The Political Purpose of Remembering

Collective Memory in EU-Israeli Foreign Policy 2009-2021

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International Relations in Historical Perspective

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Abstract

This thesis explores what role collective memory played in the ''special relationship'' between Israel and the European Union during Benjamin Netanyahu's second administration as Prime Minister (2009 to 2021). While extensive scholarship explored the role of collective memory in foreign policy between states, its role in multilateral institutions remains underexamined. During the second Netanyahu administration, the EU-Israeli relationship shifted interestingly in its levels of communication. Therefore, this timeframe offers the perfect case study to analyse what role collective memory played in different levels of foreign policy. Through a critical discourse analysis of 393 speeches, statements, and declarations, this study investigated who invoked the past when, how they did so and, most importantly, why. The analysis revealed that both the EU and Israel predominantly referred to the past positively for explaining, legitimising, justifying and mobilising purposes. Interestingly, their use of the past varied throughout different socio-political and geo-political contexts. Additionally, Israel demonstrated greater flexibility in which pasts it referred to than the EU and did so for legitimising and justifying purposes rather than mobilising ends. These findings enhance our understanding of collective memory beyond a state-centric perspective and uncover new insights into the special EU-Israeli relationship.

Keywords: Collective Memory, Identity, Foreign Policy, European Union, Israel

"Our relations here and now are a dialogue between two miracles."

Israeli President Shimon Peres to the European Parliament, 2013

List of Abbreviations

- **AA**: Association Agreement
- **CDA**: Critical Discourse Analysis
- **EC**: European Community
- **EEAS**: European External Action Service
- **EEC**: European Economic Community
- **ECSC**: European Coal and Steel Community
- **ENP**: European Neighbourhood Policy
- **EP**: European Parliament
- **EPC**: European Political Cooperation
- **EU**: European Union.
- **HRVP**: High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission
- **MENA**: Middle East and North Africa
- **OPEC**: Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
- **PLO**: Palestinian Liberation Organisation
- **UN**: United Nations
- **US**: United States

Introduction

"Israel's history is part of European history, and our fates are intertwined."

Jerzy Buzek to the Knesset, 15 June 2011

On 15 June 2011, European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek spoke these words in his speech to the Knesset.[1] In this speech, he linked the EU and Israel historically to one another by recalling the memories of the Holocaust. The Knesset did not seem surprised at this endeavour. On the contrary, their prime minister had made a similar argument a few months earlier in his address to the European Friends of Israel Conference, going even further back to ancient Greece.[2]

Politicians referring to the past is not an uncommon phenomenon. In 2015, President Barack Obama remembered Martin Luther King and connected his dream to stress the need for more progress in the country.[3] In 2019, German Chancellor Angela Merkel used the memory of the concentration and destruction camps in Auschwitz-Birkenau to draw a clear contrast between the past and the present. In doing so, she justified the power of the liberal and free world in the fight against antisemitism and discrimination.[4]

But why do politicians refer to the past? What role do historical references play in foreign affairs? The activity of a political entity of remembering events as a collective, representing and interpreting the past in a particular way is known as collective memory.[5] This seems rather contradictory. To memorise a particular historical event seems entirely personal, linked to one's own experiences and perspectives. Maurice Halbwachs argued that this is exactly what makes a memory inherently collective. Every memory is marked by the influences

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[1] Jerzy Buzek, "Buzek's full speech to the Knesset," 15 June 2011, European Parliament, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/former_ep_presidents/president-buzek/en/press/speeches/sp-2011/sp-2011-June/speeches-2011-June-1.html; The Knesset is the Israeli Parliament.

[2] Benjamin Netanyahu, "Address by PM Netanyahu to the European Friends of Israel Conference," 7 February 2011, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/news/speechfriends070211/en/sitecollectiondocuments_pmo_32communication_speeches_2011_02_friendseng070211.doc

[3] Barack Obama, "Presidential Proclamation: Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Holiday, 2015", 16 January 2015, Obama White House Archive, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/16/presidential-proclamation-martin-luther-king-jr-federal-holiday-2015.

[4] Melissa Eddy, "Visiting Auschwitz, Merkel Warns Against Danger to Liberal Democracy," *The New York Times,* December 6, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/06/world/europe/angela-merkel-auschwitz.html.

[5] Maria Mälksoo, "Politics of Memory: A conceptual introduction," in *Handbook on the Politics of Memory*, ed. Maria Mälksoo (Copenhagen: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2023), 1-16.

of the stories told within society. This sets collective memory apart from history. Instead of mapping a development based on facts derived from primary sources, one historical event can know many different collective memories, both positive and negative.[6] How a political entity remembers a specific event depends on its identity. Different political entities can thus have different memories of the same historic affair.[7]

As Kathrin Bachleitner wrote, collective memory can be used as a mirror and a lamp in international relations. On the one hand, collective memory is a mirror reflecting a state's identity onto the world. On the other hand, it is a lamp shining a light on the path to follow in the future.[8] Political actors can use positive or negative memories of the past in their foreign policy to explain situations, justify actions, or mobilise other actors.[9]

However, thus far, scholarship focussing on the role of collective memory in foreign affairs is primarily state-focused. But what role can it play in multilateral institutions where the identity and common history are much less evident? This thesis contributes to the field of collective memory by analysing its role in foreign policy between a state and a multilateral institution. In doing so, this thesis supplements existing scholarship by exploring to what extent multilateral institutions can utilise their past for foreign policy purposes, and in which ways their abilities might differ from a state.

The EU-Israeli relationship offers the perfect case study to do so. Israel was one of the first countries to become associated with the Union, and scholarship has identified their relation as historically close and "special"[10]. Although multiple scholars already indicated that Israel frequently referenced the past in its foreign policy,[11] a comprehensive two-way analysis seems to be missing.

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[6] Maurice Halbwachs and Mark Elchardus, *Maurice Halbwachs, het Collectief Geheugen: met in bijlage, Het collectief geheugen van de musici*, (Amersfoort: Uitgeverij Acco, 1991), 10-15.
[7] Kathrin Bachleitner, *Collective Memory in International Relations,* (Oxford: Oxford University Pressbooks, 2021), 65-86.
[8] Bachleitner, *Collective Memory in International Relations*, 35.
[9] Lina Klymenko, "The Role of Historical Narratives in Ukraine's Policy towards the EU and Russia," in *Historical Memory and Foreign Policy*, ed. Lina Klymenko and Marco Siddi (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 31-47.
[10] Raffaella Del Sarto, "Israel and the European Union: Between Rhetoric and Reality", in *Israel and the World Powers: Diplomatic Alliances and International Relations Beyond the Middle East,* ed. Colin Shindler (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 155-186; Neve Gordon and Sharon Pardo, "Normative Power Europe meets the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Asia European Journal* 13 (2015): 265-274; Sharon Pardo and Joel Peters, *Israel and the European Union: A Documentary History,* (Lexington Books, 2012), 3-4; Sharon Pardo and Joel Peters, *Uneasy Neighbours: Israel and the European Union* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010), 47-68.
[11] Ayre Naor, "Hawks' beaks, doves' feathers: Likud Prime Ministers between Ideology and Reality," *Israel Studies* 10, no. 3 (2005): 154-19; Aluf Benn, "The End of Old Israel: How Netanyahu Has

During Netanyahu's second administration as prime minister, ranging from March 2009 until June 2021, that policy shifted interestingly. In the beginning, there was a rather structured political dialogue, determined by the Association Agreement of 1995. However, structured high-level conversation stopped on 24 July 2012, only to be resumed with the new premiership in 2022. In contrast to these years of silence, Netanyahu was also the first prime minister in twenty-two years to visit Brussels in 2017. Although this thesis does not aim to explain these policy shifts, this timeframe provides the opportunity to explore the role of collective memory during both highs and lows in the relationship.

This thesis aims to answer the following question:

How did collective memory play a role in foreign policy between the EU and Israel from 2009 until 2021?

As collective memory in foreign policy is described as an inherently discursive practice, this thesis will conduct a critical discourse analysis of a wide variety of sources. In doing so, it will explore when politicians referred to the past, who did so, which pasts were invoked, in what manner, and with what particular purpose. This contributes to our understanding of EU-Israeli relations and collective memory's significance within these interactions.

The introduction will continue by outlining the theoretical framework to provide a better understanding of the concept of collective memory. Subsequently, it will critically analyse the existing scholarship to map the field and demonstrate how this thesis contributes to our understanding of EU-Israel relations and the role of collective memory in said relationship. After justifying the chosen methodology, this thesis will chronologically shift between changes in foreign policy communication, analysing the role of collective memory in each timeframe. This chronological approach will contribute to the final claim of this thesis, which argues that the role of collective memory differed not only between the two actors but also shifted throughout the administration.

Transformed the Nation," *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 4 (2016): 16-27; Guy Harpaz, "EU-Israel Relations: Netanyahu's Legacy," *European Foreign Affairs Review* 27, no. 4 (2022): 541-562; Sam Sokol, "The Tension between Historical Memory and Realpolitik in Israel's Foreign Policy." *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 3 (2018): 311-324.

Analytical Framework – Collective Memory and Foreign Policy

Before delving into the analysis of how collective memory played a role in EU-Israel foreign policy, it is important to be on the same page on the concept's meaning and its relevance in international politics. The term collective memory refers to "the active remembering together as a political collective as well as a reference to a set of collective representations of the past".[12] The concept differentiates itself from history in its main purpose. Where history aims to reflect the past as a clear set of facts and data based on primary sources, the concept of collective memory refers to the aim of remembering the past in a particular manner. The latter concept is thus much more fluid and subject to change than the former. Therefore, collective memories of a particular event can differ between different groups and throughout time.[13] As illustrated in the introduction, memory is always inherently collective. Following Maurice Halbwachs, the first scholar to use the term, the activity of remembering the past always takes place within a social context. Therefore, memories are always coloured by the perspectives of the group in which remembrance takes place.[14]

Katherine Bachleitner argues that "Memory is the carrier of identity".[15] As nations are imagined communities, as famously argued by Benedict Anderson, a collective memory creates a sense of continuity in a nation's identity.[16] Through using the past to construct such a continuity, a state identity can refer back to that past in the present, using it both as a manner of presenting itself to the outside world and as a guide for its future policies.[17]

From a constructivist perspective, such an acquired identity plays a crucial role when explaining state behaviour within the international system. Alexander Wendt argues that these identities construct the interests and thus behaviour of actors within the international realm.[18] Following that logic, anyone with a particular identity can thus construct an interest in international relations. Therefore, this argument is also valid for non-state actors such as international organisations like the European Union. Collective memory can be used to reflect

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[12] Mälksoo, "Politics of Memory: A conceptual introduction," 1.
[13] Bachleitner, *Collective Memory in International Relations,* 67.
[14] Halbwachs and Elchardus, *Maurice Halbwachs, het Collectief Geheugen: met in bijlage, Het collectief geheugen van de musici*, 12-13; Bachleitner, *Collective Memory in International Relations,* 67-68.
[15] Bachleitner, *Collective Memory in International Relations,* 23.
[16] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2016), 130-139.
[17] Bachleitner, *Collective Memory in International Relations,* 35.
[18] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992), 391-425.

the EU's identity, to ensure the continuity of its norms and values as an actor, and to serve as an indication of what behaviour is appropriate in its international relations.[19]

What does collective memory look like within international politics? The field of memory politics explores who referenced the past, which past is memorised, in which manner, and what the aims were of using memory within politics. It refers to "the discourses and practices of using the past by various social and political actors for the purposes relevant in the present".[20] So, it is an inherently discursive activity. These discourses can be used ethically positively or ethically negatively. On the one hand, these discourses can be used ethically positively by reflecting on one's own past wrongdoings and opening oneself to new perspectives. This way a state uses memory politics to critically reflect on one's own identity, and explore the different policy options available. On the other hand, memory politics can be used ethically negatively by focusing solely on the politically preferable version of the past. In doing so, the state can present itself very one-sidedly, as either a hero or a victim for example.[21]

These either positive or negative references to the past have two main aims in international politics: explaining one's position or structuring one's political behaviour. First of all, actors can use collective memory in their foreign policy to explain their position. The actor reflects on the past in the present to explain their perspective on the world according to its identity. Secondly, memory politics can be used to structure political behaviour. On the one hand, the past can be used to justify an actor's move. That actor refers to the past to indicate what the 'right' or 'wrong' path of history was, and therefore justify their own decision. On the other hand, an international actor can refer to the 'right' or 'wrong' decision in history to steer another actor into making a particular move. This way, a political actor uses the past to mobilise another state.[22]

Historiography
There exists an extensive body of scholarship on both EU foreign policy towards Israel and Israeli foreign policy toward the EU during Netanyahu's second administration. Broadly, the historiography discusses two main themes. First of all, multiple scholars discuss the inability

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[19] Eric Langenbacher, "Collective Memory as a Factor in Political Culture and International Relations," in *Power and the Past: Collective Memory and International Relations*, ed. Eric Langenbacher and Yossi Shain (Georgetown: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 13-50.
[20] Mälksoo, "Politics of Memory: A conceptual introduction," 2.
[21] Mälksoo, "Politics of Memory: A conceptual introduction," 3-4.
[22] Klymenko, "The Role of Historical Narratives in Ukraine's Policy towards the EU and Russia," 35.

of the EU to produce a coherent foreign policy toward Israel. Secondly, another group of scholars discusses how Israel used the history of the Holocaust strategically in its foreign policy.

