# The European Union in the Holy Land

## A Discourse Analysis on interviews from the West Bank

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# To Ruba

We dedicate this space to our driver, fixer, helper,

and what has become our new best friend in Palestine; Ruba Samander.

The project would have been a shell of what is now, without you.

We wish you the best of luck in Norway

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**Introduction**

When the president of the United States, Donald Trump in December of last year announced that it was "*(...) officially time to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel",* he judged it to be *"(...) in the best interests of the United States of America"* (Trump, 2017). It sparked the High Representative of the EU, Federica Mogherini to express *"serious concern"* about the decision and repercussions it may have on the prospect for peace. However, Mogherini went on to state that *"The EU reiterates its firm commitment to the two-state solution and to its existing policies"* (Mogherini, 2017). This seemingly serious blow to the two-state solution did not in any way cause the EU to act politically or adjust its policies. This caused us to ask ourselves why the EU, who last year spent 220.1 million Euros on funding the Palestinian state and doing humanitarian work in Palestine (EC 2017), is unwilling to embark on a different path in the conflict and how the current actions by the EU was perceived by the Palestinians and the EU officials who work in the region. We found this especially relevant, since all the money and work the EU does in Palestine is aimed towards the two-state solution - a solution that has not materialised in 25 years and, in light of the US embassy move and the political climate, could seem more unlikely than ever. In this regard, we found it particularly interesting and relevant to ask the Palestinian actors about how they perceived the EU, since they are the subjects of EU's policies. In order to do this, we decided to travel to the West Bank and East Jerusalem to conduct interviews with actors that receive funding from, and work, with the EU and other actors who are affected by EU policies. This resulted in 16 interviews with four main groups of actors; *civil and political, recipients of EU funding, actors within the Palestinian Authority* and lastly *EU officials*, from East Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

In the following sections, the problem area is outlined. It starts with a brief history of EU and the Israel/Palestine conflict and the EU's role as state builder. Secondly, an overview of the history of the conflict from world war one until today are outlined. Finally, our research question is presented.

EU in Palestine

The EU has been involved in the Israel/Palestine conflict for 47 years with effort of establishing a 'just peace'. In 1971, the then EC issued its first official statement on what it identified as the problem in the Middle East which was the Arab/Israeli conflict and the

solution was establishment of just peace in the region (Persson 2014: 1). It was not until two years later in 1973, that the EC recognized the rights of the Palestinian people. In 1980 further statements were made by the EC: *"The European Community consider that the traditional ties and common interests which link Europe to the Middle East oblige them to play a special role and now require them to work in a more concrete way towards peace"*, this is the wording of article 2 of the Venice Declaration of 1980, that came out of a meeting between the ministers of foreign affairs of the EC after a discussion on the growing unrest in Israel/Palestine (EEAS 1980). It was also with the Venice Declaration that the EC recognized the Palestinians right to self-determination, calling for an end to the Israeli occupation over Palestinian land, that Israeli settlements are illegal and an obstacle to peace, and that any unilateral initiatives to change the status of Jerusalem are unacceptable (EEAS 1980). In 1999 the EU recognized the Palestinians right to a sovereign state, and in 2009 their right to a state with East Jerusalem as its capital (Persson 2014: 1).

This still remains the stands of the EU, and today the objective of the EU is defined as a *"(..) two-state solution with an independent, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours* (EEAS 2016). This commitment means that the EU has been highly active as a state builder in Palestine ever since the signing of the Oslo Accords, investing large sums of money and technical expertise, especially in the West Bank, readying Palestine for statehood and pursuing its formula for just peace as outlined above (Persson 2014: 1f). The EU is now close to its sixth decade of attempting to 'build a just peace' in what is now referred to as the Israel/Palestine conflict.

EU as a humanitarian actor and state builder

The EU shows its commitment to promoting democracy and human rights in third world countries in its *Acquis Communautaire* which is strongly informed by the argument of the Kantian thesis; that democracies are more likely to promote peace in their interactions with others. In other words, that stable and mature democracies are better at dealing with ethnic and religious fragmentation and avoiding conflict than non-democracies (Bouris 2014: 24). When EU's foreign policy objectives were specified in the Maastricht Treaty of 1991, there were amongst them a commitment to strengthen peace, consolidating democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (EC 1992). Because of a

commitment to these values, state building projects, as the one in Palestine, are especially focused on good governance and the rule of law (Bouris 2014: 26). The Maastricht treaty also marked the beginning of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), that was made intergovernmental and with consensus based decision-making (EC 1992).

The EU has adopted a bottom-up approach to the state building project which means that the EU tries to transform states from the inside rather than ruling them above, as is the case with the building of the Palestinian state. The focus on good governance from the part of the EU, has resulted in state building policies that focus on a technical and administrative understanding of the role of government. This allows the EU to avoid direct political responsibilities associated with its power as a state builder. This approach to state building has been described as the 'either or', or the middle between respecting sovereign autonomy and coercively intervening and undermining sovereignty (Bouris 2014: 28).

The Israel/Palestine Conflict

The history of the Israel/Palestine conflict is contested and riddled with different views and narratives; therefore, we have done our best to present it as neutral as we can.

European countries have been active in the area of Palestine since the first world war. Palestine was a part of the Ottoman Empire, but when the empire dissolved after losing the war, The League of Nations Council decided to split the middle eastern territories in to "mandates". The British were granted Palestine as a mandate in 1920. (Yacobi & Newman 2009: 175). Already in 1917 'The Balfour Declaration' by the British government promised 'a national home' for the Jews in Palestine, and the post war years saw an increase in Jewish immigration which led to tensions and incidents between Arabs and Jews (Caplan 2011: 1f). It was also in the period of the British Mandate that a discussion emerged concerning the partition of Palestine west of the River Jordan into two political entities; one Jewish and one Arab. The reason for this was the change in demographics and settlement realities that had occurred during the period. Violent riots against British rule from both Jews and Arabs led the British to relinquish their mandate and return the issue of Palestine to the United Nations, who set up The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, which came up with a partition plan that included a Jewish state, an Arab state and an international Jerusalem. This plan was approved by the UN general assembly in 1947. Israel declared its independence on the 14th of May, 1948, as a result of the end of the British Mandate in Palestine. The Jewish

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Zionist movement said yes to the partition plan, but the Palestinians along with the rest of Arab world said no, and they initiated hostilities to stop the implementation of the partition plan. This marked the beginning of the first Arab-Israeli war, 1948-1949, a war between the newly founded state of Israel and the newly established neighbouring Arab states (Morris 2008: 396). The war ended in 1949 with an Israeli victory, that led to a separation of the Gaza strip, then occupied by Egypt, and the West Bank, then occupied by Jordan, from the rest of Palestine.

The war is remembered in Israel as the War of Independence and as 'Al-Nakba' in Palestine, which translates to 'the catastrophe' (Yacobi & Newman 2009: 175f). During the war, almost 700.000 Palestinians became refugees and had to flee or were expelled from their homes (Morris 2008: 406). 'The green line' that separated Israel from the then Jordanian occupied West Bank was drawn up after the war. After a period of 19 years with growing tensions between Israel and the Arab states, the 'Six Day War' broke out with an Israeli attack on the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, prompting Jordan and Syria to launch a counter-attacks on Israel. The Israelis won a convincing military victory over Egypt, Jordan and Syria. The conflict ended with Israel occupying the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria and the West bank from Jordan (Caplan 2011: 8). The war also resulted in Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem. To this day, Israel still view the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem as a part of the Israeli state, as the Israeli parliament has sanctioned the annexation of these areas twice, in 1967 and 1981. Following the occupation of the West Bank, the Golan heights and Gaza, successive Israeli governments have promoted settlement constructions and adopted policies that have led to consolidation and expansion of settlements in these areas (Yacobi & Newman 2009: 176). As of today, there are nearly 600.000 Israeli settlers and about 127 government sanctioned settlements in the West Bank, not including settlement enclaves in East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights (B'Tselem 2017). This presents a huge territorial problem in terms of conflict resolution, since it makes it difficult to establish a sovereign Palestinian state within the pre-1967 Palestinian territories. The next big event in the conflict was the first Intifada, Arabic for 'shaking of', that started in 1987, which was a Palestinian uprising brought on by Israeli settlement activities and expropriations in the West Bank and Gaza. It went on for almost five years and ended with the signing of the Oslo Accords of 1993 and 1995 between Israel and PLO, the Palestinian representatives (Brym and Araj n.d). The Israel government interprets the Oslo Accords as a legitimizing of them carving up the Palestinian territories into exclaves, that have varying degrees of autonomy. Almost the entire Gaza Strip and a fifth of

