms than about security. This confirms that the EU was mainly focusing on establishing its own position instead of having the capacity to directly influence the conflict.<sup>46</sup>

### Oslo Accords

The Oslo Accords in 1993 and the following Oslo peace process led to a change in the role of Europe. The negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) during the Oslo Accords set up a framework for the gradual withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Occupied Territories and the strengthening of Palestinians self-rule there. Although it was not mentioned in the agreements, the international community, including the EU, saw a two-state solution as the ultimate goals of the peace process.<sup>47</sup> The EU became the main financier to the Palestinians to commit to the long-term development of the Palestinian economy.<sup>48</sup> Thereby, the EU signed a new trade agreement with Israel and their political relation became less tense. However, the better relationship with Israel did not lead to any capacity to affect the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The EU was still marginalized from the political process by the US and Israel.<sup>49</sup>

In the EU documents on the Oslo Accords, published in 1993, the EU stressed its support for the Middle East Peace Process.<sup>50</sup> It is also emphasized how the EU was the largest financial contributor to the Occupied Territories with its aid to the Palestinian Authority. In a

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<sup>45</sup> European Council, “Venice Declaration,” June 13, 1980.

<sup>46</sup> Peters, “Europe and the Israel–Palestinian Peace Process: The Urgency of Now,” 515.

<sup>47</sup> Del Sarto, “Stuck in the Logic of Oslo: Europe and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” 377.

<sup>48</sup> Persson, “Introduction: The Occupation at 50: Eu-Israel/Palestine Relations,” 318.

<sup>49</sup> Peters, “Europe and the Israel–Palestinian Peace Process: The Urgency of Now,” 515.

<sup>50</sup> Council of the European Union, “EPC Statement on the Middle East Peace Process Concerning the Israeli-Palestinian Agreement,” August 31, 1993.

statement on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September, the EU reiterated its commitment to a comprehensive peace and hoped that progress would be accomplished in future economic cooperation.<sup>51</sup> In a Council Decision about the Middle East Peace Process in 1994 it was written again that the EU would ‘consider additional ways in which it might contribute towards the [economic] development of the region’.<sup>52</sup> Through the economic commitment, Europe acquired a direct and material interest in the peace process.<sup>53</sup>

Furthermore, in the Council Decision in 1994 the EU emphasized to encourage all parties to support the peace process and achieve a strengthening of democracy and respect for human rights.<sup>54</sup> The main EU role in the peace process was still protecting the Palestinians by EU funding.<sup>55</sup>

Again, it is hard to apply the securitization framework on the EU documents concerning the Oslo Accords and the years after that. The EU statements about the Oslo Accords were mainly about the financial support for the Palestinians and the importance for peace for both Israel and Palestine. It was impossible to discern a referent object being existentially threatened. There was no security issue for Europe in this case, thus the EU felt no need to take extraordinary measures. This automatically meant that there is was no speech act used since there is no security issue.

The main self-interest for the EU in this case was about the economic cooperation with the region, mostly with Israel. Secondly, it seemed to be an opportunity for the EU to define itself as an important player in the peace process. It stressed the opportunity to reiterate their total support for the Middle East peace process and its ‘readiness to participate in further international arrangements arising in connection with implementation of the agreement’.<sup>56</sup> The statements emphasized the importance of the EU’s financial aid to the Palestinians in order to achieve peace on the Middle East.

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<sup>51</sup> Council of the European Union, “EPC Statement Supporting the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements,” September 13, 1993.

<sup>52</sup> European Union, “Council Joint Action in Support of the Middle East Peace Process,” April 19, 1994.

<sup>53</sup> Peters, “Europe and the Israel–Palestinian Peace Process: The Urgency of Now,” 515.

<sup>54</sup> European Union, “Council Joint Action in Support of the Middle East Peace Process”.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Council of the European Union, “EPC Statement on the Middle East Peace Process Concerning the Israeli-Palestinian Agreement”; Council of the European Union, “EPC Statement Supporting the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements.”