When discussing EU foreign policy toward Israel, the scholarship pays particular attention to the political deadlock due to a lack of consensus within the Union. As each EU member state has a different historical connection to the Israeli state, political unity on the matter seems impossible. Peter Malcontent illustrates with his case study on Dutch relations with Israel how complicated national foreign policies toward Israel can be.[23] Because of that lack of unity, many scholars shifted their focus to the relationship between Israel and individual member states. Where Malcontent focussed on the historical relationship between the Dutch and the State of Israel, Lorena De Vita analysed the differences in the relationship between East and West Germany after the Second World War, and Joanna Dyduch and Patrick Müller examined the degree of de-Europeanization of the Polish foreign policy toward Israel.[24]

However, some scholars did explore the complex EU-Israeli relationship. Raffaella del Sarto is one of them. She argues that the broader relationship can be identified as economically strong, but politically strained. Where economic relations improved following the Association Agreement in 1995, political relations remained tense. Where Brussels wanted to link the improved relationship to the Middle East Peace Project, Israel wanted the relationship to stay politically neutral. Del Sarto claims that this triggered a political deadlock.[25]

Instead, Neve Gordon and Sharon Pardo connect that difference between rhetoric and action inherently to the type of power that the EU has. As a normative power that requires consensus for a common foreign policy, the European member states agreed only on matters of norms and values inherent to the European peace project for identification purposes. Condemning Israel within foreign policy is thus possible as long as it is based on such norms and values. As soon as these statements have tangible negative economic consequences for the member states, the widely diverging economic interests of the twenty-seven member states would result in an immediate veto. Therefore, Neve and Gordon claim that statements of condemnation will always be purely discursive.[26]

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[23] Peter Malcontent, "The Netherlands, the EU and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Why The Hague Continues to be One of Israel's Most Faithful European Allies," *European Review of International Studies* 9 (2022): 270-299.

[24] Lorena De Vita, "German-Israeli ties in 2015 and 1965: the difficult special relationship," *International Affairs* 91, no. 4 (2015): 835 – 849; Joanna Dyduch and Patrick Müller, "Populism meets EU Foreign Policy: the De-Europeanization of Poland's Foreign Policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Journal of European Integration* 43, no. 5 (2021): 569-586.

[25] Del Sarto, "Israel and the European Union: Between Rhetoric and Reality", 155-186.

[26] Gordon and Pardo, "Normative Power Europe meets the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," 265-274.

In contrast to Gordon and Pardo, Sinem Akgül-Açıkmeşe and Soli Özel analyse the effectiveness of EU mitigation strategies toward Israel. Whereas the EU is normally able to use such strategies when influencing state behaviour, they argue that they were unable to do so in Israel on two different levels. First of all, on an external level, the EU could not act effectively because of multipolar competition. Both the United States and the Middle East (through signing the Abraham Accords in early 2020) made it increasingly difficult for the Union to get a grip on Israeli policymaking. Secondly, on an internal level, the EU could not effectively use such strategies because of internal fragmentation. On the one hand, similarly to the previous arguments, the Union was unable to align the many different interests and positions of the member states. On the other hand, Akgül-Açıkmeşe and Özel argue that within the institution, diverging opinions between the different EU bodies could not converge. Whereas the EU Council relied on the many different positions of the member states, the European Commission tried to balance both pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian positions, and the European Parliament wanted to become more critical of Israel. All those different opinions and interests led to a political deadlock when trying to create an effective foreign policy.[27]

The second body of scholarship discusses the impact of Netanyahu's administration on Israeli relations with the EU. This scholarship is primarily focused on the increased tensions during his periods in charge. Both Adam Lerner and Dov Waxman illustrate how the Israeli identity has significantly changed since the Eichmann trial in 1961.[28] This public trial of former Nazi officer Adolf Eichmann marked the return of the Holocaust to the Israeli collective memory. Following Waxman, this had a significant impact on the identity of the Israeli state and its subsequent foreign policy. When countries or institutions praised or supported Israel, the Likud Party[29] emphasised the contrast with earlier Jewish generations, illustrating their difference in strength and resilience. However, when countries or institutions criticised Israel or voiced their disagreement, the Likud Party compared these countries with the antisemitic perpetrators in the Second World War.[30]

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[27] Sinem Akgül-Açıkmeşe and Soli Özel, "EU Policy towards the Israel-Palestine Conflict: The Limitations of Mitigation Strategies," *The International Spectator* 59, no. 1 (2024), 59-78.
[28] Adam B. Lerner, *From the Ashes of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 135-173; Dov Waxman, *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity: Defending/Defining the Nation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 15-42.
[29] The Likud Party is a far-right Israeli party of which Netanyahu became the leader in 1993.
[30] Waxman, *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity: Defending/Defining the Nation*, 15-42.

The scholarship focuses especially on the latter. Raffaella del Sarto, Arye Naor, Aluf Benn and Guy Harpaz all illustrate this phenomenon.[31] According to Raffaella Del Sarto, the Israeli foreign policy of the Likud Party after the Venice Declaration in 1980 was coloured by historical analogies to the Second World War, calling Europe inherently anti-Semitic.[32] Ayre Noar illustrates how Netanyahu in 1993 compared the recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination to Czechoslovakia in the Second World War in the Knesset.[33] Following Aluf Benn, Netanyahu called the Oslo Accords concluded in the 1990s, seen as a major success within the Middle East Peace Process, inherently anti-Semitic, followed by stressing the need to prevent a second Holocaust.[34]

Both Sam Sokol and Guy Harpaz argue that this use of Holocaust memories in Israeli foreign policy is a strategic and thoughtful decision made by Israel. Sam Sokol states that Israeli leaders strategically ignored countries' black pages in the Holocaust history when interests were at stake.[35] Harpaz claims that Netanyahu used his rhetoric to delegitimise the EU as a normative power, casting it as inherently anti-Semitic. Additionally, following Harpaz, Netanyahu would support Eurosceptic sentiments within Eastern Europe, which, returning to the first group of scholars, obstructed the possibility of achieving the consensus necessary to construct a coherent foreign policy within the Union.[36]

So, the scholarship on EU foreign policy toward Israel predominantly focusses on the political deadlock in the EU, and does not take the concept of collective memory into account. The dominant narrative on Israeli foreign policy focusses on Netanyahu's negative use of Holocaust memories. Even though both Sokol and Harpaz make an argument about the strategic use of memory by Netanyahu, a comprehensive analysis of the role of collective memory during this timeframe is still missing. This thesis contributes to the existing literature by analysing the role of collective memory in the interaction between the EU and Israel. This new perspective contributes by exploring the EU foreign policy beyond its inefficiency, and by providing a comprehensive analysis of collective memory within Israeli foreign policy during Netanyahu's

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[31] Benn, "The End of Old Israel: How Netanyahu Has Transformed the Nation," 16-27; Del Sarto, "Israel and the European Union: Between Rhetoric and Reality", 155-186; Harpaz, 'EU-Israel Relations: Netanyahu's Legacy,' 1-22; Naor, "Hawks' beaks, doves' feathers: Likud Prime Ministers between Ideology and Reality," 154-19.
[32] Del Sarto, "Israel and the European Union: Between Rhetoric and Reality", 155-186
[33] Naor, "Hawks' beaks, doves' feathers: Likud Prime Ministers between Ideology and Reality," 154-19
[34] Benn, "The End of Old Israel: How Netanyahu Has Transformed the Nation," 16-27
[35] Sokol, "The Tension between Historical Memory and Realpolitik in Israel's Foreign Policy," 311-324.
[36] Harpaz, "EU-Israel Relations: Netanyahu's Legacy," 1-22.

second administration. By analysing the foreign policy as a two-way street, it also contributes to the existing literature on collective memory, as it provides the opportunity to identify similarities and differences between Israel and the EU on referring to the past.

<u>Sources and Methodology</u>

To explore how collective memory played a role in EU-Israeli foreign policy from 31 March 2009 until 13 June 2021, this thesis analyses a wide variety of foreign policy documents between the EU and Israel. The sources that are chosen for analysis follows the 1995 Association Agreement (AA).[37] This agreement, ratified in 2000, stipulates that the political dialogue between the EU and Israel is structured annually on different levels. First of all, on a ministerial level, the Association Council should hold annual meetings. The meeting minutes, press statements and produced documents can be found at the public register of the European Council.[38] Secondly, on senior official level, meetings between representatives of Israel and either the Council Presidency or the Commission President should take place. Because of the high status of these meetings, these meetings are also often followed by press releases, which be found in either the register of the Israeli government, the same register of the Council or the archive of the Commission's European External Action Service (EEAS)[39]. Thirdly, on an expert level, meetings of the eleven different committees and expert groups should also meet annually. However, because of a lower status, it is not likely that these meetings are followed by press conferences. Following the agreement, there should be regular briefings by officials on these consultations, but these documents remain classified. Lastly, the AA stipulates that there should be a political dialogue between the European Parliament (EP) and the Israeli Knesset. Records of these inter-parliamentary meetings can be found in the archives of the EP delegation to Israel.[40]

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[37] Council of Europe, ''EU-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the State of Israel, of the other part, '' *Official Journal* 147 (21 June 2000), 3-171.

[38] European Council, ''Document Register,'' European Council, accessed March 28, 2024, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/public-register/

[39] Government of Israel, ''Ministry of Foreign Affairs,'' Government of Israel, accessed March 28, 2024, https://www.gov.il/en; European External Action Service, ''EEAS Archive,'' European External Action Service, accessed March 28, 2024, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/filter-page/archive_en

[40] European Parliament, ''Delegation for Relations with Israel, 7th Parliamentary Term,'' European Parliament, accessed 28 March, 2024, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/organes/d-il/d-il_7leg_meetinglist.htm; European Parliament, ''Delegation for Relations with Israel, 8th Parliamentary Term,'' European Parliament, accessed 28 March, 2024, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/organes/d-il/d-il_8leg_meetinglist.htm;

However, not all foreign policy between the two actors is stipulated by this agreement. Therefore, this thesis will also analyse sources outside of the previously mentioned framework. Ad hoc meetings between the European Union for the High Representative of External Relations to the EU (HRVP) with both Israeli foreign ministers and the prime ministers are not uncommon. Records of such meetings can be found in the archives of the EEAS.[41] Additionally, high level governance of the EP President, the Council President, and the Commission President can also result in similar ad hoc meetings not reflected in the framework of the AA. Such meetings can be found in the registers and archives of the respective bodies, or the public register of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office.[42] These archives resulted in a total of 393 meeting documents, speeches, and statements usable for this thesis.

This thesis will analyse these sources by conducting a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA analyses discourse as a linguistic tool used by both individuals and institutions and links this rhetoric to the socio-political context.[43] As the analytical framework illustrated, collective memory is inherently a discursive phenomenon. CDA analyses what type of argumentation is used in the foreign policy documents, when this was done, in what manner, and with what specific purpose.[44] This methodology thus offers the perfect opportunity to explore how the discursive concept of collective memory was throughout the different shifts in EU-Israeli foreign policy.