the West Bank was transferred to the Palestinian Authority (PA) and designated as 'Area A'. Another fifth was designated as 'Area B' which meant an area under Palestinian political and Israeli security control. The remaining 'Area C' was to be under full control of the Israeli military. This was, from a Palestinian perspective, the beginning of a process from initial autonomy towards full statehood, that was to accompanied by further territorial changes, such as the transfer of the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip to Palestinian control (Ibid.: 177). The long-term solution for the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was to be determined under future negotiation of a final peace agreement. In 2000 the 'Camp David Talks' between Yasser Arafat, the leader of PLO, and the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Mubarak, broke down and the conflict increased in intensity and reached high levels of violence culminating in the second Intifada. Which was a violent five-year conflict, where the two sides attack both military and civil targets, leaving thousands dead. A right-wing government under Ariel Sharon was elected, and Israel re-entered and took control in much of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The violence peaked in a way it had not in 30 years and peace plans calling for a two-state solution with a return to the green line borders with minor territorial changes were proposed. However, under the Intifada Israel constructed separation wall, that resulted in unilateral territorial changes in Israel's favour. It was built inside the green line in order to include some Israeli settlements. However, this means that some Palestinian villages now find themselves as 'spatial hostages' living east of green line, but west of separation wall. In 2006 elections were held in Palestine resulting in a victory for the Islamic party Hamas, deemed a terrorist organisation by the EU and the US, over Fatah. This resulted in internal clashes, and ended with Hamas taking over the rule of Gaza while Fatah remained in power in the de facto capital of Palestine, Ramallah in the West Bank, a situation that remains unchanged until this day (Reuters 2007). Discontent with the political situation and the pressure on Gaza, Hamas fired rockets towards Tel Aviv in 2008, prompting an Israeli invasion. This was repeated in 2014 were another military campaign by Israel entered Gaza with the goal of destroying missile launching sites. In 2017 the US president, Donald Trump, recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, upsetting the Arab world and many western allies (BBC 2018). And on the 30th of March, large protest in the Gaza Strip began by Palestinians marking their 'right to return' and to protest the blockade of Gaza by Israel, protests that so far peaked on the 14th May, when the US embassy move was effectuated. These protests have, as of 22nd of may 2018, resulted in the killing of 111 Palestinians and has left 12,733 injured by Israeli Defence Forces since the protest began on March 30th (Dabashi 2018).

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Optimism After the End of The Cold War

The large EU involvement in the building of the Palestinian state began in the aftermath of the optimism that followed the end of the cold war. The Oslo Accords came after secret talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis and was viewed at the time, as one of the first real chances for peace in the region. The first agreement was signed on September 13th in the year 1993. It became a historical moment in its time, but it came in the shadow of a bigger moment in world history that happened two years before; the collapse of the Soviet Union. This marked the shift from a bipolar world order to a unipolar world order and it was the background for Bush Sr.'s famous speech in 1991 where he announced the birth of the New World order (Bush 1991). Some of our informants and academics have made a connection between these two events. Mohamad Morra wrote an article where he sees the Oslo Accords because of the New World Order (Morra 2016). This view is not controversial, even the Guardian uses this way of looking at history (Black 2013). In Morra's view the US hegemony of the world paved the way for the peace-agreement, especially since many of the Arab actors needed to find new allies (Morra 2016, 75). The idea of a more peaceful world without the proxy-wars of competing world powers were also much of what inspired Fukuyama to write *"The End of history"* as he saw the liberal democratic model to be victorious (Fukuyama 1992). It seemed like a time of peace and prosperity was ahead of us. But the grass was not greener on the other side. As the history of the conflict has showed and as it was prophesied by Edward Said; a happy ending is not an easy thing to accomplice in Palestine (Said 1993). And after nearly 50 years of involvement in the conflict and billions of Euros spend on building the Palestinian state since the signing of the Oslo Accords (Persson 2014), the facts on the ground are, that the EU did has brought peace or resolution to the conflict. And recent changes in the political climate in Europe, the US moving their embassy to Jerusalem and the hardline government in Israel, has made the two-state solution even harder to spot on the horizon.

The question we ask is, why is the EU not changing their modus operandi since the two-state solution is not materializing? We will answer this by finding out how EU's involvement is viewed by the institutional actors in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, since they are the subject of EU's actions. We will also ask the EU actors who work in East Jerusalem and Palestine to gain their perspective. Secondly, we will explain the nature of

EU's involvement, as perceived by our informants and literature on the subject, by applying theories on historical institutionalism and path dependency. Our research question is as follows:

*How do institutional actors in Israel and the West Bank understand the current involvement by the EU in Palestine, and how can this involvement be explained by a path dependency approach?*

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Group photo of us at the EU representation in East Jerusalem

## **Theory**

This chapter concerns itself with the theories we use in the project, and to synthesize a framework of these theories we use a two-fold analysis strategy; first we will describe Margaret Levi's *Analytical Narratives*, used in the first part of the analysis to highlight and display 'narratives' about the EU's role in Palestine. This theory will lead us to frame the understanding our informants have of the EU. This will be followed by a description of *Historical Institutionalism*, which we will use to understand the continuous effort and bring our analysis into a bigger perspective and explanation.

### Analytical Narratives

In 1999, Margaret Levi wrote an essay called *Modeling Complex Historical Processes with Analytic Narratives*, as her contribution to J. Bowen and R. Petersen anthology *Critical Comparisons in Politics and Culture*. Here she reflected on another pierce of her work, called *Analytic Narratives*. In Modeling Complex Historical Processes with Analytic Narratives, which we will use in this project, Levi attempts a systematic outline for the analytical narrative (Levi 1999: 1). We will primarily use this version, as its organized form makes it a better fit for an analytical framework.

An analytical narrative aims to give an understanding of institutional origin and change, through a combination of data and theory (Ibid.). This results in a two-fold analysis, as the one this project uses. The first part is focused on understanding the narratives. This will be done by extracting the key actors, identifying their goals and preferences, and finally illuminating the institutions, which are the effective rules of the game, the incentives and constraints, that are influencing the actors' behaviours. In the second part of our analysis, we will focus on understanding how *"the institutions and interactions produce a situation that constraints some actions and facilitate others"* (Ibid.: 4). The last part will use the theory of *Path dependency*, presented later in this chapter.

Levi's key concepts of analytical narratives are the actors, goals and preferences and institutions, which will guide the structure of the first part of the analysis. Therefore, we will identify the key actors from the narratives we see in our interviews, identify their goals and preferences, and identify the institutions, that are the 'rules of the game', that influence the behaviour of the actors. The three concepts that make up the analytical narrative; actors, goals and preferences, and institutions, will be explained in the following:

*Actors:*

We will identify our narratives' actors through determining the subjects in our interviews. As we focus our questions around the EU and its involvement, we will mainly be using the EU as an actor. Though as we noted, we find our actors in our data, meaning that if the member-states are the subject, we will treat them as actors as well.

*Goals and preferences:*

As the terms goals and preferences are widely used concepts, and Levi does not provide clear definitions, we will use the terms in ways we find most productive for our project. This means practically that we do not analyze any preferences forward, but use easily deducted expressions of them.

The preferences and goals are not exclusive nor streamlined. Actors are capable of having contradicting and unrelating goals and preferences. Furthermore, we must note that goals can achieved through non-actions as well.

The difference between goals and preferences is only seen in it is aim. Preferences do not have a final outcome, but is seen as a positive by the actor, whereas the goals have an end; it is what a given action or non-action strive towards accomplishing.

*Institutions:*

When Levi uses the word "institutions", she bases it on the definition of Douglass C. North. He defines institutions as the social structures, that are expressed through formal and informal "rules", which influences the actors' behaviour and make them act in ways they otherwise would not (Ibid.: 1). Institutions are the effective 'rules of the game' that can provide the actors with incentives and constraints that affects their goals or preferences and in terms the outcomes (Ibid.: 5), thus the institutions provide a framework that can be advantageous towards achieving one thing, while constraining the possibility of another.

When an informant express, that he/she believes an actor have acted in a specific way, because of a constraint or incentives from an overlying factor, we call this a part of the institution (Ibid.: 2). Thus, when we use the word institution we do not mean EU or the Quartet, instead we are referring to the set of rules in the international community, that applies to the situation.