## Barcelona Process

In 1995 the EU launched the Barcelona Process (BP) to redefine the EU relations with the Mediterranean states and to develop a new framework for peaceful and cooperative relations.<sup>57</sup> Besides economic partnership and partnership in social, cultural and human affairs, the political and security partnership was an important part of the BP.<sup>58</sup> The EU envisioned to create a ‘stability pact’ to create more security in the region for better economic development and trade relations. This would, again, complement the EU’s role in the peace process.<sup>59</sup>

The first objective was to create a zone of peace, stability and security in the Mediterranean. This required a strengthening of democracy, respect for human rights and sustainable and balanced economic and social development. However, it is remarkable how the BP showed that security got a bigger role than before. For instance, there were several mentions that one of the resolutions should be ‘combating illegal immigration, terrorism, drug trafficking, international crime and corruption’ and ‘eliminate weapons of mass destruction’. It is stated that fighting terrorism is a priority for all the parties.<sup>60</sup> The European approach towards the Middle East became less about peace for the people living there and more about the risks for stability in the region and in Europe itself. Perhaps Europe became the referent object which was in existential danger of being influenced by for example terrorism, drugs trafficking and crime which could spill over from the Mediterranean. This could mean problems for the European security but also for economic relations. In the BP document of 1980, it was literally mentioned that ‘security-building measures’ could be taken for the long-term possibility of a Euro-Mediterranean pact.<sup>61</sup> This could be seen as a speech act that brings ‘security’ into the approach towards the region. It is the question if ‘security-building measures’ are more extreme measures than normal. The statements by the EU emphasized that ‘security’ is the condition for the economic and social partnerships to succeed.

In the years after the BP, the decision of the Israeli Government to start building homes for Jewish residents in East Jerusalem brought the peace process to a breakdown. Even though European officials stressed that the BP and the Middle East peace process were not linked, this eventually led to the failing of the BP.<sup>62</sup> The European Commission mentioned in 1998 how ‘most importantly for the EU, the crisis [among other things the Israeli-Palestinian conflict]

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<sup>57</sup> Harpaz and Shamis, “Normative Power Europe and the State of Israel: An Illegitimate EUtopia,” 586.

<sup>58</sup> European Union, “Barcelona Declaration. Adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference,” 27-28/11/95.

<sup>59</sup> Rory Miller, “Troubled Neighbours: The EU and Israel,” 644.

<sup>60</sup> European Union, “Barcelona Declaration. Adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference,” 27-28/11/95.

<sup>61</sup> European Union, “Barcelona Declaration. Adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference.”

<sup>62</sup> Peters, “Europe and the Israel–Palestinian Peace Process: The Urgency of Now,” 517-518.

threatens the Barcelona process'.<sup>63</sup> In 2000 European Commissioner for External Policies, Christopher F. Patten, stressed again how the EU needed to deepen the dialogue with the Middle East in such issues as drugs, terrorism, conflict prevention and human rights.<sup>64</sup> This shows how the economic and social relations with both Israel and Palestine were inevitably intertwined with the conflict and therefore also with security.

## Events after 2000

### Al-Aqsa intifada

In 2000 the Oslo peace process collapsed and the al-Aqsa *intifada* broke out which led to an escalation of violence.<sup>65</sup> The assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin, mounting Palestinian terror attacks against Israeli targets and the election of Benjamin Netanyahu severely strained the peace process.<sup>66</sup> The EU was unwilling to accept the failure of the Oslo process because of fear to lose its new-found political power.<sup>67</sup> During the years after the Oslo Accords, the EU not only developed an economical but also a political stance on the conflict.<sup>68</sup>

In 2001 Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten stressed in a speech on the situation in the Middle East that the EU urged to play a stronger part in the region and the resolution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.<sup>69</sup> In a meeting in 2001 of the EU Association Council it was stated that it 'is particularly concerned with human rights and other international law violations occurring in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.'<sup>70</sup> This made the EU also focus more on the Israeli settlement building in the Occupied Territories that were seen as illegal under international law.<sup>71</sup> Despite the improving economic ties between Israel and the EU, there was a growing distrust between the two sides while the prospects for reaching a peace deal according to the principles of the Oslo Accords became almost zero.<sup>72</sup>

The statements done between 2000 and 2005 showed the European support for the

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<sup>63</sup> European Commission, "The Role of the European Union in the Middle East Peace Process and Its Future Assistance" (Brussels, January 16, 1998).