Following this methodology in combination with the analytical framework, this thesis will answer the following four sub-questions:

1. *When were historical references included in EU-Israeli foreign policy?*
2. *By whom were historical references included in EU-Israeli foreign policy?*
3. *How were historical references included in EU-Israeli foreign policy?*

European Parliament, "Delegation for Relations with Israel, 9th Parliamentary Term," European Parliament, accessed 28 March, 2024, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-il/home

[41] European External Action Service, "EEAS Archive," European External Action Service, accessed March 28, 2024, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/filter-page/archive_en

[42] Government of Israel, "Ministry of Foreign Affairs," Government of Israel, accessed March 28, 2024, https://www.gov.il/en; Government of Israel, "Prime Minister's Office," Government of Israel, accessed March 28, 2024, https://www.gov.il/en

[43] Ruth Wodak, "What CDA is about – a summary of its history, important concepts and its developments," in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: Sage Publications, 2001) 6.

[44] Michael Meyer, "Between theory, method, and politics: positioning the approaches to CDA," in Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: Sage Publications, 2001) 25.

4. *What purpose did the inclusion of historical narratives have in EU-Israeli foreign policy?*

Through combining the answers to these four sub-questions, this thesis will provide a coherent answer to the question on how collective memory played a role in EU-Israeli foreign policy from 2009 until 2021.

The analysis will be divided into three chapters, analysing the foreign policy chronologically. Each chapter is divided from the next by significant shift in the communication. The first chapter of analysis (Chapter 2) analyses the communication from the beginning of the administration up until the last Association Council meeting taking place on 24 July 2012. The second chapter of analysis (Chapter 3) analyses the communication from that last Association Council until the visit of Netanyahu to Brussels on 11 December 2017, which was the first time in twenty-two years that an Israeli Prime Minister visited the European Union. The final chapter of analysis (Chapter 4) analyses the final years of the administration from 11 December 2017 until 13 June 2021. This chronological approach contributes to the final claim, namely that the use of memory of both actors differed between different socio-political contexts. But before getting to this conclusion, the first and next chapter will delve into the question of why EU-Israeli relationship is so special. This provides the background necessary for conducting the CDA and understanding the relevance of the historical references made in chapters two, three and four.

Chapter 1

A "Special Relationship"

During the Essen Summit on 9 and 10 December 1994, the European Council decided that Israel "should enjoy *special* status in its relations with the European Union".[45] But what does "special" truly mean? Does it have a positive or negative connotation? Or is it simply complicated? Specifying a relationship as "special" is not an uncommon practice within the field of international relations. Scholarship analyses the "special" relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States[46], between the United States and Israel[47], and between Israel and Germany.[48] The wide use of this term might also be its pitfall. As all of these relationships have a different nature and history, the definition of the term might become muddled.

So, what makes a relationship "special"? Kai Oppermann and Mischa Hansel define a special relationship as "exclusive and relatively durable bilateral relations" that are "qualitatively distinct" and distinguish themselves "positively from other interstate relations".[49] They argue that identities play a major role in justifying this speciality.[50]

This chapter analyses what the speciality of the EU-Israeli relationship looks like and how it developed over time. It will take the beginning of the European integration project in 1950 as the starting point and analyse its development up until the start of the second Netanyahu administration in 2009. In doing so, it argues that the EU and Israel have been close since the beginning, but not consistently. Based on changing identities and socio-political contexts, the relationship had a rather ambivalent nature. By analysing the development of the relationship,

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[45] European Council, "European Council Meeting on 9 and 10 December 1994 in Essen: Presidency Conclusions," European Parliament, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/ess1_en.htm#:~:text=The%20European%20Council%20in%20Essen,in%20the%20Single%20European%20Act; Cursive added by the author.
[46] David Reynolds, "A 'Special Realtionship?' America, Britain and the International Order since the Second World War," *International Affairs* 62, no. 1 (1985-1986): 1-20.
[47] Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, "The United States and Israel since 1948: A 'Special Relationship'?" Diplomatic History 22, no. 2 (1998): 231-263.
[48] Lorena de Vita, "German-Israeli ties in 2015 and 1965: the difficult special relationship," *International Affairs* 91, no. 4 (2015): 835 – 849.
[49] Kai Oppermann and Mischa Hansel, "The Ontological Security of Special Relationships: the case of Germany's relations with Israel," *European Journal of International Security* 4, no. 1 (2019): 81.
[50] Oppermann and Hansel, "The Ontological Security of Special Relationships: the case of Germany's relations with Israel," 85-87.

this chapter provides the historical background necessary to conduct a CDA and to understand the importance of the references to the past used in the chapters to follow.

An Unexpected Friendship

Contact between the two actors took off rather swiftly. Israel distinguished itself in being one of the first countries to become associated with the European integration project. Even before the European Economic Community (EEC) was established in 1957, Israel and the EU already had a political dialogue in place. Not long after, in 1958, it was the third country to create its official diplomatic mission in Brussels.[51]

However, from both sides, this relationship did not come expectedly. As the European integration project developed itself, the search for an identity was complex. Consisting of a wide variety of nation states all with their individual identities set, it was, and still is, rather difficult to find unity within diversity. Whether or not they have succeeded in obtaining a clear-cut identity that effectively stipulates foreign policy, is an academic debate that goes beyond the scope of this thesis. However, Karen Smith argues that the establishing document of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) of 1950, the predecessor of the EEC and EU, showed how the integration project was inherently a peace project, aimed to prevent a new German threat. [52] This Schuman Declaration aimed to pool resources in order to maintain the peace.

''The rassemblement of the nations of Europe requires the elimination of the age-old opposition of France and Germany. … It proposes to place Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole under a common higher authority… The solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable but materially impossible. ''[53]

As the ECSC was predominantly focussed on preserving peace on the European continent, creating ties with non-European countries was thus not the most obvious decision. Especially knowing that both Arab and African countries had extensively lobbied to the EEC not to

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[51] Sharon and Pardo, *Uneasy Neighbours: Israel and the European* Union, 1
[52] Smith, *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World,* 22.
[53] Robert Schuman, ''The Schuman Declaration,'' 9 May 1950, CVCE. https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/the_schuman_declaration_paris_9_may_1950-en-9cc6ac38-32f5-4c0a-a337-9a8ae4d5740f.html

associate with the Israeli state, Israel becoming one of Europe's first formal external relations was a rather unexpected move.[54]

Israeli opinions on the relationship were rather dubious. On the one hand, the public opinion was highly critical of creating any ties. Many Israeli citizens wanted to keep their distance from the European continent following the Holocaust.[55] This is illustrated well by the Luxembourg Agreement with the West-German government of 1952. After signing this agreement, the Israeli government needed to carefully downplay any symbolic meaning domestically. And despite doing so, it still received a lot of criticism. [56] On the other hand, due to the European roots of the Israeli state and its geographical proximity, Israel perceived Europe as a natural trading party which they desperately needed when facing a massive immigration wave.[57] In instructing the Israeli ambassador, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion emphasised that they (the Europeans) "inherited their spiritual values from that little but endearing people which you [the ambassador] are going to represent".. [58]

It was not until the Eichmann Trial in 1961 that the Israeli identity and narrative shifted toward a form of victimhood nationalism with a focus on the Holocaust. In this trial, Holocaust architect Adolf Eichmann was publicly convicted in Jerusalem for his crimes. However, the trial served a broader purpose than only persecuting a Nazi criminal. Broadcasted all over the world by an American network, the judge, persecutors and lawyers quoted historians, poets and philosophers widely referring to the Holocaust past. They did not only do this to convincingly argue Eichmann's guilt. Instead, they used these literary references to the past as a way of linking the Nazi past to their Arab counterparts, portraying them as the enemy instead of West-Germany, from whom they desperately required financial aid.[59] This shifted the Israeli identity from questioning the European Diaspora Jew to identifying with that particular Jew. The Holocaust became an inherent part of the Israeli identity, and the Jewish component returned to the foreground when describing the Israeli state.[60] This shift in identity also resulted in a shift in foreign policy. It seemed that the taboo on strengthening relations with Europe had disappeared. Three years later, in 1964, Israel signed its first official trade agreement with the EEC.[61]

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[54] Pardo and Peters, *Israel and the European Union: A Documentary History,* 3-5.
[55] Del Sarto, "Israel and the European Union: Between Rhetoric and Reality" 155.
[56] Lerner, *From the Ashes of History,* 150.
[57] Del Sarto, "Israel and the European Union: Between Rhetoric and Reality", 156.
[58] Pardo and Peters, *Israel and the European Union: A Documentary History,* 3-4.
[59] Lerner, *From the Ashes of History* p. 156.
[60] Waxman, *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity: Defending/Defining the Nation,* 48.
[61] Pardo and Peters, *Israel and the European Union: A Documentary History,* 5.

However, this victimhood identity did not always have the upper hand in Israel's foreign policy. As illustrated by Dov Waxman, the degree of Jewishness of the Israeli identity depended on the tone of the actor it interacted with. When another international actor criticised Israel, Israel stressed the Jewish component of its identity, showing how the condemning actor portrayed antisemitic behaviour. In contrast, when an international actor complimented Israel, or when Israel wanted to strengthen its ties with the actor, they emphasised the differences with the persecuted Jews of the past.[62]

After the first relations were established, criticism would follow. A few years later, in 1967, the Six Day War broke out in the Middle East. In this war, Israel faced Egypt, Syria and Jordan, and won this war within six days with minimal Israel victims and massive territorial gains. It resulted in numerous Egyptian, Syrian and Jordan casualties.[63] In response to that war, the EC noticed its inability to come to a foreign policy consensus. This led to the creation of the European Political Cooperation (EPC).[64] Although the EPC still relied upon consensus between the different members, it was the first official form of foreign policy making within Europe.[65]

Following the cruelties of the Six Day War, the EC grew increasingly critical of Israel. With the pressure of the oil embargo by the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to break their support to Israel, the EC shifted from perceiving Israel as "a small and regionally threatened state whose citizens had survived the Holocaust" to perceiving it as "a colonial power displacing and oppressing the Palestinians".[66] This eventually resulted in the production of the Schuman Declaration.[67] This declaration argued to consider the "legitimate rights of the Palestinians". This statement was later sharpened in the 1977 London Declaration and the 1980 Venice Declaration, both documents sharpening the position of the Europeans in favour of Palestinian statehood.[68]

Israel responded fiercely to this development. To the Schuman Declaration, they responded as it were "a stab in the back" , and argued that the EC was focused on securing its

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[62] Waxman, *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity: Defending/Defining the Nation,* 52-53.

[63] Thomas G. Fraser, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict.* 2nd ed. (Houndsmills: Pallgrave Macmillan, 2004) 76-82.

[64] Pardo and Peters, *Israel and the European Union: A Documentary History,* 74.

[65] Neil Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 396-397.

[66] Del Sarto, "Israel and the European Union: Between Rhetoric and Reality", 157.

[67] Pardo and Peters, *Israel and the European Union: A Documentary History 76.