As Levi's analytical narrative provides us with several tools, we will use it as our main analytical framework for our discourse analysis. Levi considers her theory to be inductive (Ibid.: 11), and this will be our approach. While it is crucial to have a pre-understanding, one must be ready to change the conception with new information (Ibid.: 12)

As the key concepts theoretical purpose is to grasp a wide range of events and actors, and to explain the connections in a given narrative, our analysis will use this to describe the narrative dynamics creating points of interest in history (Ibid.: 3).

Historical Institutionalism

The institutional vector in our analysis will be provided by *Historical Institutionalism*. We will use this theory to analyse upon our narratives to explain the EU's behaviour through *Path Dependency*. To do so, we will use Historical Institutionalism. This will provide us with an explanatory framework for our second part of the analysis. The notion of path dependency entails supplementary concepts which we will use to show a path dependency in the EU's behaviour. These are *Critical Junctures* and *Feedback*, that combined will help us analyze a path dependency; both in terms of what is going on today and what rationale enables a path dependency.

To understand path dependency in a political science context, we will first outline how to use historical institutionalism as an analytical tool. Historical Institutionalism has three distinct characterizations (Pierson & Skocpol 2002): firstly, historical institutionalism concerns itself with broad problems which are important not only to the researcher, but also the general public. Secondly, it has a timeframe focus as well. Due to the nature of history and the transformations, processes and development within the field, time plays a large role. Lastly, historical institutionalism focuses on the macro context in the problem area, meaning that it does not concern itself with only one process or one institution, but instead tries to fathom both processes and institutional effects within the analysis, thereby broadening the scope of the analysis. As Pierson & Skocpol (2002, 5f) specify: *"Such widening of the empirical terrain is especially important for political scientists because many phenomena of great interest - especially macro ones such as revolutions, state-building, democratization, the construction of welfare states"* thus making the approach a fit for our problem area.

Historical institutionalism and rational choice theory has some aspects in common, most noticeably are assumptions of preferences and actors – an area where historical institutionalism has commonly taken the approach of rational choice theory, and analysed

actors as rational. This means that we will largely adopt this approach. For our analysis of the EU, we will assume both the EU, and its member states to have a preference for their own self-interest. This will be our base assumption for the EU in the analysis.


*Path Dependency*

The concept of Path Dependency, is broad. Its basic understanding of being committed to one certain path exists in many different forms, everything from economics to technical knowledge, as Thelen (1999), highlights with her example of the QWERTY organisation of keyboards, still exist as a form of path dependency. This technical path dependency leads us into what describes the path dependency of social science.

Based on Margaret Levi's definition of 'path dependency', as written by Pollack in Diez and Wiener (2009), we use this concept as the institutional dynamic, where the cost of changing the 'path' will be so high, that it is not favourable to do so, even in the face of an 'exogenous shock' – a sudden and strong change in the situation, in which the institution is positioned (Pollack 2009). This dynamic of historical institutionalism, makes this concept relevant to explain a continuing policy 'path' of an institution.

Pollack (2009) provides a few conditions for path dependency within an organization, namely a great start-up cost, both in the first creation of the path dependency, but also a great start-up cost in changing any policy or approach from a path-dependent one. Thelen notes this as: *"several authors invoke Stinchcombe's (1968) arguments about "sunk costs" and "vested investments" that make embarking on alternative paths costly and uncertain"* (Thelen, 1999, 391). This gives a foundation for analysing and locating a possible path dependency for the EU in the two-state solution.

Furthermore, path dependency has a couple of defining traits that we will attempt to uncover. Thelen (1999), describes these traits as Critical junctures, and Feedback effects. Path dependency is generally described by having a critical juncture, that sends an institution towards the path they become dependent on (Thelen, 1999, Amenta, 2012). The critical juncture is a political event or process that shape an institution: *"All of these works emphasize sequencing and timing and, related to these issues, different patterns of interaction between ongoing political and economic processes in the formation and evolution of institutional arrangements"* (Thelen, 1999, 388).

For our analysis, the critical juncture will be the Oslo Accords. And to help us provide an explanation of the critical juncture, that shaped the following path dependency, we will

bring in an EU theory; the Joint Decision Trap. This term was coined by Fritz W. Scharpf in the article "The Joint Decision Trap: Lessons from German Federalism and European Integration" (1988). Here Scharpf describes his term 'joint-decision trap', a concept in which a consensus voting procedure can create traps for institutions agreeing upon something through this procedure. Pollack (2009) describes the criteria for Scharpfs joint decision trap as being under intergovernmental decision making, and not supranational, and unanimity voting opposed to majority voting and policies persisting if no political development is agreed upon. Scharpfs himself describes this as: *"unanimity is a decision rule which can claim welfare-theoretic optimality, most plausibly, for single-shot decisions. In ongoing joint-decision systems, from which exit is precluded or very costly, non-agreement would imply the self-defeating continuation of past policies in the face of a changing policy environment"* (Scharpf 1988: 265). This provides us with an analytical aspect of joint-decision traps; if a continuation of a policy is automatic and will happen even if there is no consensus, the policies face the possibility of becoming "self-defeating" in a changing environment, by continuing past its usefulness.

The joint-decision trap entails a system, which is rigid and hard to change due to the unanimity, especially when the political environment changes and the preferences of states change along with governments due to elections (Pollack 2009). This means that *"EU institutions and policies may become locked-in not only as the result of change-resistant institutional rules from above, but also through the incremental growth in political support for existing, entrenched institutions from below, as societal actors adapt to and develop vested interest in the continuation of specific EU policies"* (Ibid.: 137). This support from societal actors is a concept Thelen (1999) calls feedback effects.

The term 'feedback effects', as explained by Thelen (1999), describes one of the most vital aspects for path dependency; the self-reinforcement of the institution. Feedback effects are usually described as being a positive feedback effect, where an aspect or output of a possible path dependency is received with a positive feedback, which then reinforces the process that lead to the positive outcome, creating a positive feedback loop. This feedback effect entrenches the path dependency, by making any alternative both risky and costly. Thelen (1999) describes the feedback effect as having two distinct *"types of feedback mechanisms"* (Thelen 1999.: 392).

The first mechanism is functional; it concerns itself with positive feedback in frameworks and constructions of strategies: *"Once a set of institutions is in place, actors*

*adapt their strategies in ways that reflect but also reinforce the "logic" of the system."* (Ibid.: 392). This mechanism is caused by the informal and formal structures were created with a specific system in mind. As we assume the institutions are rational, the system that will be created would then be aimed for the largest possible return for the institution. This effect is not specific for singular institutions. The system created affects every actor within it, which means that these actors (or *"complimentary institutions"* (Ibid.: 393)) are created or shaped into the structure, that is creating the positive feedback effects. This is another self-reinforcing mechanism, as the complimentary institutions would then create a minor positive feedback mechanism towards the bigger structure, or as it is explained by Thelen (Ibid.: 393) *"As business adapts its strategies to institutional incentives and constraints, its adoption encourages further movement along this trajectory, as firms come to depend on the existence of these institutions for their continued success."*

The second type of feedback effect is a more political charged mechanism. Thelen explains it as: *"The idea is that institutions are not neutral coordinating mechanisms but in fact reflect, and also reproduce and magnify, particular patterns of power distribution in politics"* (Ibid.: 394). It has some similarities to the first mechanism, in its ability to reinforce itself within the system. Both types are self-sustaining, but in different areas. Whereas the first was practical, the second is politically laden, where the main instruments for positive feedback is power and continuation of a given structure of distributing power. Scholars argue that these feedback effects are power focused: *"Her view of path dependency stresses political-distributional feedback effects, arguing that the incentives embedded in political-economic institutions are above all else... the reflection and product of power relations"* (Ibid.: 395). Here Thelen quotes Terry Lynn Karl, and as we noted above, this falls in line with the summarizing text that is Thelen's article.

As we mentioned above, these two types of feedback effects are not exclusive towards each other. Both can be present at the same time, and aspects of them can be seen in each other. This means that we will not choose one approach over another, but apply the ideas from both, when suitable for our analysis.

## Method

Our choice of methodological approach will be explained and outlined in the following segment. Here we will outline how we have conducted and used the qualitative interviews, what our methodological choices and considerations were and discuss the challenges and limitation we faced.

### Inductive method and data

All the data we use for our analysis is qualitative. We will elaborate on the data gathering and its methodological impact further on, but for now we must note that we have an inductive approach and our gathering of data was open-ended, which has had a large impact on both the final product and the process of creating it, through a Hermeneutic-esque approach of constant re-focusing on the basis of new information from our sources as the interviews progressed.

