EUROPEAN UNION-ISRAEL RELATIONS: A DESCRIPTIVE RESEARCH OF THE STATUS-QUO AS PART OF THE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

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Abstract:
Although the last legislative elections in Israel indicate a strong desire for political change, the Israeli voter is still very much aware of the position of Israel on the current international scene. The Peace Plan for Israel and Palestine proposed by the Trump administration, on the one hand, alienated even more the Palestinian Authority, and on the other hand, ignored European Union's willingness to become a more relevant global actor by not involving it in the development of the Plan. Regardless the results of the future presidential elections in the United States, it is important to understand up to which extent should the European Union get involved in order to prevent potential negative outcomes of the Peace Plan. Starting from this context, the research aims at outlining the current dynamics and narratives governing the relations between

the European Union, as a global actor, and Israel, as a regional actor in the Middle East, including here the global implications of the events in this region.

1.INTRODUCTION

The relations between the European Union and Israel in the current global context continue to be conundrum for whoever tries to approach in an isolated manner. The history of the State of Israel indicates an already existing habit of the Israeli leaders to discuss a specific issue with the actor they considered the most relevant for the topic, in spite of any traditional partnership with any other country. For this reason, the relations of Israel with different relevant global or regional actors are better understood in the political context of the Middle East. Of course, one should keep an eye on Israel's domestic politics and the relationship with its traditional partner, the United States of America. However, no matter how much the Netanyahu government tried to dodge the contact with the European Union, this relationship stays relevant, and it seems to become more relevant for a post-Netanyahu leadership.

This research aims at delivering a clear understanding of the interactions between the narratives of the United States and the European Union regarding Israel during the Obama and Trump administrations (2009-2020). Additonally, the research comparatively looks at the period of the two administrations with the second term of Netanyahu as Prime-Minister. By having them compared it would be possible to emphasize a few significant aspects for future researches. The first such aspect is the (in)compatibility of the narratives of the two U.S. administrations with those of Netanyahu government. The second aspect is represented by the different approach of the two administrations in respect to topics like the Iran Nuclear Deal and the Two-State Solution, which are crucial for the research of the relations with Israel. The third aspect is the narrative of

European Union as a global actor, and the position of this narrative in the interactions between the U.S. and Israel since 2009.

Thus, the research begins with a short description of the political situation in Israel at the moment of writing this article, and continues with identifying the elements behind the domestic political narrative in Israel. Most of these elements gravitate around the 'messianic aura' surrounding Netanyahu's efforts of pursuing the national security of Israel. The political crisis following the 2019 legislative elections in Israel that led to the creation of a coalition government is in many aspects the result of the increasing influence of Netanyahu during his second term as a Prime-Minister and, of course, of the inability of the opposition parties to counteract this expanding influence. While the aim of this research is not to measure this influence, by approaching the narrative of Netanyahu government it will be possible to examine this influence.

The second part of the paper will bring into discussion the relations between the EU and Israel as integrative part of the trialogue European Union – Israel – United States. Rather than approaching historically this relationship, this segment of the research aims at identifying the EU's position in relation to Israel during Netanyahu's second term. The paper shows here that the EU succeeded in co-teaming the United States during the Obama administration in issues like the Iran Nuclear Deal, while the steps taken by the Trump administration regarding Israel have a low level of compatibility with the EU's approach.

The final part of the research brings into discussion the change of U.S.' narrative regarding Israel during the two administrations. The main reason for this is to deliver a clearer understanding of the approach of the Netanyahu government towards the security of Israel, as well the Iran Nuclear Deal and the situation of the Occupied Territories. The relevance of this clarification lies in understanding the historical place and impact of the Netanyahu's government policies in Israel.