[68] Pardo and Peters, *Uneasy Neighbors: Israel and the European Union,* 6.

oil instead of preserving the peace that it stood for.[69] However, in 1975, the two partners still decided to improve their relationship by signing a free trade agreement. It was not until the Venice Declaration of 1980 that Israel really fell out against the EC. In line with Waxman's argument, the Israeli government compared the declaration to the Munich Agreement of 1938, where Czechoslovakia had to surrender Sudetenland to Nazi Germany. Additionally, the Israeli government spoke the following striking words:

''Not since *Mein Kampf* was written have more explicit words been said, in the ears of the entire world, including Europe, about the desire for the destruction of the Jewish state and nation.''[70]

This quote illustrates how relations between the EC and Israel were tense following this Declaration. The new attitude dictated the foreign policy for the years to follow. Israel continued to portray the EC as inherently anti-Israeli. Menachem Begin, Prime Minister of the first Likud administration from 1977 until 1983, frequently referred to the past of the Second World War and the Holocaust, preventing the EC from playing any role in the peace process until the 1990s.[71]

An Ambivalent Relationship
It was not until the signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) that this attitude changed. After signing this agreement, Israel praised Europe as ''a model for putting aside past hatreds and for building new cooperative structures for peace and stability''.[72] This softening of Israeli foreign policy met a favourable European response. Soon after, the Essen Summit of December 1994 stipulated that Israel ''should enjoy special status in its relations with the EU''.[73] This statement was followed by the signing of the EU-Israel Association Agreement (AA) in November 1995. That agreement, which was ratified in 2000, both enhanced the economic integration and established a structured political dialogue on different diplomatic levels, between the EU and Israel.[74] Although this agreement was part

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[69] Pardo and Peters, *Israel and the European Union: A Documentary History,* 76.
[70] Pardo and Peters, *Israel and the European Union: A Documentary History,* 159.
[71] Del Sarto, "Israel and the European Union: Between Rhetoric and Reality", 158.
[72] Pardo and Peters, *Uneasy Neighbors: Israel and the European Union,* 10.
[73] European Council, "European Council Meeting on 9 and 10 December 1994 in Essen: Presidency Conclusions,"
[74] Council of Europe, "EU-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the State of Israel, of the other part, " 3-171.

of the Barcelona Process, to which more Mediterranean countries were a member, this agreement was still unique in the case of Israel. The AA resulted in Israel becoming the closest partner to the Union in the region, being more comparable to a Central and Eastern European country rather than a Mediterranean one.[75]

This did not mean that the relationship would be easy in the years to follow. On the contrary, the AA received a large amount of criticism for avoiding difficult questions such as defining the territory of the State of Israel. Did these new trading benefits also apply to the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories? This resulted in the Rules of Origin Dispute from 1997 to 2004. The dispute was eventually settled by a declaration that the Israeli settlements were not recognised under international law, and that therefore the benefits did not apply to these areas. It showed how the EU used its identity as a normative power in its foreign policy toward Israel.[76] Whereas Israel first responded angrily, they eventually decided to cooperate with the decision made. It seemed that Israel recognised the increasing economic and political importance of their relationship with the Union.[77]

Toward the end of the Rules of Origin Dispute, European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was set up with the aim of establishing ''close, peaceful and cooperative relations'' with its surrounding partners.[78] Similarly to the AA of 1995, the EU emphasised its special bond with Israel. Because of how advanced it was compared to other members, Israel gained a privileged status.[79] The wording of the agreement of the ENP Action Plan between the EU and Israel indicated that a positive conditionality would be included, meaning that the more Israel would adapt to the standards of the Union, the more economic 'carrots' it would gain.[80] In doing so, Europe gained the opportunity to strengthen its normative power by adding economic incentives.

After the ENP Action Plan was concluded, the Israeli government asked the EU for an update on the meaning of ''special'' in their relationship. At first, the EU responded positively to the request. However, in December 2008, just before the Netanyahu administration would come to power, Israel launched Operation Cast Lead. This military operation on the Gaza Strip

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[75] Pardo and Peters, *Uneasy neighbours: Israel and the European Union*, 50-51.

[76] Gordon and Pardo, 'Normative Power Europe meets the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,' 266.

[77] Pardo and Peters, *Uneasy neighbours: Israel and the European Union*, 55.

[78] Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union,* 400-401.

[79] Pardo and Peters, *Israel and the European Union: A Documentary History,* 320.

[80] Raffaella Del Sarto, ''Wording and Meaning(s): EU-Israeli Political Cooperation according to the ENP Action Plan'', *Mediterranean Politics* 12, no. 1 (2007): 59-75.

received strong criticism from the Union. Negotiations on updating the special relationship were halted immediately.[81]

<u>Conclusion</u>

Even before a common European foreign policy was constructed, Europe and Israel were close partners. However, this did not mean that this relationship came easily. Events such as the Six Day War and the EC statements that followed had its lasting effects. Invoking memories of a dark past, Israel strongly condemned the EC for turning to the Palestinians. The icy relationship seemed to melt with both the AA and the ENP Action Plan, providing Israel with the best position in the entire Mediterranean area. However, events such as the Rules of Origin dispute and Operation Cast Lead challenged the special bond between the two. Despite these challenges, it can be concluded that the relationship is "durable", "qualitatively distinct", and "positively distinguishes itself from other relationships", and can therefore justly be labelled as special.[82]

However, besides special, this chapter would like to also attribute the adjective "ambivalent" to it. Throughout the previous decades, the foreign policy between the two actors shifted from extremely close, to painful allegations, back to stressing their speciality. The chapter illustrated how such shifts tied together with particular shifts in identity, for example, the return of the Holocaust memories to the Israeli identity in 1961, and changing socio-political contexts, such as the breaking out of the Six Day War, the OPEC oil embargo, and the signing of the Oslo Accords.

Understanding that the development EU-Israeli foreign policy is thus far more complicated than a lack of consensus, as is often argued,[83] is crucial for understanding the analysis on the role of collective memory in the following chapters. When the new Netanyahu administration took to power in the beginning of 2009, that socio-political context was rather tense following the 2008 Operation Cast Lead. The following chapter will delve deeper into how collective memory played a role in foreign policy during these first few years.

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[81] Pardo and Peters, *Israel and the European Union: A Documentary History,* 323
[82] Oppermann and Hansel, "The Ontological Security of Special Relationships: the case of Germany's relations with Israel," 81.
[83] Akgül-Açıkmeşe and Özel, "EU Policy towards the Israel-Palestine Conflict: The Limitations of Mitigation Strategies," 59-78; Del Sarto, "Israel and the European Union: Between Rhetoric and Reality", 155-186; Gordon and Pardo, "Normative Power Europe meets the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," 265-274; Malcontent, "The Netherlands, the EU and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Why The Hague Continues to be One of Israel's Most Faithful European Allies," 270-299.

Chapter 2

From Silent Tensions to Democratic Allies
31 March 2009 – 24 July 2012

On Wednesday 11 February 2009, both Tzipi Livni's centrist Kadima party and Netanyahu's right-wing Likud Party proclaimed victory after the election outcomes. Netanyahu won twenty-seven seats in the Knesset. Kadima won twenty-eight, one more.[84] Despite winning the majority of the seats, the moderate Kadima failed to form a coalition with the victorious right-wing parties. That was not a problem for Netanyahu's Likud, who quickly succeeded to form a centre-right majority government under his premiership.[85]

The question that will be answered in this chapter is what role collective memory played during the first years of the Netanyahu administration. It will cover foreign policy from the inauguration on 31 March 2009 until the last EU-Israeli Association Council held on 24 July 2012. As the previous chapter has shown, relations were tense between the EU and Israel ever since the launch of Operation Cast Lead in December 2008.[86] Responding to the prospect of a right-wing Israeli government, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Javier Solana, stated that a lack of commitment to the previously made peace agreements would result in the relationship becoming "very, very different."[87] The Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg, holding the Council presidency, claimed that "there won't be any progress in relations between Israel and the European Union until the Israeli government clarifies its stance on the creation of a Palestinian state".[88]

Following Waxman's argument, and the previous chapter, one would expect Israel to resort to its identity of victimhood during such tensions, resulting in many references to the

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[84] Rory McCarthy, "Kadima and Likud claim victory in Israel poll," The Guardian, February 11, 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/feb/11/israel-election-livni-netanyahu.

[85] Rachel Shabi, "Binyamin Netanyahu ready to take charge of new Israeli government," The Guardian, March 31, 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/mar/31/israel-elections-binyamin-netanyahu

[86] Ian Traynor, "Europe stalls on closer links Israel links in Gaza protest," The Guardian, January 14, 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/14/europe-israel-diplomacy-gaza-protest

[87] Benita Ferrero-Waldner, "Answer given by Ms Ferrero-Waldner," 9 June 2009, P6_RE(2009)2238_EN.doc (live.com)

[88] Caroline B. Glick, "Ending Israel's Conditional Legitimacy,"3 April 2009, The Jerusalem Post, https://advance-lexis-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:53Y6-YKC1-F12G-D4N9-00000-00&context=1516831.

Holocaust from the Israeli side to delegitimise such EU statements.[89] However, this chapter argues that the contrary was true. By examining 127 government statements, meeting minutes, press conferences and speeches, this chapter argues that both parties used the past to highlight their similarities in democratic values, rather than to criticize each other.

The first part of this chapter illustrates how many EU condemnations were strikingly silent on the past. Israel invoked memories of the Holocaust to stress the difference between the past and the present, complimenting instead of condemning European actors on their decisions within international relations. The second part of this chapter shows how the context of the Arab Spring led both actors to invoke both positive and negative memories to stress their democratic similarities. However, in doing so, they differed in doing so both regarding which pasts were invoked and the purpose of it.

<u>EU Condemnations and Israeli Explanations</u>
Both Javier Solana and the Czech Council Presidency made themselves abundantly clear: a commitment to the peace process was necessary to restore what was once called a "special" relationship. However, tensions were not that easily settled. The first few years of communication from the EU towards Israel are painted by condemning statements from the European side. On 10 March 2010, the High Representative for External Relations of the European Union, Catherine Ashton, condemned the building of new housing units in East Jerusalem. Such settlements were "illegal under international law" and undermined "current efforts for restarting peace negotiations, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution possible".[90] Similarly, on 15 October 2011, Ashton condemned settlement expansion in Givat Hamatos for being 'illegal under international law".[91] A few months later, on 17 August 2011, the EU missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah condemned the closure of institutions, and demanded their re-opening "as required under the Roadmap".[92]

[89] Waxman, *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity: Defending/Defining the Nation,* 48.
[90] Catherine Ashton, "Declaration by HR Ashton on behalf of the European Union on the decision by the Government to build new housing units in East Jerusalem," Council of the European Union, 10 March 2010, https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7374-2010-INIT/en/pdf
[91] Catherine Ashton, "Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on Settlement Expansion in Givat Hamatos," European Union Press, 15 October 2011, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/d-il/dv/ashtononsettlements/ashtononsettlementsen.pdf
[92] EU Missions Jerusalem and Ramallah, "Local EU Statement on the Closure Extension of the Orient House and the Chamber of Commerce of East Jerusalem," 17 August 2011, EU Press Office https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/d-il/dv/eulocalstatementorienthouse/eulocalstatementorienthouseen.pdf

Interestingly, the EU used a similar rhetoric in all of these condemning statements. All of these statements either referred to international law, or earlier agreements, such as the Roadmap Agreement of 2003.[93] Collective memory thus played no role in the condemning foreign policy from the EU to Israel. Instead, the institution chose to emphasise its identity as a normative power focussing inherently on international law.

Whereas one would expect Israel to relate to the past of the Holocaust frequently during such tensions – especially following the multitude of EU condemnations – no such invocations appeared in this timeframe. Instead, Prime Minister Netanyahu referred to the past of the Holocaust to compliment European decisions against the Iranian president, who had been known for his Holocaust denial.[94] On 21 April 2009, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sent a letter to the countries that boycotted the Durban Conference in Geneva, as a protest against the Iranian participation.[95] Although initially only the Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Poland boycotted the conference, the Czech Republic left after the first day, and many other European member states lowered their level of attendance.[96] Netanyahu wrote the following:

''As Israel marks Holocaust Remembrance Day, I am writing to express my appreciation for your decision not to participate in the Durban II conference in Geneva. That decision helped restore a measure of sanity in a world in which a conference against racism gives a platform to the head of a regime that denies the Holocaust and openly seeks to perpetrate a new one through the destruction of the Jewish State.''[97]

In this statement, Netanyahu used the memory of the Holocaust in a non-reflective, so ethically negative, sense. He referred to the past to warn the EU of the danger that the Iranian statements and actions could form toward Israel. In doing so, he commended the countries for boycotting the Durban Conference, explaining that they were on the right side of history.