<sup>64</sup> European Union, Council for Foreign Relations, "Speech from Christopher F. Patten. The European Union's External Policy and the Mediterranean: The Case for Israel.," April 5, 2000.

<sup>65</sup> Miller, "Troubled Neighbours: The EU and Israel," 644.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Yacobi and Newman, "The EU and the Israel-Palestine Conflict," 183.

<sup>69</sup> European Commission, "Speech Made By EU Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten at the European Parliament on the Situation in the Middle East and on the Rules of Origin Dispute," May 16, 2001.

<sup>70</sup> European Union, "Declaration of the European Union Following the Second Meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council" (Brussels, November 20, 2001).

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 377.

Palestinian people to achieve freedom and security. This support was mainly in the form of substantial economic contribution.<sup>73</sup> The EU became PA's most steadfast international ally which was highly appreciated by the Palestinians and the wider Arab world.<sup>74</sup> The idea that human rights, democratization and rule of law should be included in EU foreign policies was still present. In a speech on the launch of its new Neighborhood Policy in 2003 (ENP), EU Enlargement Commissioner, Günter Verheugen stated that the EU had the intention to build a relationship with their neighbors based on these values with the aim for stability, security and prosperity.<sup>75</sup>

However, the main goal of applying these European values was to achieve regional stability and strengthen cooperation. It could be said that the policies became more based on European security. Mostly the escalation of terrorism in the region was seen as an existential threat to Europe as the referent object, and as an extension, a threat to its democracy and citizens. A new important goal became the eradication of the root causes of terrorism which endangered the international anti-terror coalition in response to the 11 September terrorist attacks.<sup>76</sup>

It is apparent that the EU's goal during the second *intifada* was to look for a peace solution to the benefit of the people of the region but also sought to maintain international peace and stability.<sup>77</sup> The EU might have used speech act here to speak in terms of risks and security to emphasize the urgency of the situation. It is emphasized that the 'rising violence is bringing added suffering and death to both the Israeli and the Palestinian people and putting at risk security in the region and beyond'.<sup>78</sup> It is questionable though if the speech act was perhaps also used for other European interests. For example, the EU has interests in keeping the strong trade partnership with Israel which also requires stability in the region. The meetings about the relation between the EU and Israel showed an increase in economic cooperation. With the

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<sup>73</sup> European Council, "European Council Declaration on the Middle East Calling for an Immediate Cessation of All Acts of Violence," March 15, 2002; European Council, "European Council Declaration on the Middle East," December 14, 2001; Commission of the European Communities, "Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. EU-Palestinian Cooperation beyond Disengagement - towards a Two-State Solution." (Brussels, October 5, 2005).

<sup>74</sup> Miller, "Troubled Neighbours: The EU and Israel," 647.

<sup>75</sup> European Commission, "Extracts of Speech by EU Enlargement Commissioner, Günter Verheugen, on the Implications of the Fifth Enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy on Israel" (Jerusalem, June 15, 2003).

<sup>76</sup> European Union, "Declaration of the European Union Following the Second Meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council"; European Council, "European Council Declaration on the Middle East Calling for an Immediate Cessation of All Acts of Violence".

<sup>77</sup> European Council, "European Council Declaration on the Middle East Calling for an Immediate Implementation of the Roadmap and Welcoming the Appointment of Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas" (Brussels, March 20, 2003).