2.THEORETHICAL FRAMEWORK

Given the fact that the interactions between the EU-Israel-U.S. play an instrumental role in this research, the analysis will be based on the state-as-actor

approach rather than focusing 'on the structure of the international system as a cause of state behavior' (Smith 2001, 38). The approach (Kiely 2017, 4) supports the post-structuralist idea that the U.S. foreign policy, for instance, can be interpreted 'based on constructed national interests, and on the articulation and interpellation of representations of international politics' and that 'these representations of international politics are structured by identity discourses which set the orientation and limits of possible policy decisions'. According to (Larsen 2004, 64),

'interests and derived policies are shaped with a particular framework of meaning and are not exogenously given. Actors do not have preferences and interests that are external to their understanding of the social world and their own identity and place therein'

Essentially, the social-constructivst approach provides a more precise framework of analysis for foreign policy based on the 'actorness' of the states. In comparison to Neoliberalist or Neorealist authors like Arie Krampf or John Mearsheimer, who approached topics related to Israel or Israel's foreign relations through their specific frameworks of analysis, the newer social-constructivist approach aims at a more comprehensive analysis. In respect to EU's contribution to different policy areas, (Larsen 2002, 39) argues that 'actorness of a particular social unit is not an essentialist category that is given by certain objective material elements. Rather, the grouping achieves its actorness as a result of its members and its surroundings articulating this grouping as an actor in a particular social field'. Thus, this theoretical approach allows an independent research of a specific involvement of the EU (or any other actor) in a certain issue related to foreign policy. In the specific case of EU-Israel relations, the social constructivist approach allows, for instance, a research of EU's involvement in the Israel-Palestine conflict regardless the relations between EU and any other actor involved in the dialogue surrounding the conflict. Moreover, since the social constructivism is associated with the analysis of discourse (not in the sense so speech, talk), it allows also an analysis of the narratives behind different policies. In this context, the framework of analysis is

determined by the social constructivism striving 'at making claims about ideas 'inside actors' heads whereas discourse analysis aims to capture the ideational by analyzing the construction of discourse as it plays out in-between set of actors' (Lynggaard 2019, 5). The definition of discourse analysis to be followed in this research is the one proposed by (Lynggaard 2019, 2) as 'a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorization that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities'

This research is built on the larger background provided the discussion around state identity or, rather, what is perceived as identity through the lenses of the political narratives. Therefore, this aspect is easily identifiable, for instance, in the way in which the U.S. – Israel relations evolved during Obama administration and during Trump administration. Also, it is visible in the way in which the EU approaches the political narrative of the Netanyahu government, as the approach is done through the significant elements of each narrative. Additionally, the social constructivist analysis of the EU-Israel relations rather than trying to replace segmental types of analyses: domestic politics based on, security related, economic, it aims at positioning them in a different, more complete perspective. The reason for this is that these fields are considered not being able anymore to influence a certain foreign policy, but are rather instrumental for the foreign policy as part of a certain narrative. For instance, in the case of the U.S. – Israel relations during Trump administration, and the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, one may argue that the relation between Trump and his evangelist voters was crucial for the political decision itself. However, Trump's relationship with the U.S. evangelist groups, as belonging to the U.S. domestic politics, was only a part of a larger narrative in which the U.S. is represented as the unconditional friend of Israel regardless any partisan influence. In conclusion, as the case study will show, it is possible, and necessary to aim at generating a more comprehensive analysis of these relations. In comparison to the realist approach in which the interests of a state play a major role, it is also necessary what defines a certain situation or context as being the interest of a certain state.

3.INTERNAL POLITICAL CONTEXT IN ISRAEL

The political crisis generated by the last three rounds of legislative elections in Israel and the final outcome, which is the coalition agreement, seem to be only a consequence of a much deeper crisis of the Israeli democracy. For those that are more optimist about it, no matter how unpleasant it looks, it is just the beginning of a long-awaited change of the Israeli political panorama. The first relevant aspect related to the outcome of the elections is the creation of an over-sized government that might reach either 32 or 36 members, and 16 deputy Ministers. (Valori 2020)