### Two-fold analysis

Our entire project is build up around our two-fold approach and framework; the first part is our immediate analysis of our interviews. This will be done through a discourse analysis on the basis of Margaret Levi's 'analytical narrative' (per Levi, 1999). We will use these narratives to analyse and display the actors' understanding about the EU's involvement on the West Bank. This knowledge created in the first part will then be pulled up to a higher a level to analyze the EU as an international actor, from the understanding of our informants.

### Interviews: Method and considerations

The research interviews will provide data for both the first and second part of our research question. In the first part of the research question: *How does institutional actors in Israel and the West Bank understand the current involvement by the EU in Palestine,* the goal of the interviews is to acquire knowledge of how the Palestinians understands the EU's aid and assistance in the West Bank. The qualitative interview enables us to do just that, as it allows us to examine the lived experience, and what the informants make of this experience. (Seideman 2013: 9). Our second part of the research question; *and how can this involvement be explained by a path dependency approach?,* will take use of our analysed narratives and

contextualize them with Historical Institutionalism, to provide the data with a larger meaning outside of the specific actors we interviewed.

Our interviews are semi-structured and open-ended, which can be applied when the researcher does not know all the necessary questions in advance, but needs to develop, adapt and generate follow-up questions, that reflects the central purpose of the research. This is the case in our project, with the inductive approach. The semi-structured and open-ended interview process also allows the flexibility to shape the interview to the individual situation and context (Sandy & Dumay 2011: 245). A feature that has been highly needed, since the variation amongst our interviewees has been huge in terms of background, culture, language, position, etc.

Another reason for using open-ended semi-structured interviews is that we are looking to access the perspective of the person being interviewed. Which we can, when we let the interviewees discuss issues they feel have importance, and avoid predisposed bias by using predefined theoretical concepts (Ibid.: 245). We have used a loose interview guide, that has helped us incorporating several broader themes, that we had set out to touch upon doing the interviews (Ibid.: 246).

By asking open-ended question, we can gain access to the subjective experience of the individual. The open-ended questions are questions that begin with *"How do you feel about…"* or *"Can you talk about…"* or *"How is it like…."*. This leaves the territory to be explored, does not assume an answer, and lets the sources take the direction they choose (Seideman 2013: 88).

We reviewed each interview together to better prepare us for the next one, and discussed what we are have learned from the interview process, leading us to have a logical progression. As illustrated below, first, we have been interviewing recipients of EU funding in Palestine to gain their overall perspective of the EU as an actor in the Region. Secondly, we have interviewed civil and political actors in the region such as NGOs, political rights groups, political parties etc. to gain a broader perspective of how the EU funding is perceived by actors that are not necessarily directly involved with the EU or dependent on funding. Thirdly, we have been interviewing representatives of the Palestinian Authority, who receive large amounts of financial and technical aid from the EU, that is the Palestinian Authority [PA] and the Palestinian Legislative Counsel [PLC]. Fourthly, we have interviewed EU officials to gain their own perspective of the EU an actor in the region, on the background of what we have learned from interviewing the Palestinians. Finally, we triangulate and

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perspective our findings by interviewing experts. The experts we have interviewed are Troels Dalgaard, Middle East expert and director of the NGO *the Danish House in Palestine*, and Middle East expert Lars Erslev Andersen, a senior at *The Danish Institute for International Studies* (DIIS). The following is a diagram that gives an overview of our informants and it is divided into colons according to the different types of actors:

| Recipients of EU Funding: | Civil/Political Actors: | PA Representatives: | EU Representatives: | Experts: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aya Sbitan from *Burj Al- LoqLoq* (EU funded NGO located in East Jerusalem). | Khitam Saafin from the *UPWC* (Women's rights group located in Ramallah). | Dr. Naser Jaghoub, Head of *PADRRIF* (Argicultural program sponsored by the EU under the PA). | Joris Van Winckel, Political Affairs Section at the *Office of the European Representative to the West Bank and Gaza Strip* (EU representation located in East Jerusalem). | Lars Erslev Andersen, Middle East Expert and Senior in Global Legislation at *the Danish Institute for International Studies* (DIIS). *Interview conducted via telephone.* |
| Shanaz Jubran from *the Danish Church Aid* (DCA). (EU funded NGO located in East Jerusalem). | Sam Bahour, Chairman and CEO of *Americans for a Vibrant Palestinian Economy* (Non-profit organization i located in Ramallah). | Saad Khatib, senior advisor to *the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture.* | Rocco Polin, EU Representative from the *Delegation of the European Union to Israel* (EU representation located in Tel Aviv). | Troels Dalgaard, Middle East Expert and Director of *the Danish House in Palestine.* |
| Khalil Abu Khadijeh, Advocacy Officer, and Maram Rajabo from *PalVision* (EU funded NGO located in East Jerusalem). | *The Popular Front for The Liberation of Palestine* (P.F.L.P) (Political Party in Palestine) *Written response.* | Suha Sharif Othman Malhelm, Adviser, and Iyad Mohamed, Head of International Relations Sections at the *Palestinian Legislative Council* (PLC). | | |
| Khalil Shiha, General Director of *PARC* (EU funded NGO located in Ramallah). | Lama Hourani, Program Coordinator, *Heinrich Böll Stiftung* (German non-EU funded NGO located in Ramallah). | | | |
| Ayman Rabi, Executive Director, *Palestinian Hydrology Group* (EU funded NGO located in Ramallah). | | | | |

## Validity of measurement

The validity of measurement of the interviews refers to the question of whether the observations we make, measure or uncover what we seek to. In our case; do we gain the understanding the Palestinians have on the EU aid in the region? We have not defined the term EU involvement, since we are working inductively, thus letting our sources make their own definitions and thereby keeping the interview open. As such, we do not know if we are asking the right questions, since we do not know what we are missing or exactly what to look for. This is a critique of our method. Our approach to knowledge is that it is contextual, so in a different time frame, in another setting, another day another researcher may get different perspectives. This falls into line within the constructivist approach, which itself notes that

knowledge is subjective and is under the reigns of the context in which it is acquired (Egholm 2014).


Sources

We acquired our sources through two ways; seven through emails, where we wrote emails explaining our project and if they wanted to be interviewed by us. But less than a tenth answered our emails. All other informants we got through our contact in Ramallah, Issa Samander. We knew him before we arrived, as group member Lars Graneruds sister is married to one of his sons. He made it clear beforehand, that as he considered Lars family, he would go through great lengths to secure interviews for our project.

Not only did Issa help with the interviews, but his daughter, Ruba Samander, was a great help as well as she assisted with language interpretation during interviews and gave us tips to navigate the different culture.


We ended with 15 oral interviews, and one written, conducted for this project. One must then ask, whether we have a sufficient sample size of sources to draw any conclusions worth analysing upon – as we aim to do in the second part of the analysis. Nowhere in science is there a coherent answer to when an analysis is valid - this is not to say that certain branches of science, especially natural science, does not have concrete measures or scales, that make the quantity of findings acceptable. But in social science, the validation comes from the relationship between theory, analysis, data and the philosophy of science. Seidman (2013) explains, the question of what is enough boils down to two criteria: Sufficiency in the numbers and saturation of information. The 'sufficiency in the numbers' deals with the quantitative aspect; is the pool of participants big enough to be useful? The 'saturation of information' is the qualitative aspect - "*A number of writers (Douglas, 1976; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Weiss, 1994) discuss a point in a study at which the interviewer begins to hear the same information reported. He or she is no longer learning anything new.*" (Seidman 2013: 58). This coupled with one's methodology and theory as the 'quantifiers' of the information, helps proof whether or not there is 'enough' data and/or informants.

When applying these criteria to our collection of sources, our constructivist approach highlights the strength of our collection; the common denominators in understanding of the EU's role. This, we argue, shows a great saturation of information and thus provides evidence

that our collection is 'enough'. It must be noted that the logical limitations of our study trip also had a say in our data collection.

As we have mentioned before, we have an array of sources, but we did have some difficulties and limitations concerning our sources. First and foremost, our search was under the mercy of Issa Samander, and any possible connections our sources could give us. As we were in a completely unknown environment, we had difficulties gathering sources on our own, due to the foreign culture, language barrier and cultural stigmatization (mostly our age). Another aspect was the logical aspect of the trip. We 'only' had 30 days to conduct interviews in, and only 18 where we were staying in Ramallah. This limitation is explained as: *"The criteria of sufficiency and saturation are useful, but practical exigencies of time, money, and other resources also play a role"* by Seidman (2013: 58), and it is partly what limited us in gathering Palestinian Authority (PA) interviews, as the different ministries and departments usually had a strong formal communication line, which demanded a formal letter of request, amongst other things, and the process was said to take towards 3 weeks.