<sup>78</sup> European Union, "Statement of the European Union Following the Fourth Meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council" (Brussels, November 17, 2003).

bilateral relation the EU hoped for more regional cooperation ‘in the context of the European Neighborhood Policy between the PA, Israel and Jordan’.<sup>79</sup>

### Hamas election

January 2006 Hamas won the legislative Palestinian elections in Gaza. The European support of the Palestinians became a more critical issue following the elections. It strongly disapproved Hamas’ violence, terrorism and its rejection of Israel’s right to exist. The EU adopted the Bush administration’s stance of holding the PA accountable for its failure to neutralize Hamas in Gaza and the organization’s terror attacks against Israel. The EU designated Hamas as a terrorist organization in 2003.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, Europe continued to support the politically weak Palestinian Authority, which currently lacks any democratic legitimacy and rules largely over small enclaves in the West Bank.<sup>81</sup>

The EU saw the elections in Gaza in 2006 as positive development for the region and as a demonstration of the commitment of the Palestinian people to democracy. However, the election of Hamas was seen as a ‘profound change and radicalization of the political arena in Palestine, [which is] primarily an expression of the Palestinian people’s desire for thorough reform’.<sup>82</sup> Thus, again the human rights for the Palestinians, a two-state solution and the implementation of democracy norms were important to the EU. It expressed its concerns over the humanitarian and economic situation in the Palestinian territories and the urgency of guaranteeing the flow of aid through humanitarian agencies.<sup>83</sup>

However, the European Council also underlined in 2006 that violence and terror are incompatible with democratic processes.<sup>84</sup> It talked in terms of security, mostly for the people in Gaza and the West Bank. It repeatedly asked for Hamas to renounce violence, to recognize Israel’s right to exist, and to disarm.<sup>85</sup> It called on the Palestinian Authority to ‘take action to

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<sup>79</sup> Commission of the European Communities, “Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Eu-Palestinian Cooperation beyond Disengagement - towards a Two-State Solution.” (Brussels, October 5, 2005).

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 652.

<sup>81</sup> Del Sarto, “Stuck in the Logic of Oslo: Europe and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” 385.

<sup>82</sup> European Parliament, “Results of the Elections in Palestine and Situation in the Middle East, and the Council’s Decision Not to Publish the Report on East Jerusalem,” January 2006.

<sup>83</sup> European Union, “Crisis in the Palestinian Territories. European Parliament Resolution on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Palestinian Territories and the Role of the EU” (Official Journal of the European Union, June 1, 2006).

<sup>84</sup> European Council, “Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council Following Hamas’ Election Victory” (Brussels: General Affairs and External Relations, January 30, 2006).

<sup>85</sup> European Council, “Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council Following Hamas’ Election Victory” (Brussels: General Affairs and External Relations, January 30, 2006); European Council, “European Council Conclusions Calling the Hamas-Led Palestinian Government to Meet the Quartet Principles and Establishing a New Temporary International Mechanism to Channel Assistance to the Palestinian People” (Brussels, June 15, 2006).



improve security and prevent terrorist attacks on Israel, including through the disarmament of groups engaged in violence and terror'.<sup>86</sup> Both the violence and terror from Hamas and the actions from Israel, like the settlements, construction of the barrier and activities in East Jerusalem, were seen as threatening to the prospects of a two-state solution.

The Commission of the European Communities also stressed later in 2006 how the crisis resulting from the formation of the Hamas-led Government retarded any process with for example the European Neighborhood Policy, which had economic interests. It said that the agenda was dominated by humanitarian and welfare needs.<sup>87</sup>

To conclude, the EU did approach the Hamas election in terms of security, but this was mostly security for the Palestinian people. The documents about the Hamas election did not show fears from Europe that this event would threaten Europe itself. These documents mostly showed concerns regarding the peace solution, the European Neighborhood Policy and safety for the Palestinian and Israeli citizens. Even though terrorism was mentioned again in these documents, it did not implicate that this would be an existential threat to Europe.

#### EU Council meeting Israeli settlements

The EU is often impeached to lack any concrete action to halt the expansions of the settlements in the Territories, which the EU sees as illegal under international law. The most glaring development since the failing of the Oslo process has been Israel's ever-increasing settlements and the control over Palestinians and their land.<sup>88</sup> According to Harpaz and Shamis the June 2009 EU External Relations Council Meeting showed the failing of Europe as Normative Power. This meeting was about the stance of the EU on the conflict and its concerns about Israel's settlement activities. Harpaz and Shamis write that this meeting in 2009 showed 'the lack of any concrete EU action against Israel which would support the EU's stirring normative proclamations [...]. Instead of offering Israel the choice between a carrot and a stick, it spoke, yet again, hesitantly.'<sup>89</sup>

The Council meeting about the settlements didn't show a strong sense of securitization

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<sup>86</sup> Commission of the European Communities, "Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy - ENP Progress Report - Palestinian Authority" (Brussels, December 4, 2006).