The idea of such a large government is largely criticized since, simply put, such a big number of members increases the chances for division and, consequently, for thwarting some important decisions. Additionally, such a big government goes against both the political tradition and the Basic Law of Israel. From the point of view of the tradition, such a cabinet is totally unjustified, as the unity government created in 1969 had 24 ministers (with a Knesset having 102 members), and the unity government from 1984 had 25 ministers (with 75 members of the Knesset) (Kenig 2020). According to the Basic Law (as Israel has no Constitution), this exceptional situation is considered to have the capacity to alter the 2014 amendment setting a limit to 19 ministers (suspended one year later) and to create a damaging precedent. In many regards, this situation can be considered similar with the avoidance of the *Spitzenkandidat* procedure during the last nominations for the presidency of the European Commission.

A very important role, however, is played by the larger context of the Israeli domestic politics in which the new government has to act, as this situation prolonged the Prime-Minister term of Netanyahu (for at least another 18 months, added to the already 11 years spent in office). This context is a very special one and, given the long time spent by Netanyahu as a Prime-Minister, many aspects of this context gravitate around his public image.

Capitalizing on Israeli's need for security became almost a leitmotif of Netanyahu's leadership, even when political initiatives undertaken under the umbrella of this need endangered the Israeli democracy. Often 'security concerns and the strong influence of the military in society have often cast

typical liberal values aside' (Heistein 2017, 2). This exchange between Prime-Minister Netanyahu and the Israeli voters and most of the parties that joined to his government coalitions was supported by two main pillars: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the efforts for halting the Iranian nuclear program (Scheindlin 2017, 4). To put it in a more concrete way, these two elements have a common ideological denominator that served well the political purposes of Prime-Minister Netanyahu: the myth of "a clash of civilizations between life-affirming Zionists and radical Islamic enemies committed to death, as well as an urgent fight against subversive enemies within" (Scheindlin 2017, 3). The issue surrounding Iran has its own contribution to Netanyahu's narrative:

'He (Benjamin Netanyahu) has frequently attacked the Islamic Republic as being on the wrong side of a moral divide with Israel while arguing in favor of their continued economic and political isolation. (…) He also criticized members of the international community for their immorality in disallowing Israel to attack Iran. Finally, Netanyahu excuses Israel's human rights record with the scapegoating rationale that Iran or other Muslim nations are comparatively much worse' (Jonathan G. Leslie 2017).

This narrative influenced significantly the coalitions that Netanyahu forged, as they include most of the time "parties that are further to the right and openly oppose a Palestinian state, as well as centrist parties who support it in theory rather than in practice" (Scheindlin 2017, 4). All these elements put together led to the creation of an ideological framework that would justify not only the domestic political initiatives, but also the moves on the international scene. One such move is the total rejection of the Iran Deal in the very heart of the American politics, the U.S. Congress. Netanyahu was supported in his endeavors by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Avigdor Lieberman, who said that the deal "is an agreement of total capitulation to unrestrained terrorism and violence in the international arena" while comparing it to the Munich Agreement reached with Nazi Germany in 1938 (Kershner 2015).

Moreover, Netanyahu attracted even the support of some political figures from the other isle, as Isaac Herzog, the leader of the center-left Zionist Union party

and, most important, the leader of the opposition in Parliament. He said that Israel was facing "a new era in the Middle East that poses security and diplomatic challenges for Israel that are more dangerous and complex than any we have known before" (Kershner 2015). Thus, it becomes obvious that this non-partisan support for rejecting the U.S. Iran Deal had a strong contribution to the political capital of Netanyahu especially in supporting the narrative of Netanyahu's government. Moreover, it contributed, as we will see further in this research, in improving Netanyahu's relations with the Trump administration.

Regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict, Netanyahu has a more indirect approach than in the case of Iran Deal. The main reason for this is that the issue manifests, from an ideological point of view, a more global dimension as the global Muslim community considers itself affected by it, while the U.S. Deal with Iran has a more regional dimension. While both issues have a strong impact on the Middle East, the discussions around the Israel-Palestine conflict has a broader impact as it involves territorial aspects that may lead to dangerous precedents and has more chances to touch a nerve of some European countries, at least. One may even speculate over a higher level of sensitivity of European countries regarding territorial issues after the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014.