Constructivism

Constructivism, as a branch of social science, focuses on the constructions created in the interaction and language between people. It stems from an opposition towards positivism especially highlighted in the stark difference between the positive concept of truth versus the social constructivist: Positivism strives for value freedom, where truth is objective and one can recreate any results (Egholm 2014). Whereas in social constructivism *"Truth is evaluated by means of coherence theory, whereby a proposition is true if it can be included in a system of interpretive statements"* (Ibid.: 229).

As a philosophy of science, it stems from an opposition, not only the positivist approach to social sciences, but the whole paradigm of "truth" seeking in science. This leaves constructivism with another goal, to clarify the how the world is viewed (Olsen 2003: 190).

This is what we seek to undercover, especially in the first part of our analysis, where we set out to explain the institutional Palestinian actors understanding of the EU. We base our project on interviews, where we try to unfold the informants' views about the EU, based on their place in the Palestinian society.

Working in a different culture

As we have been conducting research in a foreign, developing country we need to evaluate our own position in relation to the researched community and the participants, and also understand the challenges of working in different culture and how to prepare for the field work.

Factors such as ethnicity, class, appearance, gender, age, religion, culture and also non-demographic characteristics such as pre-conceptions and worldview, often defines the position that we, as researchers, have to the researched community (Apentiik & Parpart 2011: 34).

We needed to be aware and acknowledge our position before, during and after our time in the field, and prepare for the challenges of doing field work in a different culture, so we could reflect and compensate for these factors when possible, because they affect how the interviews are conducted and ultimately the quality and character of the end product (Ibid.: 43).

This is especially relevant since our analytical starting point is constructivism and the perceptions are an important analytical focus, which can easily be distorted if we fail to take our positionality into account.

First of all, we needed to read about the history of Palestine, the socio-cultural relations and the actors we set out to examine. One member of the research team also visited the West Bank before and he could therefore share his insights about Palestine. We also conducted an interview with Lars Erslev Andersen, a Middle East expert, which gave additional useful insights. This background knowledge helped us to minimize and discover our misconceptions about the researched community, and equally important, it allowed us to identify different interest which, in turn, made us aware of sources and their possible self-interested bias. (Ibid.: 35) This insight, which naturally grew bigger as the interview process progressed, allowed us to avoid generalizations.

When that is said, we still had preconceptions that were flawed and were changed during the research process. For example, we had an idea that the perception of the EU was generally negative, which turned out to be false. We also discovered that geographical place names are contested in the region and is something to be aware of, to not seem offensive. Examples of this is the term East Jerusalem, that to some Palestinians can be offensive, as some see Jerusalem as one city that is rightly a part of Palestine. Another example is the

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Palestinian city Al-Khalil, which in the West is referred to by its Hebrew name Hebron, a name not often well-received amongst some Palestinians.


We were also made aware through our research, that the West Bank is a place with a long history of foreign NGO and foreign government actors involved in development projects and activities. This means that there are also many government and non-governmental agencies present, that are involved in development research. This, in turn, means that in some of these institutional actors, as the ones we interviewed in Palestine, there is a general perception that research projects, like ours, can have the potential to offer development benefits in forms of development projects or financial aid (Ibid.). Therefore, we needed to be aware that some informants were inclined to give ideal answers and exaggerated responses to questions, with the hope of attracting development funds and projects, because it has become a habit in an environment where development actors are omnipresent. Thus, he informant's answers may not reflect their perceptions, but the interest of the institution which was something we were aware of when we made the interviews. An example of this, was our interviews with local Palestinian NGOs PARC and PalVision. In these interviews, the informants overwhelmingly used the term 'you' when referring to the EU and its behaviour (Shiha, Khadijeh). We tried to counter this by making it clear that we were not involved in any development research project and that we did not represent any donors, thus minimizing the risk for exaggerated or ideal answers and perspectives, that did not reflect the informants' own perspectives (Ibid.).


Positionality

We went into the field with our position and identity as white, privileged, relatively young Western European male outsiders, and we needed to be aware of what impact our identity had on our informants and the interview situation in order to anticipate these impacts (Apentiik & Parpart 2011). This was especially important since we were Europeans working in a former colony, which could entail some perceptions of privilege and arrogance and thus result in a hostile attitude from our informants (Ibid.: 34f).

In the following, the tactics used to counter the impact of our position and to renegotiate our identity will be outlined. Firstly, we were aware of our appearance and did our best to look professional, and comply with what seemed to be the clothing norm in

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Palestine. So, we always wore dress pants and dress shirts to interviews, despite the fact that the temperature rose to 30 degrees Celsius.


We also quickly gained a basic understanding of the language, the greetings and the daily courtesies, that we used when introducing ourselves and during the interviews, which helped improve the perception of us as respectful and engaging with their culture. Also in the initial stages of the interview, we tapped into the informant's curiosity about our culture and country and our own curiosities, which often shortened the distance between ourselves and informants, and made the atmosphere more comforting and confidential.

We were also aware that our young age could be a problem, since age in Palestine gives you respect and authority. Because of this we were worried, we might be pushed aside and out questions seen as uninformed or irrelevant. To counter this, we did our best to be as well-informed about the institutions and people we interviewed, their background and the environment in general, which helped us to ask informed questions.

We also engaged with the cultural norms doing the interview sessions. We experienced that many of our informants enjoyed smoking before and during the interview process, and smoking in Palestine is often viewed as 'manly'. So, since two members of the research teams are smokers, we engaged with this behaviour which seemed to also shorten the distance and create a feeling of mutual respect.

Finally, since we were staying in Palestine for three weeks, we took the opportunity to see the sights, go to the local markets and engage with the food and music culture. This gave us an understanding of the community and increased the trust and the level of comfort the informants had with us as researchers, because they appreciated that we engaged with their culture.

In short, knowledge about the community, the institutions, socio-cultural values and the nature of the area and the activities, really helped us navigate interviews and the pitfalls we might encounter. While the aforementioned strategies and a general open and respectful behaviour helped us renegotiate our position and the assumptions about us, creating a safe and comfortable relation between us and the informants, thus enhancing the quality of the data collection and the analysis (Ibid.: 43).

Key concepts operationalized methodically

Our key concepts, per Levi, is our main analytical focus in the first part of the analysis - our discourse analysis. As mentioned in our theory chapter we will extract the key concepts from the analytical narratives, that are evident through our informants understanding of the EU's involvement. This is also providing a clear cut methodological approach. By doing a discourse analysis, we can find these key concepts and thereby discover our narratives. As Abell & Myers in Wodak & Krzyzanowski (2008:145) says: *"The usual approach to these data is to reduce what the participants said to some sort of content categories. This process may involve summarizing themes common to many of the transcripts"*. This basic approach to discourse analysis is the one we will be using for our analysis. The reason for using a basic discourse analysis, compared to 'conversation analysis' – a sociological method or 'critical discourse analysis' – a critical method, which aims to show underlying and implicit aspects such as the intricacies of interactions, or power relations, which is not our approach. While we try to take these factors into account through our reflections about positionality, our aim with the discourse analysis is not to uncover these covert aspects, but to take the informants' sayings as face value (more or less). Now it must be noted that we do aim to show 'constructions' (see the sub-chapter "Constructivism"), but not covert ones like the above mentioned. Therefore, we instead focus on finding the key concepts in our interviews and thereby show narratives that are seen throughout to describe tendencies with the EU and its involvement in Palestine.

While our search for key concepts in our data could lend itself to use any form of coding, it will not be a method we will use in this paper. As Myers in Wodak & Krzyzanowski (2008:146) explains: *"There is of course a place for content coding, if one wants to know the range of different views expressed in a set of interviews, or how widely one view is expressed or how the holding of a view correlates with other factors, such as age, gender or experience"*. Our sources have a broad array of positions within the system, and some may have contradicting aims and biases, thus the nature of coding would be challenged. As coding has little leeway in the meaning of its codes, our overarching narratives and key concepts are perceived differently and the context of the interviews are different – and as Abell & Myers (Ibid.: 146) state: *"But all such coding assumes that for each question the meaning stays the same in each interview because the context of utterance stays the same, and assumes that one knows, reading the transcript, what this context was"*.