<sup>87</sup> Commission of the European Communities, "Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Strengthening the European Neighborhood Policy - ENP Progress Report - Palestinian Authority" (Brussels, December 4, 2006).

<sup>88</sup> Del Sarto, "Stuck in the Logic of Oslo: Europe and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," 380.

<sup>89</sup> Harpaz and Shamis, "Normative Power Europe and the State of Israel: An Illegitimate Eutopia," 602.

on the EU's stance. The Council confirmed its view that a two-state solution constitutes a fundamental European interest. It urges

the government of Israel to immediately end settlement activities, including in East Jerusalem and including natural growth [...]. It reiterated that settlements are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace.

They stressed that violence against civilians must stop, and that international humanitarian law must be respected; reiterating the human rights paradigm and security for the Palestinians. The EU stressed its efforts to help the Palestinian Authority to develop an effective security sector and to counter terrorism.<sup>90</sup> It could not be said that the EU showed an existential threat to itself. There was no present speech act done to convince others of the need for exceptional measures. This also corresponded with Harpaz and Shamis argument that the EU lacks any concrete actions against Israel. Del sarto writes about the EU policies towards the settlement activities that they 'have been operating within parameters that Israel defines' and that the EU assumed that Israel and the PA would eventually resume negotiations on a meaningful two-state solution and that Israeli settlement expansion would come to a halt'.<sup>91</sup>

### Operation Protective Edge

In 2014 Israel launched the third Gaza war against Hamas, Operation Protective Edge (OPE), which was followed by indiscriminate rocket fires from the Gaza Strip. The conflict was one of the deadliest between Palestinians and Israelis in decades. The EU responded to the conflict with increasing its humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip where 'a humanitarian crisis is becoming more dramatic by the day'. The violence between Hamas and Israel resituated in hundreds of civilian casualties and displaced people in Gaza. The European Commission said in a press release about Gaza in 2014 to refocus on its humanitarian assistance to those people.<sup>92</sup> It stated in 2015 that the situation in 2014, with its armed conflict and hostilities, was a challenge for the whole Middle East.

Again, the EU showed its normative intentions in the region. And that the implementation of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, were essential for

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<sup>90</sup> European Council, "Press Release. General Affairs and External Relations. Middle East Council Conclusions" (Luxembourg, June 15, 2009).

<sup>91</sup> Del Sarto, "Stuck in the Logic of Oslo: Europe and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," 385.

<sup>92</sup> European Commission, "Press Release. EU Increases Humanitarian Aid in Gaza in Response to Escalating Crisis" (Brussels, July 25, 2014).

the ultimate goal, the two-state solution. It was emphasized how the EU would monitor the UN investigations of violations of international law by Israel. It was stated that the State of Israel is based on the same norms as Europe, but that implementing these common values continued to pose a challenge. Particularly when it came to respect for human rights in the Occupied Territories and in relation to minorities.<sup>93</sup> Europe affirmed Israel's right to defend itself against the rocket attacks by Hamas, but it also remained critical of Israel's conduct during the wars on the Gaza strip.<sup>94</sup>

Thus, on one hand there was the emphasis on humanitarian help and normative influence again. However, on the other hand, the terrorist activities of the Palestinians were also stressed. The EU 'condemned the indiscriminate firing of rockets into Israel by Hamas and militant groups in the Gaza Strip and reiterated that all terrorist groups must disarm'. The analyzed documents showed a certain kind of urgency for fighting terrorism and participation in Israel's fight against terrorism. This terrorism could be an existential threat for Europe (the referent object). In comparison to the previous events, the EU seemed to focus more on terrorism in the years after Operation Protective Edge. It is likely that this was a result of the increased terrorist attacks in Europe. Especially in 2015 the threat of terrorism increased significantly in Europe.<sup>95</sup> But, did this in turn give Europe a reason to allow Israel to use exceptional measures against the Palestinians? In the documents it became clear that the EU was aware of the humanitarian crisis for the people in Gaza, however, it still let Israel continue to fight by framing its indignation about Israel's disproportional violence in mild terms.