Although the topic was never approached again in the terms required by the Oslo Accords after it, it did not lose its capacity of delivering a good amount of political capital for the Netanyahu government among the Israeli voters. While indicted on charges of fraud, bribery and breach of trust, political moves like having the U.S. Embassy (and other embassies) moved from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem, or the Trump Peace Plan promising a durable peace, are aimed only at supporting the political causes of the Netanyahu government. Both these political moves, similarly to the opposition to the U.S. Iran Deal, are part of the same narrative leveraging on the special need for security of the Israeli population.

In spite of its position, that is closer to the center of the political spectrum, the leader of the Kahol Lavan party, and the main competitor of Netanyahu in the legislative elections, Gantz will be tested by the Israeli voters during his term within the coalition framework. As Israel became more isolated during the terms

of Netanyahu as Prime-Minister, the former Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has to prove that he can deliver security for the Israeli population, and that can fix its relations with the main global actors in during and post-Trump administration.

4. EU-ISRAEL RELATIONS

Based on its ten strategic points, the new European Commission approaches the field of foreign policy as a tactical step to a 'stronger Europe in the World' (European Commission 2019). The main segments on which the initiatives in this area will focus are: foreign trade, a more politically present Europe at a global level and a stronger defense of Europe. Although, according to the Agenda, the main geographical priorities of the European Commission are Africa and the Western Balkans, areas like the Middle East or the countries of the Eastern Partnership remain on the radar. In respect to Israel, the approach is an integrated one targeting the Middle East Peace Process.

In spite of the fact the relations between Israel and the European Union seem to have been stagnating, or even worsening, during the terms of Netanyahu as a Prime-Minister, the issues involving the two sides continued to generate effects. Besides economic and political aspects, the good relationships between Israel and different European countries manifests a strong historical dimension. These relations are pre-existent to the improved relations between Israel and the United States since Kennedy and Johnson administrations. One of these aspects is connected to the events surrounding the Jewish community in Europe during World War 2. However, as a political project aiming at implementing strong idealistic principles, while it witnessed major territorial changes, the European Union after 1967 and the Oslo Accords could not agree with the Israeli politics regarding Palestine.

The issue of the Israel-Palestine conflict, as approached by the European Union, is bi-dimensional. The first dimension is represented by the territorial issues, including here the policy of settlements. The second dimension is connected to the issue of Human Rights for the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. This

issue is part of the very core of interests of the European Union, as defined in the words of the former EU High Representative, Federica Mogherini:

'We have an interest in promoting our values around the globe. And the way we articulate our interests has to embed our fundamental values. So, we need a strategy to protect proactively our interests, keeping in mind that promoting our values is an integral part of our interests.' (Mogherini, 2015).

Complementary to the issue of Israel-Palestine conflict and a strong signal, in the same time, was the adoption of the Basic Law in July 2018. The European Union expressed a strong concern over the passing of the Law as Mrs. Mogherini declared: 'we've been very clear when it comes to the two-state solution, we believe it is the only way forward and any step that would further complicate or prevent this solution of becoming a reality be avoided' (Reuters 2018). The main reasons of the concern regarding the Basic Law are the following:

1. It limits the 'right to exercise national self-determination' in Israel to the Jewish people;
2. It gives Arabic language a secondary status in comparison to Hebrew, although the text of the Law describes it as a 'special status';
3. It establishes 'Jewish settlement as a national value' and mandates that the state 'will labor to encourage and promote its establishment and development' (Berger 2018);

Besides the fact that they reflect the official opinion of the European Union on the Basic Law, the declaration of the former HR/VP Mogherini stay relevant also in the case of the Trump Plan for Peace. This fact is confirmed by the declaration of the current HR/VP of the European Commission, Josep Borell on Trump's Plan for Peace:

'The European Union will study and assess the proposals put forward. This will be done on the basis of the EU's established position and its firm and united commitment to a negotiated and viable two-state solution that takes into account the legitimate aspirations of both the Palestinians and the Israelis, respecting all relevant UN

resolutions and internationally agreed parameters.' (Council of the European Union 2020)

As the EU aims at promoting its values across the globe, it pays a special attention to the enforcement of these values at home. Often, the European Union has to deal with events which affect the Jewish community in Europe as a result of the politics in Israel. The rise of anti-Semitism in the past 10 years manifested itself in different forms, from grafittis with Nazi symbols in Jewish cemeteries all across the Europe to extreme attacks like the one at Hypercacher (Paris) and the Jewish schools in France, or at the Jewish museum in Brussels. A distinct trait of this new anti-Semitism is that it comes more from the left spectrum of the politics, as a reaction to the nationalist policies of the Netanyahu government. In many ways this New anti-Semitism, as it is sometimes called, can be understood as a reaction to the nationalist policies of the Netanyahu government. Clearly referring to this aspect (one may only speculate a refence to the 2018 nation-state law too), the president of the Conference of European Rabbis, Pinchas Goldschmidt, said: 'If a party is intrinsically racist, bigoted against large parts of society and intolerant of minorities, if Jews are not the target now, they will be in the near future' (Gomel 2019).

From an economic point of view, the European Union has been for a very long time until today the main trade partner for Israel. In 2017, the total trade amounting reached approximately €36, 2 billion. Part of this, the EU imports from Israel, amounted €14,7 billion, in the same year (European Commission, 2020). The economic relations between the two sides are also targetted by a movement that was declared anti-Semitic by the European Union. Organizations under the umbrella of Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement try to influence the access of Israeli goods on European and U.S. markets. According to an official answer given by the former Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini "the EU rejects the BDS campaigns attempts to isolate Israel and is opposed to any boycott of Israel" (European Parliament 2016). In this context, it is easily understood that the EU rejects any anti-Semitic narrative and that it is in symphony with other institutions like the OHCHR Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, according to whom "the

objectives, activities and effects of the BDS movement are fully anti-Semitic" (OHCHR 2019). These aspects clearly indicate the willingness of the European Union to fully cooperate with the State of Israel, of course, on the condition of Israel engaging in solving the Israel-Palestine conflict and the consequent violations of human rights.

In the current global context, the way in which Netanyahu government decided to interact with the European Union can be interpreted in at least two ways. The first one is related to the buzzword of the 2020 edition of Munich Security Conference: westlessness. The main idea behind this new concept describes a type of cooperation much closer to *realpolitik,* based on the decreasing influence of the United States on the global scene and the rise of *illiberal* democracies (Poland, China, Turkey, Israel) or authoritarian regimes (Russia, China, Iran). This whole environment rejects the Western values while continuing to maintain economic ties with the Western countries. What makes these regimes very attractive, however, is that most of them succeed in ensuring a strong economic growth in their countries, and give a strong flavor of nationalism to this success. Based on this description, the Netanyahu government positioned itself in this paradigm of opposing the globalists (the anti-Soros narrative was thematic for some of Netanyahu's speeches).

The second way to understand this interaction, as the research will describe further, is the one in which the European Union became the collateral victim of the exchange of political favors between the Netanyahu government and Trump administration.