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**Literature review**

For our project, we have focused our literature on contemporary pieces of work. Our starting point for the contemporary literature has been the book *The European Union and Occupied Palestinian Territories*, by Dimitris Bouris (2013). The book has a similar methodological approach as our project, interviewing sources in and around the West Bank within and outside donations, and afterwards applying a larger theory. Though this book focuses on state-building and not the EU as an international actor (like our project). The book judges the current liberal peacebuilding and state building efforts from an EU perspective. It criticizes the relationship between the EU and the Israel, as the Palestinians regards them as a *"counterweight to the unconditional US support of Israel"* (Bouris, 2013: 167). It concludes that the processes can be regarded as a partial success, as the Palestinian state can *"conduct the sound economic policies expected [of a well-functioning state]"* (Ibid.: 174), but calls the current peace process *"almost dead"* (Ibid.: 175).

Richard Youngs' *Normative Dynamics and Strategic Interests in the EU's External Identity* (2004) and Anders Perssons *Shaping Discourse and Setting Examples: Normative Power Europe can Work in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (2017) discusses another aspect of the EU's approach to the two-state solution; the normative power of the EU. These articles discuss the normative approach to power and its success in Israel/Palestine. Persson (2017) uses case studies to show both the success and the shortcomings of the normative approach. Persson argues the EU has legitimized the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza as parts of a future Palestinian state, yet the also uses this as an example of the normative powers limitations. Perssons article (2017) explains that while the EU has changed the discourse surrounding Palestine, but has had little impact on the ground in the oPt's. Persson (2017) then discusses the normative problem of not recognizing Palestine, and how it plays into the hands of Israel. It concludes the normative power of the EU is larger than before, and as Israel has a stronger hold on the oPt's, the EU's normative power is larger than ever as well. Youngs (2004) describe the normative powers place in a traditional rational approach. Youngs (2004) describes the normative approach of human rights and democracy to be an identifier to the EU and it has influence on its foreign policy. Youngs (2004) also describes this focus on violations on human rights to be strategic in its neighbouring policy, for

stabilization, thus making the strive for human rights to be a self-interest as part of the normative power.

Another Richard Youngs article, called *Security through democracy: Between aspiration and pretence* (2010) discusses the promotion of democracy with security. He sees the EU's promotion of democracy as the last of the security concerns, meaning that democracy is not the main security concern. Youngs (2010) notes that diplomats see the EU commitment to democracy goes against the security concerns and that the support for democracy has changed towards technical and short termed and more in line with the security concerns, and less about regime change post-2nd Gulf War.

The tools which the EU has used in the Israel/Palestine conflict and their effectiveness with these, are analysed by Haim Yacobi and David Newman in the chapter *The EU in the Israel/Palestine conflict* in the book *The European Union and Border Conflicts* by Diez, T., Albert, M. and Stetter, S. (2009). Here Yacobi and Newman identify 4 ways in which the EU attempts to fulfil its goal of having Israeli withdrawal from the oPt's and eventually the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and the constraints the EU face in this. The EU faces an ambivalent position towards both Israel and Palestine. While the EU is the biggest donor for the PA, they are also engaged in trade associations with both sides. Israel regards the EU as a pro-Palestinian institution and untrustworthy, and Israel cares more for the opinion of certain key member-states (Ibid.: 181). The EU is also constrained by the involvement of the US; the EU's manoeuvring space is limited by the strong involvement of the US in cases where there is disagreement between the two – especially considering the Israeli positive view of the US and the negative view of the EU.

The four pathways of Yacobi and Newman are the following: *The compulsory* is an incentive based approach. But Yacobi and Newman notes this approach as rather inefficient. The EU cannot temp Israel nor Palestine with EU membership, and the EU has had a limited effect with economic incentives towards the EU. *The enabling* consists of enabling the PA, effectuated by supporting democratic and administrative reforms in Palestine and creating a viable 'partner for Israel in the oPt. Yacobi and Newman sees this as a more valuable pathway compared to political intervention, which is what the Palestinians are interested in, according to Yacobi and Newman, as the EU has so little compulsory effect over Israel. *The connective* pathway describes attempting to gain influence through substantial support of

NGOs in Israel and Palestine. According to interviews conducted by Yacobi and Newman with NGOs in the region, the European agenda in this area is unclear, and thus limiting the effectiveness. The programme can also provoke anti-EU sentiments in Israel while also only reach a limited number of political elites and academics. *The constructive* refers to whether the EU association with both sides can create a transformation of identity towards a resolutionist identity. Though it is deemed inefficient due to the weak integration with both parties.

Mohammed Morra and Rory Millers articles describe the EU's position politically and how this has affected their situation in the conflict. Morra's article *The Palestine-Israeli Peace Process* (2016) describes the post-Soviet times as a vacuum the US filled. He aims to understand the Oslo-agreement as a product of the international society, post-Soviet. As the Soviet Union were an allied to many Arab states, the US became a more viable option for them. Morra describes the US hegemony with the term, coined by Bush Sr., "New World Order.

Miller's article *Europe's Palestine Problem* (2011) takes a more contemporary approach to the EU involvement to the conflict. It calls for more EU involvement in the conflict, as the US is largely pro-Israeli. Miller criticizes the EU's vague approach and in relation to its size of donations. He quotes a joint statement by the Italian and Spanish foreign ministers, saying: *"The EU "must play a role because it is a friend of Israel and of the Palestinian Authority"* (Miller 2011: 8). Miller focuses on this duality and the EU's preference of staying relevant in the negotiations as a problem, as it excludes other actors like Brazil from entering, and that the EU should not measure their leverage by competing with the US politically, but would only dent their *"Self-confidence* (Ibid.: 10).

Lastly both John McCormick *The European Superpower* (2006) and Marx Leonard *Why Europe will run the 21$^{st}$t Century* (2005) challenges the idea of seeing the EU as second violin in the to the US 1$^{st}$ in the international 'orchestra'. They agree, the EU is a superpower in today's world but is often not seen this way, because of more "traditional" approaches that favours military operations and capability as a measurement, over soft-power. McCormick further argues, that the EU is promoting liberal peace in the world, and is more committed than the US.

Lastly we have another piece of work by Richard Youngs. In *the European Union and the Promotion of Democracy: Europe's Mediterranean and Asian Policies* (2002) Youngs provide an overview of the different theoretical approaches to EU foreign policy. He groups the different approaches into intergovernmental, functional, and liberal. He explains how the intergovernmental sees the EU as an ineffective international actor, as the military power of the EU does not equal the sum of the parts due to the lack of majority-voting in the CFSP-area. The functional and liberal argues the EU is an effective actor, and the focus should not be limited to EU military powers but also on softer types of power. The strength comes from the internals of the EU and their external partnerships.

This literature will serve as an aid to understanding our informants' perceptions about EU as it relates to the Israel/Palestine conflict, and as tool to triangulate our analysis to existing literature.

**First part of the Analysis**

In the first part of the analysis, we identify three main narratives, which will be our structure in this part. Under each narrative, we will describe how we have identified the narrative. We will identify the goals and preferences (and actors if there are any particular), and after the narratives, we will extract the institutions, per Levi.

The EU's funding is bureaucratic and ineffective

This narrative is made based on our preconditions and our literature. The idea, that the EU is bureaucratic stems partially from a common public perception, but it is also identified in the literature. In Richard Youngs book (2002) on EU's Mediterranean policies, some academics argue that the area of CFSP, as a whole, is ineffective. Others argue that funding in itself is effective and meaningful (Youngs 2002, Leonard 2005, McCormick 2006).

We often asked about how the informants had experienced the funding from the EU. This question was most relevant for the organizations and program-leaders, that were being funded by the EU. Here the possibility, that the informants, that receive EU funding, would hesitate to criticize the process through which they get funding, could exist. Furthermore,

there seemed to be some tendencies in the interviews; the NGOs would argue the PA misused the funds and vice versa. Therefore, we also understand the word "ineffective" as funds being given to recipients, that does not use them effectively.

*Recipients of EU funding:*

As an actor, the EU is generally viewed positive in regards to funding (Sbitan 12:38), and so is the communication overall (Sbitan 20:22, Khadijeh 23:09, Shiha 59:18). The EU is described as an entity that "listens" (Shiha 59:29) to the problems of the Palestinian people, the EU "understand the needs" of the people (Sbitan 10:09). Only one informant opposed this charatization, Ayman Rabi from Palestinian Hydrology Group named two examples, where the EU had not listened to them (Rabi 10:10, Rabi 13:09).

But all the informants in this category made explicit statements about the EU's funding mechanism being too bureaucratic (Sbitan 9:47, Jubran 27:24, Khadijeh 32:11, Rabi 12:10), except Shiha. The interviews support the narrative, since the process of getting funding is seen as "complicated" (Sbitan 8:31) "not flexible" (Jubran 24:59) and surrounded by "strict rules" (Khadijeh 32:22). The EU is viewed as having a preference for bureaucratic processes.