Thereby, the trade, economic and scientific cooperation with Israel is cited again. Operation Protective Edge led to a moderation in economic activity which makes solving the conflict a more urgent interest for Europe. It could be questioned if Europe used speech act to talk about the situation in terms of security to solve the conflict for its own economic interest.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> European Commission, "Joint Staff Working Document. Implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy in Israel Progress in 2014 and Recommendations for Actions Accompanying the Document." (Brussels, March 25, 2015).

<sup>94</sup> Del Sarto, "Stuck in the Logic of Oslo: Europe and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," 380.

<sup>95</sup> Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst. "Tijdslijn van Aanslagen in Het Westen. Chronologisch Overzicht van Jihadistische Aanslagen in de Periode 2004 - Heden," May 2019.

<sup>96</sup> European Commission, "Joint Staff Working Document. Implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy in Israel Progress in 2014 and Recommendations for Actions Accompanying the Document." (Brussels, March 25, 2015).

## Findings of the analysis

Based on the analysis of the EU documents before 2000, it can be concluded that the EU/EC did not play a big role in the conflict in this period. It mainly tried to create its own identity and to become a more significant player in world politics. This was particularly expressed by the EU's attempts to implement its norms to the conflict, such as achieving strengthening of democracy and respect for human rights. In this period of time the EU mostly spoke in terms of rights for the Palestinians, a two-state solution and its effort to help in the form of EU funding to Palestine. It was not possible to apply the securitization theory on the documents of this period since the EU did not speak in terms of its own security.

During the Barcelona Process (BP) a shift towards a more security-based policy could be noticed. Besides the normative statements about the conflict, the risks for European security were mentioned several times. Where the EU did not use speech act to talk in terms of security in the documents about the Venice Declaration and the Oslo Accords, this could be observed in the documents about the BP. It was stated that fighting terrorism was a priority for all the parties and that 'security-building measures' were needed. This could indicate an attempt to securitization to use more extreme measures. The question remains what these measures would be and if Europe was capable of using concrete action to achieve this.

Another outcome of the analysis was the extent in which European economic interests played a role in the policy documents. During all three events, the fact that Europe was the main financial contributor to the Palestinians was stressed. However, also the economic cooperation with Israel seemed to be a significant interest of Europe. Especially in the BP, it became clear that the EU saw a certain urgency in solving the conflict to create more stability for economic relations with Israel.

The results of the analysis of the documents after 2000 indicated that the EU policy changed as a result of the collapse of the Oslo Accords and the increased violence. However, it can be noted that the change already started in the years of the BP. The documents from the second *intifada* and Operation Protective Edge showed a shift to a more security-based policy. Especially the increased violence and terrorism were presented as a (existential) threat to the region but, more than before, also to Europe and its democracy and citizens. It could be concluded that the EU used speech act to stress the urgency of fighting terrorism to work towards a two-state solution.

However, on the other hand, the documents about the Hamas election and the meeting

about Israel's settlements showed a different attitude. The EU did not speak in terms of security for Europe but about the security and rights of Palestinians. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the violation of international law by Israel were stressed. These documents showed the human rights approach comparable to the documents about the Venice Declaration and the Oslo Accords. The (financial) support for the Palestinians and the criticism of Israel's policies were emphasized again. The EU showed to still have normative intentions in the region. However, there is still no concrete proof of how the EU lived up to these intentions. It is for example very contradictory how the EU stressed the humanitarian crisis for people in Gaza, but still let Israel continue to fight at the same time.

Thereby, the EU again underscored its interests in keeping the strong trade partnership with Israel which also required stability in the region. The EU showed how the crisis was threatening for the economic activities in the region.