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[93] The Roadmap was an outlined timeline towards peace, produced by the Quartet (consisting of the US, EU, the Russian Federation and the United Nations).
[94] The Associated Press, ''Ahmadinejad drops Holocaust denial reference,'' *NBC News* (21 April 2009), https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna30323549
[95] The Durban Conference is a United Nations conference focussed on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. It focusses on combatting racism, racial xenophobia and related intolerance.
[96] Julian Borger, ''UN racism conference boycotted by more countries,'' *The Guardian* (20 April 2009) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/apr/20/un-race-conference
[97] Benjamin Netanyahu, ''PM Netanyahu sent a letter to the countries that boycotted the Durban Conference in Geneva,'' 21 April 2009, Government of Israel, https://www.gov.il/en/pages/spokederb210409.

A few days later, in a meeting with the Czech Prime Minister, who also held the Presidency of the EU Council, Netanyahu referred again to the past of the Holocaust. He stressed the ''Jewish tradition'' of the Czech Republic, arguing that they had ''tragic experiences with a common enemy'' and commended them for standing up ''against another common enemy that threatens all of our values''.[98] Similarly to the response to the Durban boycott, Netanyahu referred to their collective Holocaust trauma to explain the situation with Iran. He seemed to use the Holocaust not to condemn actions from the European member states, but instead to explain the state of the world order, criticising Iran and commending Europe for being on the right side of history.

Explaining, Justifying, and Mobilizing Democratic Change
It was in response to the socio-political context in the Middle East that the past was invoked more frequently. As had been the case throughout the entire period, Israel was still in combat for its right to exist. The Arab states did not recognise that right. Additionally, in 2011, the Arab Spring took over politics in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Many countries in the MENA area were struck by democratic revolutions.[99] Interestingly, both the EU and Israel used references to the past within their statements adapting to these developments.

One example can be found in a speech by Netanyahu given to the European Friends of Israel Conference in Jerusalem on 7 February 2011.[100] In this speech, Netanyahu referred to a very wide scala of historical events to stress the similarities between the EU and Israel on democratic grounds. Drawing on memories from ancient Greece as the beacon of European democracy, and the moral laws governing the kingdom of the Biblical King David, Netanyahu stated the following:

''So there were two sources of freedom for Western civilization that grew out of these two places. One was in Athens and the other was in Jerusalem. … The idea is that men are governed

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[98] Benjamin Netanyahu, ''PM Netanyahu Meets with Czech PM Topolanek,'' 23 April 2009, Prime Minister's Office, https://www.gov.il/en/pages/spokeczech230409.
[99] John Davis, *The Arab Spring and Arab Thaw: Unfinished Revolutions and the Quest for Democracy* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 2.
[100] The European Friends of Israel Conference is a conference with members of the European Parliament and the parliaments of the member states.

by laws, by moral laws, and not by men. … Well, it came from this Acropolis here. If you visited Temple Mount, that's the other Acropolis."[101]

In this fragment, ancient and Biblical history is used to stress the similarities between Israel and the EU. Or, as Netanyahu put it: "In the most profound sense, in the deepest sense, we are you and you are us. … We share a common heritage and we share a common future."[102] Although these last words – "a common future" – seem to indicate that Netanyahu used the past to mobilize the EU toward a certain action, the rest of the speech illustrated a different purpose. First, after historically emphasising the similar values of the EU and Israel, Netanyahu called out those people who did not recognise the State of Israel.

"Part of the campaign against Israel is the attempt to distort not only modern history but also ancient history. There was no Jewish Temple – did you hear that one? Well, I'd like to know where were those tables that Jesus overturned."[103]

In this quote, Netanyahu presented the Jewish connection to the land as a clear-cut fact. He used the past one-sidedly to ridicule anyone not recognising Israel. Following that de-legitimisation strategy, he referred to a wide scala of memories of the Jewish diaspora, pogroms and Holocaust to argue that the Jewish people rightfully owned the land.

"So for the last 2,000 years what we've been trying to do is get back to our ancestral homeland and reestablish a sovereign existence for our people so we can continue our national life with our heritage and our values of freedom, and this is an encapsulation of our history and we did come back."[104]

In doing so, Netanyahu explained the heritage of the Israeli identity and legitimised the existence of the state. Having legitimised their existence, Netanyahu deplored European history to justify their cautious position towards the Arab Spring.

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[101] Benjamin Netanyahu, "Address by PM Netanyahu to the European Friends of Israel Conference," 7 February 2011, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/news/speechfriends070211/en/sitecollectiondocuments_pmo_32communication_speeches_2011_02_friendseng070211.doc
[102] Netanyahu, "Address by PM Netanyahu to the European Friends of Israel Conference," 2.
[103] Netanyahu, "Address by PM Netanyahu to the European Friends of Israel Conference," 2.
[104] Netanyahu, "Address by PM Netanyahu to the European Friends of Israel Conference," 3.

"I remember what we felt in the great events of 1989. I remember the jubilation in Berlin and in the capitals of Eastern Europe. We all felt the promise of a new day. … Yet at the same time, history also argues for caution when it comes to revolutions. … you're familiar with one example, it happened in 1917."[105]

By recalling two different European revolutions, Netanyahu emphasised the different outcomes that such revolutions could have. He compared the present to the past and justified his position by embedding his cautiousness in previous negative historical outcomes.

Not only Israeli politicians referred to the past in this timeframe. On 15 June 2011, EP President Jerzy Buzek referred to multiple different pasts in his speech to the Knesset. Similarly to Netanyahu, Buzek remembered the past of the Holocaust, more specifically, his youth growing up in the vicinity of Auschwitz. However, he did so with a different purpose than Netanyahu. Whereas Netanyahu used the Holocaust to legitimise its existence, Buzek remembered this negative European past in a more reflective sense to justify his position against Holocaust denial.

"The uniqueness of the Shoah is unquestioned. And let me be clear, political leaders and all those who continue to deny the Holocaust will never be accepted in the community of civilised nations. Because the Holocaust is not only a European tragedy; it is a stain on the history of mankind."[106]

Interestingly, Buzek broadens the scope of the Holocaust memory to expand beyond Europe. Although this weakened the reflective element of his speech, this strengthened the justification of his opposition against Holocaust denial, but also spread the guilt beyond Europe, presenting it as a universally condemned crime.

Additionally, Buzek used the past to stress the similarities between Israel and the EU. Similarly to Netanyahu, he referred to a common heritage emphasising their similar democratic nature. However, he did so much less elaborate. Where Netanyahu went in great detail to

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[105] Netanyahu, "Address by PM Netanyahu to the European Friends of Israel Conference," 4.
[106] Jerzy Buzek, "Buzek's full speech to the Knesset," 15 June 2011, European Parliament, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/former_ep_presidents/president-buzek/en/press/speeches/sp-2011/sp-2011-June/speeches-2011-June-1.html; Shoah is the Hebrew translation of Holocaust.

connect Jerusalem and Athens, Buzek simply stated that both actors have a "common heritage" and are "as democracies … part of the same community of values".[107]

The aim of creating this historical connection was also different. Instead of using the connection to legitimize the existence of the European Union, Buzek connected the past to the developments in the MENA region.

"Our common heritage and ideals should be at the core of our common action to inspire hope, and to respond to the aspirations of the peoples for democracy in an ever-changing Middle East."[108]

Interestingly, he used the positive history to mobilize Israel in adopting a more positive stance towards the developments in the Middle East. He did a similar thing concerning the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. Later in his speech, he recalled the positive history of the successful European reconciliation process.

"As I already mentioned, the story of the European Union provides hope. The notion of reconciliation between nations was at the origin of our common European journey. … Without France and Germany overcoming their divisions of the past, there would be no European Union. Without Poland and Germany reconciling their past, there would be no reunification of our continent. Without Israeli and Palestinian peace, there will not be peace in the region."[109]

He compared the Franco-German and Polish-German rivalries of the past to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East. By emphasising the success story of reconciling the European continent, Buzek justified his positive position towards the peace process, aiming to mobilize Israel to put in the effort to achieve the same. Unfortunately, the response was rather silent.

Conclusion
During these early years, both actors used the past in their foreign policy. It is striking how they did so primarily for complimenting rather than condemning purposes. As the EU was completely silent on the past in its many condemnations, Netanyahu invoked the memories of

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[107] Buzek, "Buzek's full speech to the Knesset," 3.
[108] Buzek, "Buzek's full speech to the Knesset," 3.
[109] Buzek, "Buzek's full speech to the Knesset," 6.

the Holocaust to compliment the EU rather than condemn it. Instead, it was in response to the socio-political context in the Middle East that both actors used the past more frequently. Israel invoked a wide variety of memories of ancient Greece, biblical Jerusalem, the pogroms, the Holocaust, and revolutions on European soil in the twentieth century to legitimize its own existence, and justify its position toward the developments in the Middle East. The European Union recalled a more limited variety of memories referring only to the Holocaust and European reconciliation. Although similarly to Israel it did so partly to justify its positions, its primary aim was to mobilize Israel in adopting a certain stance to the Arab Spring and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Whereas the existing scholarship argues that Israel predominantly used the negative memories of the Holocaust to respond to European condemnations,[110] this chapter showed that the opposite was true. Israel and Europe used both positive and negative pasts to emphasise their shared democratic values in response to the Arab Spring in the MENA region. While both actors stressed similarities, they differed in which historical events they referred to and their reasons for doing so. Netanyahu drew upon a wide range of Israeli and European memories, and focused on legitimising Israel's existence and justifying its positions on Middle Eastern developments. In contrast, Buzek's speech was limited to European history and aimed to mobilise Israel to adopt a more positive position toward Middle Eastern developments.

These differences present an interesting perspective. Whereas the state used both its own and European memories as a legitimisation and justification tool, the multilateral institution limited itself to its own histories in mobilising the state toward a particular action. This finding provides an interesting stepping stone to the next chapter. As the Association Council on 24 July 2012 was the last instance of high-level communication between the EU and Israel, the next chapter will analyse how collective memory played a role in times of silence.

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[110] Benn, "The End of Old Israel: How Netanyahu Has Transformed the Nation," 16-27; Harpaz, "EU-Israel Relations: Netanyahu's Legacy," 541-562; Naor, "Hawks' beaks, doves' feathers: Likud Prime Ministers between Ideology and Reality," -19; Sokol, "The Tension between Historical Memory and Realpolitik in Israel's Foreign Policy," 311-324.

Chapter 3

Silence Speaks Louder than Words
24 July 2012 – 11 December 2017

The eleventh EU-Israeli Association Council on 24 July 2012 ended with a commitment to bring the EU-Israeli partnership to new heights.[111] However, what the attendees of that Council meeting did not yet know, was that a period of silence would follow instead. It would take ten years, and a new Prime Minister, before the Association Council would reconvene.[112] Although the EU and Israel continued to meet on lower levels, this is remarkable as the main decision-making bodies concerning foreign policy were not in direct contact for the years to come.

The question that will be answered in this chapter is what role collective memory played in a relationship officially put on hold. During these years, a significant increase in settlements, the 2014 Gaza War and the adoption of a notice by the EU to label products from the occupied territories challenged the relationship. As tensions were rising in the Middle East, it will show how both the EU and Israel used the past to respond to these developments predominantly in a positive manner. In analysing 129 government statements, meeting minutes, press conferences and speeches, this chapter claims that both parties were everything but silent when it comes to invoking the past.

The first part of this chapter illustrates how collective memory played a role in the condemnations toward each other. The EU responded to these tensions similarly to the previous timeframe: with numerous condemning statements grounded in international law. In contrast to the previous chapter, Israel did invoke the past of the Holocaust in response to an EU decision. The second part of this chapter illustrates how Israel and the EU invoked memories of an unlikely European peace, in times of heightened tensions. However, they differed again in doing so. Whereas Israel used a wide variety of EU and Israeli memories to legitimise its existence and justify its positions, the EU invoked their own past to mobilize the peace process.

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[111] Israeli Mission to the European Union, "11th EU-Israel Association Council, 24 July 2012," 24 July 2012, https://embassies.gov.il/eu/IsraelEU/Associationagreement/Pages/Departments.aspx

[112] Foreign Affairs Council, "EU-Israel Association Council, 3 October 2022," 3 October 2022, European Council, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-ministerial-meetings/2022/10/03/.