These civil recipients of the EU funding are of the opinion, that the funding is best spend in the NGOs in contrast to the PA (Shiha 43:00).

*"You can't feel they [the PA] are independent or are taking in the consideration of its people. They are very ineffective, there is a lot of people working in these institutions, but not very many results. "(Jubran 14:15)*

They view the PA as an actor, that only act as an agent for other parties, than the Palestinians (Khadijeh 52:10). These reveals a view of the PA as an ineffective actor, which reflects on the EU and its funding.

Our informant Aya Sbitan from the NGO Burj Al-LoqLoq felt that the EU were not involved in the project they funded at the ground level:

*"The EU came doing the opening and they will come at the closing ceremony - and that's it"* (Sbitan 17:17). This quote is exemplary to an overall feeling of the EU not always invested in the people they try to help, only the projects themselves. Two informants express how the EU

has a goal to support projects even if, in some cases, it might not benefit anyone. (Sbitan 17:19, Jubran 41:14). This is somewhat supported by the NGO Palvision, as they argue that the EU does not work for the most important needs of the people (Khadijeh 38:40) and when they talk about how they feel limited by the EU (Khadijeh 1:14:32). A discontent about the goals of the EU's funding can is clearly presented amongst this actor group.

*PA representatives*

All PA informants generally views the EU an actor positively (Jaghoub 13:24, Khatib 38:41, Malhelm 5:13). Furthermore, they view their communication with the EU as good, (Jaghoub 13.40, Khatib 21.00, Malhelm 27.00).

As was the case with the civil recipients, the PA actors overall describes the funding either as too bureaucratic (Jaghoub 04:40, Khatib 38.39) or inefficient (Mohamed 42:20). Both of these informants comes with examples of how rigid the funding process is; Dr. Jaghoub, head of an EU sponsored agriculture program, highlighted 72 steps of approval. (Jaghoub 10:50) and Saad Khatib, advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture, mentioned all the rapports, the EU are paying him to make about projects (Khatib 5:35). The informants thus express a view of the EU having a preference for bureaucratic process.

Our informants often explain this by referring to their perception, that the EU is restrained by Israel: *"Israel puts limits for the Europeans, on their aid to Palestinian security forces"* (Mohamed 29:34). And our two informants from the PLC and Saad Khatib perceive the same thing. However, they identify the EU's preference to uphold Israeli law as a reason for their lack of actions. (Mohamed, Malhelm 27:00, Khatib 49:25).

Saad Khatib argues, that the NGOs are not efficient with the use of EU funds (Khatib 33:40), a view Jaghoub supports:

*"Countries with political agendas uses NGOs. They [the NGOs] spend money, more than 50 % on administrative work, training, traveling, workshop and it is not needed now. The Palestinians are educated people."* (Jaghoub 31:29).

*Civil/Political actors:*

Khitam Saafin, President of UWPC, was more positive towards the EU's funding (Saafin 04:20), while both Sam Bahour and Hourani was more critical (Bahour 10:50, Hourine 26.00).

The PLFP was directly negative: "*Before [the funds] reaches these public workers, it goes directly to a Palestinian class that does not necessarily depend on salaries, and instead performs as a subcontracting company.*" (PFLP 2). Except from Khitam Saafin, there is a coherent view that the EU's funds ineffective actors, both governmental and non-governmental.

"*To keep putting 100 dollars in my pocket so I have a good lunch, you are not building anything, you are just keeping me alive (...) The EU and other donors need to face the Israelis politically*" (Bahour 26.30).

Both Lama Hourani, and Sam Bahour questions the EU's preferences and long term goals with their funding. In Bahours opinion, the funding is inadequate and the EU knows this, even though he does not offer a reason for this behaviour (Bahour 26:30). Hourani is offended by the EU's critique of the corruption in Palestine and sees this as a prism to understand the EU funding:

"*It is not about the level of corruption, but about the needs of the Palestinians, it is in the interest and benefitting these countries to stay here and keep the area as much breathable and liveable as possible to the Palestinians, so they don't do anything crazy.*" (Hourani 26:39). The view of the EU trying to uphold "status quo" is shared by Saafin (Saafin 38.00). The funding is not guided towards a two-state solution, but to uphold the status quo. Sam Bahour explains this as a preference for good relations with Israel:

"*I think it is a calculation of cost-benefit. Right now, the benefit from their good relationship with Israel severs them more, than serving the Palestinians justice*" (Bahour 29.00)

*EU representatives:*

The EU representatives does not challenge the idea of the EU funding mechanism as being inflexible (Polin 16:00, Van Winckel 1, 14:39). Since only one of the EU informants we have interviewed, Joris van Winkel, is working with the PA and Palestinian NGOs, he will be most relevant in this section.

Communication with the recipients of funding is in van Winckels optic "*a mixed bag*" (Van Winckel 1, 14:40) and he sees the cooperation with the PA as "*not ideal*" (Van Winckel 1, 08:30). He even hints at corruption, when he says:

*"You notice that some people [in the PA] are getting quite wealthy, and I do not know how they manage."* (Van Winckel 1, 08:40).

This supports the views by both the civilian recipients of the EU funding and the political and civilian actors; the PA is not an efficient recipient of the funding.

Van Winckel is, in general, pessimistic about the EU's involvement. He acknowledges, that the Palestinians would be worse off without the support of the EU, but he still sees a complete standstill in the situation.

*"The way I sometimes summarize is, that it is to a large extent a frozen conflict and we pay for the freezer"* (Van Winckel 2, 32:00). The funding is thus seen as upholding the status quo, not dissolving it. He further acknowledges that the two-state solution *"(...) is not materialising"* (Van Winckel 1, 05:12) and the reason why EU perhaps is not supporting it wholeheartedly is that *"(...)there are also short term considerations."* (Van Winckel 2, 34:30). EU Funding is thus also given with the goals and preferences for 'short term' considerations.


*Conclusion:*

The narrative resonated with our informants since there was an overall perception of the EU as an actor that prefers a bureaucratic funding process and who gives funding to ineffective recipients. Our own preconception was therefore confirmed in the view of our informants. At least two of our sources explain the effectiveness of the funding as a result of the EU's preference to uphold Israeli law and retain their relationship with Israel. This is also supported by the perception of EU's goal of maintaining the status quo, that both our EU informant and the rest of the informants agreed on.

The notion of EU as an ineffective donor, as described in Youngs (2002)*,* is to some extent validated in this part of the analysis, since all categories of informants in some way showed a perception of the EU's funding as ineffective.


We have to account for quite a lot in this narrative, due to the role and position of some of our sources. Not surprisingly, none of the recipients of the EU funding view funding, in general, as negative.

## The EU's position does not align with their actions

This narrative is slightly based on preconception, but mostly on the information in our literature review. We believed that even though the EU officially fights for a two-state solution, is dedicated to international law and often makes statements defending human rights and democracy, it might not be willing (or capable of) following through on these values and goals.

Richard Youngs makes the point that the EU's stance on human rights and democracy is not leading its considerations in foreign policies, but instead securing strategic interests is the dominant goal (Youngs 2002). This led us to the narrative that EU's position and efforts on making the two-state solution a reality (EEAS 2016) were not sees as a genuine effort by the Palestinian actors.

### The recipients of EU funding

The Recipients of EU funds in the Palestinian civil society were explicit about the EU not acting in accordance with their positions and values.

*"(...)As long as they [The EU] are speaking about rights, and as long as they are recognising that there is an occupation here, I expect them to talk the talk and walk the walk; to do something concrete"* (Jubran 47:20). This is how Shanaz Jubran from The Danish Church Aid office in East Jerusalem expresses a disconnect regarding the EU's actions. This recurs from all the informants that are recipients of EU funding in the Palestinian civic society (Jubran 19:00, 47:00, Shiha 1:02:00, Khadijeh 25:00, Sbitan 21:00, Rabi 26:30). It shows, that our informants expect the EU to keep their actions aligned with their position. This also shows a belief that the EU as an actor has the capabilities to *"walk the walk"*.

The Advocacy officer Khalil Abu Khadijeh from the Palestinian NGO PalVision expressed the hypocritical nature of EUs aid in the following way: *"The EU funds a school in Area C, then Israel comes within a month and demolish it, then they rebuild it again. That is not a position; it is trying to help, while you know it will be demolished, so what's the point?"* (Khadijeh 26:00).

This notion that the EU is spending a lot of money, while not protecting the investment they make, is something that recurs in many of the interviews (Shia 23:00, Khadijeh, 26:00, Rabi 18:30).