5.ISRAEL - USA RELATIONS DURING TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Besides the worsening of the relations between the Netanyahu governemnt and Obama Administrion that the Iran Nuclear Framework brought between the Netanyahu government and Obama Administrion, it also created a misconnection in the dialogue between the two countries. However, the Iran

Nuclear Deal was not the only element to alienate Netanyahu form the United States. Additional to this, Netanyahu was 'forced by the Obama administration, for example, to publicly endore the two-state solition to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to orded a nin-month freeze of settlement building in the West Bank and to refrain from unilaterally attacking Iran's nuclear facilities' (Saltzman 2014, 2). However, this uncomfortable situation for Netanyahu ended as Trump slammed the Agreement as 'one of the dumbest deals ever' (Inbar 2017, 1), and decided the withdrawal of the United States from the agreement on May 8, 2018. It is still a matter of debate either the decision to withdraw from the Iran Deal would affect the image of president Trump in from of the U.S. citizens. Even before the withdrawal of the U.S. from the Iran Deal there were surveys indicating a drop in how Americans perceive the threat posed by the Iranian nuclear program. In this respect, some analysts expect that such a move might compel the administration to allocate considerable resources and risk a military confrontation with Iran (Golov 2018, 3).

In this context, although the relations between Israel and the European Union remained at a low level, it seemed that there still space for dialogue between the two. Thus, at the end or Obama's second term, Netanyahu was in a position needing a good ally in whoever was to follow as the President of the United States. The victory of Trump in 2016 presidential elections represented a strong reassurance of the U.S. support for Israel, especially through the lenses of Netanyahu nationalist approach. Fully enjoying the support of the white evangelicals, Trump positioned himself in concordance with their messianic narrative (par excellence anti-Semitic). In this regard, as he already promised to deliver a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, he decided to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This recognition 'has not only deepened the stalemate in peace negotiation, but perhaps put an end to the two-state idea as a scenario in peacemaking' (Mohamad 2019, 28). While, at a domestic level, many decyphered this decision as a way to reward his evangelical voters, in terms of foreign policy it can be understood as a sign of policies contrasting to those of the Obama administration:

'The progressive, liberal Obama stands in direct contrast to the conservative and increasingly illiberal Netanyahu. Unlike U.S. presidents, Israeli prime ministers have no term limits, and Netanyahu is safely on his way to becoming the longest-serving prime minister, surpassing the founding father of the Israeli state, David Ben-Gurion. Netanyahu's place in the history books will not be earned on the basis of a bold foreign policy record or brilliantly planned and executed military campaigns.' (Etzion 2016, 2)

Moreover, this support of the Republican Party for Netanyahu fits an older background, as 'Netanyahu's Likud and his American supporters are an integral part of the Republican Party's camp, and Israel is too involved in the American political and defense establishment for Netanyahu to be considered as distant as a foreign leader' (Bernard 2015).

In Israel, the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel was immediately perceived as having the capacity to bring a consistent amount of political capital to. Netanyahu for the expected – at that moment – legislative elections. Moreover, as the Israel Police started 5 cases of investigation on Netanyahu, here this political move was perceived as expected to deliver too. In respect to the narrative behind the politics of Netanyahu government, the recognition of Jerusalem, and the consequent decision of the U.S. and few other countries to move their embassies to Jerusalem, was aimed at fueling the messianic image of Netanyahu government. Also, it was targeting at reassuring the Israeli citizens of the full support of the United States and few countries around the world – although most of them have not moved their embassies yet. In the end, the symbols that this episode involved give fuel the narratives and the nationalist feelings of both the supporters of Likud and the white evangelists. In the words of Prof. Yehuda Bauer:

'The eternal Jewish people did not exist before the fourteenth century BCE, and Jerusalem developed from a small village at about that time. It did not exist before that. The city will be, they tell us, the eternal capital of the Jews. This kind of talk is typical of unthinking religious nationalism – "eternity", our politicians should remember, is a very long time' (Bauer 2020).