<u>One spark could light a fire</u>

As settlements were increasing and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict escalated to war in 2014, the EU condemned Israel rather frequently. Similarly to the previous chapter, such condemnations characterised themselves in the absence of collective memory. When condemning the increased settlement units, the statements by the EEAS were grounded in international law instead of invocations of collective memory. On 10 May 2013, HRVP Catherine Ashton responded to the settlement expansions as "illegal under international law".[113] That same rhetoric appeared in multiple statements by different spokespersons of the EEAS. In responding to the Israeli decisions on encouraging the construction of settlements, they used, once again, the argument that this was "illegal under international law".[114]

Also in responding to the Israeli decision to halt tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority in 2015, the HRVP Federica Mogherini referred to international agreements. She opposed the decision by stating that this went against "Israel's obligations under the Paris Protocol".[115] Additionally, statements by the local EU representatives in the region and the spokespersons of the EEAS condemned multiple demolitions in the occupied Palestinian territories by Israeli authorities. In line with previous arguments, they stated how these demolished structures were often funded by the EU which happened in "full accordance with international humanitarian law". [116] This strengthened their claim that these actions went against the regulations of international law.

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[113] Catherine Ashton, "Statement by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Asthon on recent developments in East Jerusalem and the West Bank," 10 May 2013, European Union Press, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/137069.pdf

[114] European External Action Service, "Statement by the Spokesperson on Israel's Announcement of New Settlement Units in East Jerusalem and the West Bank," 5 June 2016, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/7191_en; European External Action Service, "Statement by the Spokesperson on Israel's Decision to Advance Plans for Housing Units in Gilo Settlement in East Jerusalem," 26 June 2016, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/7301_en.

[115] Federica Mogherini, "Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the Situation in Israel and Palestine,"6 January 2015, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/2499_en

[116] European External Action Service, "Statement by the Spokesperson on the latest development in Area C of the occupied Palestinian territory," 6 February 2016, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/2950_en ; 24 January 2016 – Local EU Statement on recent demolitions and confiscations in Area C; European External Action Service, "Statement by the Spokesperson on the resurgence of demolitions in Area C of the West Bank," 12 August 2016, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/8574_en; European External Action Service, "Local Statement on Israeli Demolitions and Confiscations of Palestinian Structures in Area C, " 13 December 2016, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/17114_en; European External Action Service, "Local Statement on Israeli demolitions of Palestinian Structures in Area C," 22 February 2017, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/21143_en.

Israel did not respond at all to these allegations. It took a bit more than statements to provoke an Israeli response. When the Union adopted its interpretative notice on the labelling of products from the occupied Palestinian territories on 12 November 2015,[117] Israel responded fiercely, invoking the memories of the Second World War. In December 2015, Netanyahu stated that the decision "brings back dark memories" and that "Europe should be ashamed of themselves".[118] In a meeting with the international press on 14 January 2016, Netanyahu equalised the labelling notice to the labelling of Jewish products during the Second World War.

"… and then we get the absurdity of the EU in Brussels, from European soil labelling the products of Israeli citizens, of Jews. And the last time that was done on the soil of Europe was over 70 years ago".[119]

Both examples show how Netanyahu referenced the past of the Holocaust and the Second World War as a manner of arguing that the EU finds itself on the 'wrong side of history'. In doing so, Netanyahu used this dark past non-reflectively as a strong tool to justify the fierce Israeli opposition to the decision, and to delegitimise the new EU regulation.

What is interesting to note, is the timing of recalling the past in responding to the Union. Both in this and the previous chapter, tensions had been immensely high between the EU and Israel. This was also indicated by the numerous European condemnations. However, whereas the EU was everything but silent when it came to calling out Israel, it took concrete negative actions against Israel until a historically loaded response followed.

Remembering the story of success
However, again, the dominant narrative on collective memory was not one of condemnations in this timeframe. As times were tumultuous in the Middle East, a continuation of the peace process was not only necessary but also extremely difficult. Even though negotiations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had started again in August 2013, Israeli settlement expansion led to

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[117] Official Journal of the European Union, "Interpretative Notice on Indication of Origin of Goods from the Territories occupied by Israel since June 1967," 12 November 2015, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/dpal/dv/4a_interpretativenoticeindicationorigin/4a_interpretativenoticeindicationoriginen.pdf.
[118] Benjamin Netanyahu, "PM Netanyahu Comments on EU Decision," 11 November 2015, Prime Minister's Office, https://www.gov.il/en/pages/spokeeudecision111115.
[119] Benjamin Netanyahu, "Netanyahu Meets with the Foreign Press at the GPO Annual New Year's," 14 January 2016, Prime Minister's Office, https://www.gov.il/en/pages/eventgpo150116.

a new breakdown.[120] In July 2014, Operation Protective Edge, now better known as the 2014 Gaza War, led to an escalation of violence.[121] Internationally, tensions were also rising with regard to Hezbollah and Iran.[122] During these years, both Israel and the EU used memories of the past in the – rather ad hoc – political communication to justify their positions and mobilise the peace process. Similarly to the previous years, a wide variety of the past was used to create a historic connection between the two actors. However, where the emphasis in the previous chapter was put on democratic values, peace was the common denominator in this timeframe.

The first Israeli example of invoking the past can be found in a speech given by President Shimon Peres to the EP on 12 March 2013. In that speech, Peres recalled both positive and negative memories of the pogroms on European soil, of the Holocaust, and of the unlikeliness of peace in Europe and the creation of a Jewish state to create a historical connection. He narrated on a Europe in which "more Jews lived … than in any other continent", but also on a Europe in which "more Jews were murdered … in the last hundred years than in the preceding two thousand years".[123] He used that narrative to illustrate how unlikely both a Jewish state and a united Europe were in the post-war period. Or, as he poetically put it, how their relations were "a dialogue between two miracles".[124]

Having established a common heritage, Peres used those similarities to argue that Israel could walk the same path as Europe did. If a war-torn Europe achieved peace, so could Israel.

"Some people claim it will take generations. Europe has proved that great events can be achieved in six years. We live in a new era where events are moving at the speed of a plane and no longer at the speed of a carriage. For that reason, I believe peace can be achieved in a short while." [125]

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[120] Harriet Sherwood, "Middle East Peace Talks: Prisoner Release and New Settlement Push Raises Temperature," 12 August 2013, *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/11/israel-palestine-middle-east-peace-talks

[121] British Broadcasting Centre, "Gaza Crisis: Toll of Operation in Gaza," *BBC News*, (1 September 2014), Accessed 10 June 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28439404.

[122] Associated Press Beirut, "Hezbollah vows to retaliate against alleged Israeli air strike in Lebanon," *The Guardian* (26 February 2014), accessed 10 June 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/26/israel-hezbollah-retaliate-airstrike-lebanon-syria; Yaakov Laapin, "Iranian arms vessel captured by IDF docks in Eilat," *The Jerusalem Post* (March 8 2014), accessed 10 June 2024, https://www.jpost.com/Defense/Iranian-arms-vessel-captured-by-IDF-to-dock-in-Eilat-344702

[123] Shimon Peres, "Address by President Peres to the European Parliament," 12 March 2013, Mission of Israel to the UN and EU, https://embassies.gov.il/UnGeneva/NewsAndEvents/Pages/Address-President-Peres-European-Parliament-Mar2013.aspx

[124] Peres, "Address by President Peres to the European Parliament," 3.

[125] Peres, "Address by President Peres to the European Parliament," 3.

Drawing similarities between the European past and the Israeli present, he used this past non-reflectively to justify his positive perspective on the opportunities of the peace process.

Another example can be found in a statement made by Prime Minister Netanyahu on 20 May 2015. Prior to his meeting with HRVP Federica Mogherini, the Prime Minister referred to Europe's "great transformation" and stated that that was exactly what Israel hoped to achieve as well.[126] Although his short statement did not go into similar detail as Peres did in his lengthy speech, the purpose of invoking the past remained the same. Europe has done the impossible, so why can't Israel?

The last Israeli example is a speech made by President Reuven Rivlin to the EP on 22 June 2016. Similarly to Peres, Rivlin first established a historical link between Europe and Israel. He made this link by also using a wide variety of both European and Israeli historical references. Rivlin narrated on the Jewish soldiers who fought on the fronts during the First World War, on the pogroms that took place all throughout Europe, and on the disastrous Holocaust during the Second World War. Based on these memories, Rivlin argued that "even the wildest of imaginations" would not have predicted the coming into existence of a Jewish state. Just as, following his speech, it was unlikely that there would ever be a European Parliament on a previously "torn and bleeding continent, awash with the blood of war and strife".[127]

On the one hand, through illustrating the speciality of the existence of the Israel, Rivlin claimed a certain status of legitimacy for the existence of Israel. On the other hand, Rivlin used the past of unlikely peace in Europe as an argument that Israel could achieve such peace as well, albeit with help from the master. He asked the EP whether they would "step together" to achieve peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians, as it had been "small steps" creating a "great reality" of peace on the European continent.[128] It thus seems that this reference had a more mobilising function.

European politicians also invoked the past frequently to show the possibilities of the peace process. A first example is the speech given by EP President Martin Schulz to the Knesset

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[126] Benjamin Netanyahu, "PM Netanyahu's Statement at the Start of his Meeting with EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini," 20 May 2015, Prime Minister's Office, https://www.gov.il/en/pages/eventmorgini200515.
[127] Reuven Rivlin, "Speech by Israeli President Rivlin at the EP Plenary on 22 June 2016," 22 June 2016, European Parliament, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/dpal/dv/3e_presidentrivlin_speech_ep_plenary_/3e_presidentrivlin_speech_ep_plenary_en.pdf.
[128] Rivlin, "Speech by Israeli President Rivlin at the EP Plenary on 22 June 2016,"

on 12 February 2014. In this speech, Schulz recalled reflectively the negative European memories of Jewish persecution and the Holocaust. He used those memories as an explanation of the Union's values "for freedom, for democracy and for human dignity". After historically embedding these values, Schulz argued that "Israel and the European Union share these values"[129].

Having established a common heritage, Schulz memorised the story of reconciliation between France and Germany. He compared this unlikeliness to the unlikely peace between Israel and Palestine by speaking the following words:

"My grandparents' generation would have regarded reconciliation with the arch enemy France as impossible. But the impossible came to pass, through a simple acknowledgement of the fact that if Europe was not to continue tearing itself apart on the battlefield we Europeans had no choice but to make peace and work together. I believe that if we want to grant people a life in dignity there is no alternative to peace for the Israelis and Palestinians today." [130]

Schulz used the past to legitimise their special relationship and mobilise the other by showing the possibilities presented by the past.

Another example was found in a speech by Lars Faaborg-Andersen, Head of the European Delegation to the State of Israel, on 9 May 2016. In this speech, Faaborg-Andersen recalled the past of how the Schuman Declaration made an end to a war-torn continent. He used that past to state the following:

"Just as Europe achieves its potential when working together, Israelis and Palestinians will achieve their full potential when the conflict here is solved and both can live in peace and security".[131]

He strengthened that statement by quoting the "Jewish philosopher" (interesting emphasis on him being Jewish) Spinoza in stating that "Peace is not the mere absence of war – it is a virtue,

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[129] Martin Schulz, "Full text of European Parliament President's Speech to Knesset," 12 February 2014, *The Times of Israel*, https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-european-parliament-presidents-speech-to-knesset/.

[130] Schulz, "Full text of European Parliament President's Speech to Knesset," 2.

[131] Lars Faaborg-Andersen, "Speech by Ambassador Lars Faaborg-Andersen
Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the State of Israel
Europe Day Reception, 9 May 2016," 9 May 2016, European Parliament. 9 May 2016 - Speech by Ambassador Lars Faaborg-Andersen (Head of Delegation of the EU to the State of Israel).pdf

it is a state of mind''. Based on the ''strong cultural and historical ties'', that state of mind, and thus peace was at the ''very core of the EU-Israel relationship''.[132] The Head of the EU Delegation used the past to show the possibilities of peace: if Europe could do it, so can Israel as they are one and the same. Interestingly, this statement was rather similar to the ones made by the Israeli leaders.