## Conclusion

This research aimed to look deeper into the relation between the EU and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By analyzing EU publications concerning the conflict between 1980 and recently, this thesis aimed to identify changes in the EU policies. The main goal was to test the theory from Joel Peters that the European narrative shifted from one in terms of justice, rights and opportunity for the Palestinians to one of risk and danger to its own strategic concerns. By doing this, it aimed to answer the question if securitization played a role in the changed policy of the European Union relative to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The results of the analysis indicated that security played a role in the EU policies towards the conflict. It is questionable though if the securitization process that Peters mentions, was happening.

The findings of the analysis of the documents before 2000 matched with Peters argument that the European approach was mainly normative. This research showed that the EU played a small role in the conflict and that it tried to create its identity as a more important player by placing its normative frame on the conflict. In the period between the Venice Declaration and the Oslo Accords, the EU focused on the rights of the Palestinians and its financial help.

The shift towards a more security-based policy that Peters initially emphasized in 2000, began during the years around the Barcelona Process. Especially during the violent years of the

second *intifada* between 2000-2005 and the situation during Operation Protective Edge, the EU emphasized threats to European security. It could be concluded that the EU used speech act to stress the urgency for fighting terrorism and participation in Israel's fight against terrorism to work towards a two-state solution. This supports Peters argument that the EU had intentions to securitize the conflict for its own strategic interests. However, it is the questionable if we can speak of a securitization when the outcome of these intentions is not successful. According to the Copenhagen School a securitization is successful when the perpetrator of the speech act, in this case the EU, has convinced a relevant audience of an existential threat adequate to have substantial political effects that requires exceptional measures.<sup>97</sup> Since the EU is often accused of its lack of concrete action it never showed attempts to use exceptional measures to solve the security issue. Therefore, it is important to question if we can speak of a securitization. This conclusion can be substantiated with a survey done by Pew Research Centre on the worldwide views on the Middle East conflict. This research shows that in many countries in Western Europe and elsewhere, people sympathize more with the Palestinians than with Israel.<sup>98</sup> The increasing criticism on Israel and growing sympathy for the Palestinians, show that people in Europe don't see the Palestinians as a security threat. A logical reason for that could be that Hamas never carried out terrorist attacks in Europe. Thus, in most European countries, people are not convinced of the existential threat at all, which makes the securitization in that case unsuccessful.

Secondly, Peters' theory suggested that the normative attitude of Europe disappeared when their policy became more security based. However, based on the analysis of the documents after 2000, it could be concluded that the EU still used its normative framing in its policies towards the conflict. The documents about the Hamas Election and the meeting about the settlements in 2009 showed that the EU still had normative intentions. The (financial) support for the Palestinians and the criticism of Israel's policies were emphasized again. This showed, opposed to what Peters suggested, that normative and security-based policy can be intertwined. However, the lack of Europe's concrete action in the conflict perhaps implies that Europe might be failing as a Normative Power because it is not able to execute what it promises.

Thirdly, a remarkable finding of this research was that the EU's economic interests in the region were very present in its policies. The EU underscored several times its interests in keeping the strong trade partnership with Israel which also requires stability in the region. The

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<sup>97</sup> Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*.

<sup>98</sup> Pew Research Centre, "Global Unease with Major World Powers. Rising Environmental Concern in 47-Nation Survey. Chapter 5. Views of the Middle East Conflict," June 2007.

EU showed how the conflict is threatening for economic activities in the region. The example of how the EU stressed the humanitarian crisis for people in Gaza but let Israel continue to fight at the same time, might be showing that the EU's interests were perhaps not based on security or norms but on economic advantages. The fact that the EU did not live up to its normative based and security-based policies perhaps comes from the need for the EU to maintain its positive economic relation with Israel. It could also be that the EU tried to securitize the conflict to make it more urgent. Solving the conflict as soon as possible is beneficial for the economic cooperation.

Although, the results of this thesis are interesting, the size of this research was too small to make general statements about this topic. Because of the limited access to sources and the size of this thesis, especially the arguments about the normative stance of Europe and the role of its economic interests were incomplete. This research showed that security played a role in the EU policies towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but further research is needed to determine how these relations played out in economic processes between them.

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