In this specific case, the EU's rhetoric was more than obvious already for many years, since the 'European references to Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem as *settlements* and determining their construction as *illegal*, thereby not distinguishing them, in European eyes, from Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, is seen as a direct challenge to Israel's claim as its undivided capital' (Sharon Pardo & Joel Peters 2010)

Since Trump promised during the electoral campaign to deliver a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, one can even think about the recognition of Jerusalem as a preparatory step of the process. These events created a strong context for alienating the European Union as a partner of dialogue in solving the Israel-Palestine conflict. One aspect in which the Trump administration is not compatible with the European Union, and which strongly related to finding a solution for the Israel-Palestine conflict is represented by the issue of the settlements in the West Bank. President Obama paid extra attention to the issue of settlements considering it crucial for solving the conflict. However, Trump administration approached the topic of the settlements in a more relaxed manner as it is not perceived by him and his advisors as the most important problem in the Middle East. Event when the White House criticized the settlement building 'it called them unhelpful to the peace process, but added that they are not impediments to peace' (Inbar 2017, 2).

Finally, as the Trump Plan 'Peace for Prosperity' was released, it proposes 'a realistic two-state solution'. One of the objectives included in the Vision is to 'achieve mutual recognition of the State of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people, and the state of Palestine as the nation-state of the Palestinian people, in each case with equal civil rights for all citizens within each state' (The White House 2020). Although widely criticized, mostly because it is considered to having ignored the actual needs of the Palestinians, the Plan, or the Deal of the Century as president Trump called it, remains for the moment the main official proposal on U.S.' side regarding the two-state solution after the Oslo Accords. As many other proposals on the same issue before it, it was rejected by the Palestinian side with the leader of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas saying: 'After the nonsense that we heard today we say a thousand no's to the 'deal of the century' (Tharoor 2020). Even though this plan is not the only one

rejected by the Palestinian Authority, its leadership did not prove a strong will to find an optimal solution to the issue (as it is the case of Netanyahu government). This situation created a gap that gave enough space for Netanyahu to put his ideological net in the expectation of the right moment when a Plan like the one proposed by the Trump administration can be created. Obviously, this expectation paid its dividends as president Trump considers that 'the religious-historical affinity of the Jewish people to the land of Israel must be taken into account in any settlement that is achieved' (Zaki and Kobi 2017, 2). Besides its historical background, this approach brings together, from the point of view of the narrative, the two leaders and, thus strongly alienating the European Union and the Palestinians (it can be added that extensively it reaches the Muslim world too, in this way generating consequences like a significant rise of the Muslim anti-Semitism in Europe).

6.CONCLUSIONS

Starting from the narratives governing the relations between European Union, Israel and the United States, one may easily understand what are the origins of the three actors foreign policies. However, the full picture of the situation during Trump's term involves also many unknown aspects. For instance, what would happen in a context having a government led by Gantz, and having Netanyahu sentenced for the any/all investigation cases against him? Also, would be Trump able to succeed in obtaining a second presidential term? If so, how the dialogue between Trump and Gantz will continue? Will it inherit the narrative behind Netanyahu's politics? If Trump will not obtain a second presidential term, what would be the approach that the United State will take on Israel and the Two-State Solution and, consequently, the future of Trump's Plan for Peace? Among all these questions, the European Union as willing to be stronger in the world, needs to find the ideological gaps, in which its values can be exported. Moreover, given the importance of the foreign policy narratives in this trialogue, one may easily understand that whoever will follow Netanyahu in the position of Prime-Minister of Israel after the end of his political career, will have to deal

with a narrative that already has strong roots in the perception of the Israeli society. Also, in the political context created by the rejection of the Iran Nuclear Deal by Trump administration in 2018, the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in the next year, and Trump's Plan for Peace released in 2020 (including here the reactions of the Palestinian Authority and of the Muslim World, in general, to these events), security will continue to be a hot topic on the political agenda in Israel. Therefore, the change of Israeli politics in a post-Netanyahu era (and post-Trump), will involve not only a change of the political party, but also a hard work of re-shaping the perception of the Israeli citizens on the idea of national security.

Based on the elements/observations identified, and on its main objective, the research managed to prove not only the existence of interactions between the discourses of the three actors, but also to identify certain future directions determined by these interactions. The main contribution of the research is that it delivers a description of these interactions, and of their short-term consequences related to some potential scenarios regarding the foreign policies of the three actors.

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