A final example can be found in the first statement by incoming EU ambassador to the State of Israel, Emanuele Giaufret, on 25 September 2017. In this statement, Giaufret spoke his mind about the discussions on the peace process being too pessimistic. Recalling the histories of a continent with ''the most violent conflict in human history among its own nations and from the horrors of the Shoah'', the ambassador illustrated how Europe has obtained a seemingly impossible peace. He stated:

''We're always waiting for the next generation to be the savior. Some idyllic generation which will not feel hate or anger, even when they live under conditions of terror or oppression or worse. Seventy years ago, men and women in Europe, recovering from the horrors of the war, discovered that they could be that generation. To all Israelis and Palestinians who think that, 50 years after 1967, the time is ripe to make peace, my message is that the European Union is with you.''[133]

This last quote sums up nicely the aim of Giaufret and the other European politicians in referring to the past. Through remembering the seemingly impossible success story of European reconciliation, they tried to mobilise Israel to commit to a similar goal, namely, to achieve a seemingly impossible peace in the Middle East.

Conclusion

Although there was a remarkable silence on the highest decision-making level, this chapter showed that both actors were anything but silent when it came to referencing the past. Despite the many EU condemnations in times of crisis, Israel did not respond. Only when the EU's actions had tangible consequences for Israel, did Netanyahu compare the events to a darker past. Although collective memory played a minimal role in condemning spirits, it was again

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[132] Faaborg-Andersen, ''Speech by Ambassador Lars Faaborg-Andersen
Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the State of Israel
Europe Day Reception, 9 May 2016,'' 2.
[133] Emanuele Giaufret, ''New year, new peace?'' 25 September 2017, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/32710_en

largely invoked positively in response to the developments in the Middle East. This chapter showed how both actors used negative and positive references to establish similarities between the EU and Israel. Both actors argued that if the impossible peace had been succeeded in Europe, so could it be achieved in the Middle East. In other words, both sides remembered the past to show the possibilities in the present, mobilizing the other to take a more positive stance.

This illustrates once again how the dominant narrative of collective memory by both the EU and Israel was not focused on condemnation or delegitimization, even though it did occur. Instead, both the Union and Israel used their positive and negative memories again to stress their similarities, this time with regard to the necessary peace in the Middle East. In contrast to the previous chapter, both actors seemed to do so primarily for mobilising purposes. However, whereas the Union solely focused on justifying its position and mobilising Israel, Israel also still used the past to legitimise its existence as a state. Additionally, the two actors again differed in their flexibility when it comes to referring to the past.

This illustrates how a change in socio-political context resulted in a change of narrative when invoking the past, but how Israel was still concerned with legitimising itself even when mobilising the Union. On 11 December 2017, political communication shifted. For the first time since 1995, the Prime Minister of Israel, the head of Israel's foreign policy making, visited the EU Foreign Affairs Council. The next chapter will analyse how collective memory played a role in the development of EU-Israeli foreign policy during these last years of the administration.

Chapter 4

A One-Way Street
11 December 2017 – 13 June 2021

On 11 December 2017, Benjamin Netanyahu visited the EU Foreign Affairs Council. In doing so, he was the first Israeli Prime Minister to fly out to Brussels in twenty-two years' time. Times looked bright for renewing relations. In the press conference following the meeting, both Netanyahu and HRVP Federica Mogherini restated their commitment to improve their relations, the same promise made during the last Association Council five years earlier.[134] Despite these promising vows, formal policy communication on the highest decision-making level failed to return in the years to follow.

Nevertheless, a rather interesting shift occurred in foreign policy. As Israel turned more toward a pro-Israeli United States (US), the Union tried to hopelessly stress its commitment to its former ally. However, unsuccessfully, as Israel remained remarkably silent. This chapter will analyse how collective memory played a role in a rather one-sided relationship. By analysing 137 government statements, meeting minutes, press conferences and speeches, this chapter will show how the EU used the past in its efforts to restore its relations.

The first part of this chapter will discuss how the Israeli state grew increasingly aligned with the US. Starting with the press conference by Netanyahu in December 2017, it is rather telling how Netanyahu initially used the past to defend Donald Trump, and how later references were significantly shorter and less elaborate than previously. The second part of this chapter will illustrate how the Union made considerable use of its negative and positive pasts to convince Israel of its ''special'' bond, as it hoped for the relationship to be restored.

Turning to the United States

One week before the visit by Netanyahu to Brussels, American President Donald J. Trump officially recognised Jerusalem as the official capital of Israel. In doing so, he disregarded the long-standing international agreement that Jerusalem should remain independent.[135] Mogherini

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[134] Federica Mogherini and Benjamin Netanyahu, ''HR Federica Mogherini welcomes Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu,'' 11 December 2017, Foreign Affairs Council, https://video.consilium.europa.eu/event/en/22909

[135] Mark Landler, ''Trump Recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's Capital and Orders U.S. Embassy to Move,'' 6 December 2017, *The New York Times* https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/06/world/middleeast/trump-jerusalem-israel-capital.html

used the occasion of the press conference to state the EU's disapproval of the decision, based on the argument that it threatened both the security of Israel and the stability of the Middle East.[136]

In contrast to Mogherini, Benjamin Netanyahu seized the opportunity to invoke references to a past that justified the US decision. He connected Jerusalem with the Jewish King David, which was "well-documented in the Bible". He argued that this connection had always continued throughout history. Using the example of the Holocaust, Netanyahu spoke of when "Jews in the ghettos of Europe whispered, 'Next year in Jerusalem, next year in Jerusalem.'".[137] Based on this historical connection, he delegitimised those, the UN for example, who did not recognise the city as Israel's capital, and praised the decision by Trump to do so.

"That connection is denied in UN forms and UNESCO in laughable decisions that seek to deny history and seek to deny historical truth. … I think what President Trump did was to put facts squarely on the table."[138]

His words simultaneously praised Trump's decision and delegitimised those who had not made such a decision. Interestingly, that also meant delegitimising the Union. Despite Netanyahu's good efforts, the EU stuck with their position on Jerusalem's neutrality.

One year later, at the Conference against Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism, Netanyahu struck again. This conference was hosted by the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU in Vienna. In his address, Netanyahu employed a wide variety of memories of the Holocaust to, logically, stress the necessity of combating anti-Semitism. Additionally, he used it as a platform to legitimise the existence of the Israeli State.

"And since the establishment of the State of Israel, we face a new form of antisemitism: vicious efforts to demonize the Jewish State and deny the Jewish people the right to self-determination in our ancestral homeland, the Land of Israel." [139]

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[136] Mogherini and Netanyahu, "HR Federica Mogherini welcomes Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu," https://video.consilium.europa.eu/event/en/22909.
[137] Mogherini and Netanyahu, "HR Federica Mogherini welcomes Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu."
[138] Mogherini and Netanyahu, "HR Federica Mogherini welcomes Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu."
[139] Benjamin Netanyahu, "PM Netanyahu's Message to the Conference on the Fight against Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism," 21 November 2018, Prime Minister's Office, https://www.gov.il/en/pages/eventa_antisemitic211118

Although it is not that remarkable that Netanyahu used the past to legitimise its existence, it is once again interesting to see how he seized the opportunity to attack those who did not yet recognise Israel's right to exist, even though the EU did not necessarily have a part in that.

After that speech, Israel kept rather quiet. Only a few brief references to the past occurred. All of these invocations were in response to initiated action by the EU, in contrast to the lengthy speeches and statements seen in previous years. One example was a response by Ron Huldai, Mayor of Tel Aviv to a speech by EU Ambassador Emanuele Giaufret on 16 May 2019.

"The creation of the European Community in 1950 is a testament to the courage and determination to end the conflict that claimed the lives of tens of millions of people in wars on its lands. You proved that peace is not always made with those you love, but those you need to in order to create a better reality for people."[140]

Although Huldai used the past to show how Europe achieved an unlikely peace, in contrast to the previous chapter, no analogies to the present were made. The statement was much less clear on its purpose compared to earlier invocations.

A second example can be found in a statement by the Head of the Israeli Mission to the EU, Aharon Leshno-Yaar, who invoked the past of the Holocaust very briefly when meeting with the EP Delegation to Israel on 7 November 2019. In response to a discussion on the labelling of products, Leshno-Yaar stated that he perceived this as a "boycott of Israel", and that this reminded him of "hard times in Europe".[141] Similarly to Netanyahu earlier, the Head of Mission used the Holocaust to delegitimize this EU decision.

A last example can be found in a statement by President Rivlin on Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2021. Together with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and EP President Charles Michel, he recalled the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau to restate their "commitment to preserving the memory of the Holocaust and fighting antisemitism".[142]

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[140] Ron Huldai, "Celebrating Europe Day in Israel," 16 May 2019, European Union Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/62534_en.

[141] European Parliament, "Minutes of the Meeting of 7 November 2019," 7 November 2019, D-IL_PV(2019)1107_1.

[142] Charles Michel, Reuven Rivlin, and Frank-Walter Steinmeier, "Joint statement by Presidents Michel, Rivlin and Steinmeier on the eve of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day," 26 January 2021, European Council, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/01/26/joint-statement-by-presidents-michel-rivlin-and-steinmeier-on-the-eve-of-the-international-holocaust-remembrance-day/

However, similarly to the first example, this statement seemed to be more focused on explaining its common identity with the Union, rather than that it had a clear legitimising, justifying or mobilising purpose.

<u>The Union Reaching Out</u>
In contrast to the Israeli silence, EU officials distinguished themselves during these final years in the frequency of referring to the past. Interestingly, almost all of these invocations happened on Israeli soil, or on Israeli special occasions. It seemed as if the EU tried to seize each and every opportunity to reach out to Israel to regain its influence in the region.

A prominent figure in doing so, was the EU Ambassador, Emanuele Giaufret. During these last few years, he organised multiple special occasions actively remembering the past. On 29 January 2018, 28 January 2019, and 30 April 2019 he hosted an event at his residence in Israel on the occasion of both the International and the Israeli Holocaust Remembrance Day.[143] During these commemorations, he connected the history of the Holocaust to the importance of the EU values of non-discrimination and the combat against anti-Semitism. On 29 January, he stated the following:

"It also reminds us to double our efforts to combat anti-Semitism which not only is a threat to Jewish citizens in Europe and elsewhere, but also to the core values and the very identity of the European Union."[144]

On Yom HaShoah (the Israeli Holocaust Remembrance Day), he hosted a commemoration of the victims who were deported from Drancy to Auschwitz, and argued that

"Our Union was built as a reaction to the horrors of the Holocaust and the Second World War. Remembering it and fighting antisemitism is our duty towards the European Jewish citizens and indispensable to protect our common European values."[145]

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[143] Emanuele Giaufret, "EU Ambassador hosts commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day," 29 January 2018, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/38873_en; Emanuele Giaufret, "EU Ambassador Hosts commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day," 28 January 2019, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/57272_en.
[144] Giaufret, "EU Ambassador hosts commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day."
[145] Emanuele Giaufret, "Ahead of Yom HaShoah, EU Ambassadors honour the memory of Jewish deportees from Drancy to Auschwitz," 30 April 2019, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/61755_en.

Although it is not surprising that Giaufret referred to the past of the Holocaust on these days of remembrance, the way in which he linked these memories to the values of the Union is striking. Using the past as a legitimisation of the EU and an explanation of its values is in stark contrast with the previous chapters, where the EU was always either trying to justify its positions toward the Middle East, or trying to mobilise Israel to adopt a certain position.

Giaufret was not the only one to do so. Both in 2018 and in 2019, the local EU missions produced a statement on Yom HaShoah. Both statements had a similar purpose as Giaufret's invocations of the past, namely, to link the Holocaust to the EU identity. On 11 April 2018 they stated:

"We stand together to combat antisemitism, which continues to undermine the security of our Jewish citizens and threatens the very core of our values."[146]

And on 1 May 2019, the following words were spoken.

"Our Union was built to respond to the Shoah and the horrors of World War II. Remembering the Holocaust and fighting antisemitism is our duty towards Jewish citizens in Europe and elsewhere in the world and indispensable to protect our common values."[147]

Both statements very explicitly created a connection between the negative memories of the Holocaust and the values of the European Union. In contrast to the previous years, the Union seemed to use the negative past of the Holocaust as an explaining tool of the EU values and identity, rather than a justifying or mobilising tool.

Another EU politician referring to the Holocaust, was Commission Vice-President Frans Timmermans. In his message on the occasion of Rosh Hashanah[148], Timmermans remembered the razzia of 1942 in Vel d'Hiv in Paris and made an analogy to anti-Semitism today.

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[146] EU Mission in Israel, "Local EU Statement on Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day," 11 April 2018, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/42777_en.
[147] EU Mission in Israel, "Local EU Statement on Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom Ha'Shoah)," 1 May 2019, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/61660_en
[148] Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year.

"With shock and sadness I recall the horrific murder of Mireille Knoll who survived the roundup at Vel d'Hiv in 1942, but not antisemitism in Europe in 2018. ... The European Union was built on the values of respect for human dignity, human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law."[149]

Similar to the previous statements, his use of the past to justify the strong opposition of the Union against antisemitism was not that surprising. However, Timmermans connected these negative memories to both "the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights", and "the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel".[150] He thus not only used the past to legitimise the Union, but also the existence of the State of Israel.

The Union did not limit itself to its negative memories on the Holocaust. In these final years, two Europe Day[151] celebrations were organised in Israel, one on 11 May 2018, and the other on 16 May 2019. It was again EU ambassador Giaufret who took the initiative for these occasions. On these days, he remembered the past of the European integration process to explain the values and identity of the Union. However, what differentiates the use of these positive memories from the dark memories of the Holocaust, is that Giaufret linked them inherently to their relations with Israel. For example, on 11 May 2018, he argued that:

"These values are also the cornerstone of our friendship with Israel. This is not just something we say – this is an important recognition of just how close Israel is to our Union, a partner to our European project and a friend we can speak to, eye to eye, as friends do. Just like the EU, Israel was born with a vision – the vision of the Jewish people which is sung in the Hatikvah[152]. … This is a vision which you have fulfilled in Israel – a thriving country built on the land to which Jews are historically connected."[153]

Through remembering the coming into existence of the Union, Giaufret both stressed the similarities between the EU and Israel's values and emphasised the proximity of their

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[149] Frans Timmermans, "Message by Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European Commission on the occasion of Rosh Hashanah," 6 September 2019, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/50196_en.
[150] Timmermans, "Message by Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European Commission on the occasion of Rosh Hashanah," https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/50196_en.
[151] Europe Day celebrates the anniversary of the signing of the Schuman Declaration, which established the ECSC. It is regarded as the official start of the European integration process.
[152] The Hatikvah is the national anthem of the State of Israel. It sings of the wish of the Jewish people for a Jewish state.
[153] Emanuele Giaufret, "Europe Day Speech," 11 May 2018, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/44396_en

relationship. He explained both the EU and the Israeli identity, and, based on their similarities, justified their special relationship. Also on the second Europe Day celebration in 2019, Giaufret historically justified the Union's close ties to Israel.

"We are also celebrating this year, 60 years of diplomatic relations and friendship with Israel. … Our futures are interdependent these days."[154]

Again, he connected these positive memories of the Union to the values of the EU and justified its relationship with Israel. In doing so, he argued in favour of a close EU-Israeli relationship, something that might have not been so straight-forward during these times.

Conclusion

During the final years of the administration, Israel turned to the US instead of the Union. After Netanyahu defended the newly-inaugurated US President during his press conference in Brussels, Israel remained silent. The few references to the past were either delegitimising the Union's decisions or had no clear purpose at all. This presents a stark contrast to the previous chapters where the focus was predominantly on legitimising Israel's existence, and justifying its positions to developments in the Middle East. It seems as if Israel felt like it had nothing to prove to the EU, knowing that it had strong support across the Atlantic.

The Union, on the other hand, was anything but silent on the past. Organising numerous remembrance events, they used the European memories of the Holocaust and the European integration process to originate the Union's values and justify its "special" bond to Israel. Although the Union was still confined to its own memories of the Holocaust and integration, this chapter illustrated how the EU shifted in its use of collective memory to respond to the geopolitical shift to their American rivals. In a time when Israel focussed its attention more on the US and grew silent, the EU increasingly tried to rely on the past in its efforts to restore its special relationship. This differed significantly from previous years when they were predominantly focused on justifying their perspectives on the developments in the Middle East and mobilising Israel to adopt a particular position.

Additionally, by focussing on the role of collective memory, this chapter portrayed a different narrative on the development of EU-Israeli relations than previous scholarship. Whereas Akgül-Açıkmeşe and Özel argued that the EU became less effective because of Israel's

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[154] Emanuele Giaufret, "Europe Day Speech by ambassador to Israel, Emanuele Giaufret," 16 May 2019, European External Action Service, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/62853_en.

shift to the US, [155] this chapter showed how the EU did not give up on its relations politically. On the contrary, it increased its efforts to stress the importance of such relations. This illustrates how collective memory can be used in response to geopolitical shifts. However, as relations did not improve until the new administration was established, it is questionable to what extent the Union was effective in achieving their goal.

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[155] Akgül-Açıkmeşe and Özel, "EU Policy towards the Israel-Palestine Conflict: The Limitations of Mitigation Strategies," 59-78.

Conclusion

Memory plays an important role in constructing a state's foreign policy. Which pasts it remembers, and in what manner, not only constructs the image of the country that is presents to the rest of the world, but also guides its decision-making process within the international realm. Foreign policy between the EU and Israel was not an exception to that rule. This thesis illustrated how speeches and statements, predominantly discursive sources, of the EU and Israel were coloured by historical references during Netanyahu's second administration.

This study explored how these references played a role within EU-Israeli foreign policy. It found that both actors used positive and negative memories predominantly non-reflectively to explain and legitimise their identity, justify their positions and mobilise the other actor toward a particular position. In contrast to previous scholarship, the analysis showed how the past, both positive and negative, appeared primarily in positive instead of condemning situations. Both actors stressed their similarities rather than differences.

However, this thesis also illustrated that who referred to which past, how and with what particular purpose differed both between the different timeframes and between the actors. First of all, this thesis illustrated how the use of collective memory was inherently related to the socio-political and geopolitical context. During the time of the Arab Spring, both actors used the past to emphasise similarities in democratic values. Whereas Israel used such similarities to legitimise its existence and justify its cautious position toward the developments in the MENA region, the EU aimed to mobilise Israel to adopt a more accepting attitude toward the democratic trend. When the socio-political context shifted to an escalation of violence in the Middle East, the main focus also shifted from emphasising democracy to emphasising peace. Whereas Israel continued to legitimise its historic standing, it also used the past to stress its support for the peace process. Similarly, the EU used its memories of an unlikely European reconciliation to mobilise Israel in taking more initiative in realising peace in the Middle East. Lastly, when the geo-political context shifted toward a pro-Israeli American government, Israel grew increasingly silent on the past in their foreign policy toward the Union, as it felt less the need to prove itself to the EU. Meanwhile, the EU shifted its use of their memories to emphasise the EU-Israeli similarities in values, emphasising the strengths of their relationship.

Secondly, this study found several differences in the use of the past between the two actors. Although both the Union and Israel used the past to emphasise their similarities, the purpose of doing so differed. Israel did so predominantly to legitimise its existence and justify its own positions towards the socio-political context. Its use of the past was thus predominantly

explanatory and self-focused. In contrast, despite the shift in the final years, the EU referred to the past more to steer Israel into a particular direction, rather than to explain its own views or identity. Therefore, its use of the past was much more mobilising than explanatory. Only when the geopolitical context changed, did the Union shift to using their common past as a means to legitimise their long-standing relationship. But even then, the past was used to steer Israel back to the Union, rather than to internally legitimise the Union's existence and positions.

Additionally, this thesis identified a difference between the degree of flexibility with which both actors could refer to the past. The analysis showed how Israel as a state was much more flexible in its references than the Union was. Whereas the EU was predominantly bound to the European memories of the Holocaust and the success-story of European integration, Israel's references to the past were much more volatile. Even though a significant amount of Israeli politicians focussed on the Jewish history of the state by referring to biblical history, the pogroms and the Holocaust, Israel also demonstrated its ability in referring to inherently European history, such as the revolutions in the twentieth century, whenever they wanted to emphasise their commonalities. This aligns perfectly with the differences in identity-construction between a state and a multilateral institution, as is argued in Chapter One. It illustrates how the use of collective memory and foreign policy are inherently identity-bound.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. One limitation of this study, is that this study focussed solely on EU-Israeli foreign policy during the second Netanyahu administration. Therefore, it cannot draw any conclusions on how collective memory played a role within the wider development of the special, but ambivalent EU-Israeli relationship. Additionally, the scope of this study was limited to the public interaction between the two actors within the international realm. It did not take into account any private, informal communications or domestic, and inter-state or inter-institutional differences that led to the production of the texts analysed. Therefore, it cannot draw any definitive conclusions on the underlying strategies of either the EU's or Israel's references to the past.

These limitations also raise new questions. Future research could look into the role of the past during other Israeli administrations. A comparison could lead to other interesting insights in the role of collective memory in the broader EU-Israeli relationship. Another recommendation could be to look into the impact of the domestic or sub-institutional realm. Adding this internal dimension could provide an interesting perspective on how the use of collective memory is determined by domestic or sub-institutional trends. To what extent is the EU limited due to its multifaceted nature both in terms of member states and institutions?

Further research in the spirit of such questions would supplement research as this in contributing to both the field of EU-Israeli relations and the role of collective memory in foreign policy.

Nevertheless, this thesis is a valuable contribution to the existing scholarship. First of all, by analysing the EU-Israeli relationship through the lens of collective memory, a new perspective on the nature of this relationship revealed itself. Instead of portraying the relationship as politically deadlocked and ineffective, as is predominantly emphasised in existing scholarship[156], this analysis illustrated how both actors used their historical similarities to emphasise the strengths of their relationship, rather than their weaknesses. It illustrated how Israel did not predominantly use the past as a tool to condemn or delegitimise the Union,[157] but how the dominant attitude was positive instead, focusing on similarities rather than differences.

Secondly, this study contributes to the field of collective memory by moving beyond its state-focussed perspective. Through analysing the role of collective memory in foreign policy between a state and a multilateral institution, this thesis showed how the phenomenon can not only be used by a state, whose identity is very clearly set, but also by multilateral institutions, of whom the identity is more complex. And, more importantly, it showed how the two different types of actors differed in their flexibility and purposes when referring back to the past.

Additionally, it illustrated once again how the political use of memory, both within a state and a multilateral institution, was inherently related to shifts in the socio-political and geopolitical context. Although that finding might not be revolutionary or novel, this thesis convincingly illustrated how this concept can reveal new insights into how a state and a multilateral institution can to such shifts. Even though they might differ in their purpose and flexibility in doing so, it shows how, for both a state and a multilateral institution, memory is inherently political.

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[156] Akgül-Açıkmeşe and Özel, "EU Policy towards the Israel-Palestine Conflict: The Limitations of Mitigation Strategies," 59-78; Del Sarto, "Israel and the European Union: Between Rhetoric and Reality", 155-186; Gordon and Pardo, "Normative Power Europe meets the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," 265-274; Malcontent, "The Netherlands, the EU and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Why The Hague Continues to be One of Israel's Most Faithful European Allies," 270-299.
[157] Benn, "The End of Old Israel: How Netanyahu Has Transformed the Nation," 16-27; Del Sarto, "Israel and the European Union: Between Rhetoric and Reality", 155-186; Harpaz, 'EU-Israel Relations: Netanyahu's Legacy,' 1-22; Naor, "Hawks' beaks, doves' feathers: Likud Prime Ministers between Ideology and Reality," 154-19; Sokol, "The Tension between Historical Memory and Realpolitik in Israel's Foreign Policy," 311-324; Waxman, *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity: Defending/Defining the Nation*, 15-42.

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P‍LAGIARISM R‍ULES A‍WARENESS S‍TATEMENT

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- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
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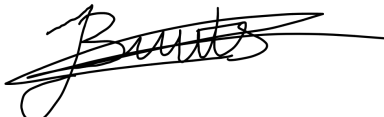
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