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Similarly expressed by Khalil Shia, General Director of PARC: *"You have to protect your investment, otherwise you are approving the occupation, there is no other alternatives"* (Shia 22:00). Anders Persson also comes to a similar conclusion in his article about the normative power of the EU. He concludes, that by not recognizing Palestine, the normative power of the EU is actually serving the interest of Israel. (Persson 2017: 11).

The non-action is here judged to be an approvement of the occupation, while the EU advocate Palestinian rights and gives large amounts of aid. This characterizes the EU as an actor, that either has no power to protect its investments or chooses not to use it. Since it is assumed, that the EU wants to protect its project in Palestine, one could see that there are no real actions to support the EU's position.

*"The [EU's] intentions are there, but the politics not. There are different interest amongst states. I do not expect they will sabotage their relation with the Israelis,"* Shanaz Jubran says (Jubran 47:20). She predicts, that the EU and individual member states prefers their relationship with Israel over realizing their intentions. This shows, that the informants see the EUs (non)actions as being contradicting to their position, because of a preference for their self-interest for Israel.

*Civil/Political Actors*

The PFLP sees a basic disconnect in the preferences and goals of the EU, in that the EU does give money to help build the Palestinian state, but do not try to change the political conditions, exemplified by the recognition of the Israeli state and not the Palestinian one.

*"The EU giving money is not a problem; the problem is that the money comes with unacceptable political conditions, such as the recognition of Israel and the acceptance of negotiations as the only path to achieve Palestinian sovereignty and statehood"* (PFLP 2018: 1-2).

Similarly expressed by Khitam Saafin, whom views the EU member-states as actors who promote freedom and rights around the world, *"(...) but when it comes to Palestine, they are not true to their values"*. (Saafin 41:00).

The informants see the EU as an actor, who do not align its actions with its position, who do not live up to its values.

*"The EU continues to maintain the EU-Israel Association Agreement at the same time that it provides humanitarian aid to Palestinians. This means that the occupier responsible*

*for ongoing violation of Palestinian human rights and the colonization of Palestine is being rewarded for that behaviour (...)"* (PFLP 2018: 1).

The PFLP view the EUs preference for trade agreements with Israel, renders the EU commitments to Palestinian rights meaningless.

Sam Bahour, Chairman and Co-founder of Americans for a Vibrant Palestinian Economy, view EU's role on the West Bank as having shifted from helping the Palestinians gain statehood to *"(...) supporting the status quo, as politically defined by the US and as practically defined by the Israeli military"* (Bahour 05:00). Sam Bahour shares the perception that the EUs preferences are their relationship to the US, and even that the *"(...)the EU has been bankrolling a US dominated political agenda"* (Bahour 02:30).

The perception, that if the EU as an actor is serious about building a democratic, viable state, they need to recognise Palestine as a state and do everything to end the occupation, is consistent with the Civil and Political actors. (Bahour 26:00, Saafin 41:00) *"How can you build democracy under occupation? How can you make economic development under occupation? (...) you cannot import or export", as* Lama Hourani of the Heinrich Bull Foundation puts it (Hourani 32:15).

*PA representatives*

The EU as an actor is, in general, viewed positively by our informants we define as the PA (Khatib 01:00, 10:25, 12:20, Malhelm & Mohamed 02:00, 15:15, 50:30, Jaghoub 01:30, 08:50, 13:40). It must be duly noted, that the PA relies on EU funds, projects and aid to function, and that these actors have close contact with EU officials - but as the interviews progresses, the EU narrative of a misalignment shows.

The perception that the EU is not effective as a political actor is shared amongst our informants in the PA. Suha Malhelm, adviser with the PLC, says that *"It all boils down to money. What we need is practical political steps (...) this is not really happening from the part of the EU",* (Malhelm 21:30). She goes on to say that the Palestinians need more than propaganda and values (Malhelm 55:40).

Suha Malhelm identifies this non-action as a result of the EU preference for their relationship with the US and the Israelis; *"The EU will not take this step [Recognise the Palestinian state], because they do not want to lose their privileges with the Americans and the Israelis".* (Malhelm 5:30). She also finds it strange that the EU, despite their enormous

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economic contribution the two-state solution, still does not have preference for adopting a more political active role in the conflict. "*Europe is the biggest donor and supporter of the Palestinian territories, but it is not taking its location in the Middle East in terms of politics*" (Malhelm 22:10). This backs up the concept from the literature on EU in the Israel-Palestine conflict as a 'payer' not a 'player' (Newman & Yacobi 2009:183).

Saad Khatib, senior advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture, sees the same unwillingness on the part of the EU, to protect the investments they make as some of the recipients of funding in the civil society (Kadijeh 26:00, Shiha 22:00). He explains that "(...) *they [the EU] could be much more proactive in protecting their investment (...) if you say something against Israel, you are automatically anti-Semitic.*" (Khatib 49:25). identifying the preference for not protecting the investment as stemming from guilt. Khatib also feels that the EU needs to pressure the Israelis politically (Khatib 59:50).

Dr. Naser Jaghoub, Head of Palestinian Agricultural Disaster Risk Reduction and Insurance Fund under the PA and sponsored by the EU, sees a disconnect in the EU talking about *"humanity and international law"* when all their problems *"are caused by the Israeli occupation"* (Jaghoub 26:00). He also sees the disconnect between the perceived political power of the EU and the lack of political will. *"The EU has many tools, but they still have not recognized our state, and the border of 1967. What are they waiting for?"* (Jaghoub 24:00).

To summarize, our informants in the PA all identify the EU as an important and valued actor that helps build their state, funds important projects and a reliable one at that. However, they also all identify the disconnect between the huge economic presence of the EU and a preference for not acting politically in any significant manor, which is what they say, they really need (Jaghoub 24:00, Malhelm 22:10, Khatib 49:25). The reasons for a lack of political action is identified as a fear of being perceived as anti-Semitic and a preference for privileges with the Israelis and Americans (Malhelm 5:30, Khatib 49:25).

*EU representatives*

Our two EU representatives were quite explicit that the EU's positions were not always reflected in the actions of the EU, and that the positions of the EU also had to give way for other preferences. Perhaps best exemplified by this statement by Rocco Polin from the EU representation in Tel Aviv: *"The two-state solution and international law is a big*

*goal, but you know perfectly well, that flourishing trade relations is also a big goal of the European Union"* (Polin 38:05). Rocco Polin perceives the EU's goal of flourishing trade relations in contrast to the goal of the two-state solution and international law. Furthermore, he explains that the EU companies profit from trade with Israel, and that 'it is not a gift' the EU gives to Israel. The EU's preference for trade with Israel is thus in contrast to their position on the two-state solution and international law. This is in accordance with Richard Youngs analysis of the foreign policies of the EU as having a primary focus on strategic self-interest (Youngs 2004).

Joris Van Winckel from the EU representation for the West Bank and Jerusalem is quite clear when in comes to explaining whether the EU positions align with its actions *"Our position is clear. But from going from there to holding Israel accountable is something else"* (Van Winckel 2, 08:52). Van Winckel views the EU not backing up their positions politically as major political failure, that has resulted in the EU's preference for acting economically in the conflict: *"(...) we failed politically, to hold Israel accountable, so we basically pay to compensate for our political failure"*. (Van Winckel 1, 20:00). Similarly, Rocco explains that the statements the EU makes on Israel and international law, especially regarding the killings in Gaza, are often for the sake of the EU itself: *"I will be very honest, there are times which we know that we will be making a statement more for our own sake (...) the European public expects us to be firm with certain concepts, and we do kind of, want to be on record, because it is our position, knowing full well, that chances of influences of a particular statement on Israeli policy making is limited"* (Polin 07:00). As such, Polin view statements as internal tools, to be on the record saying the right things that backup the positions of the EU, while not really expecting a political outcome.

Polin also acknowledges that the US is 'in the driving seat' politically, and that the EU does not plan to challenge them, even though the US has taken steps that are detrimental to the EU's goals (Polin 19:15).

Furthermore, Polin has the perception, that if the EU was to pressure the US and try to take over the peace process, it would not have the effects that the Palestinians wants, and it would not have the desired political impact. *"As long as the Americans are not willing to give up the driving seat, we could sort of create a plan B; a second game in town, which is of absolutely no use for anybody. Israel would not accept it, the Palestinians would know perfectly well, that this is not a solution, even in their case"* (Polin 21:00). The preference for non-action can be viewed as a recognition of the powerlessness of the EU politically.

As to whether increased political pressure on Israel, such as the application of conditionality from the EU on areas such as trade, exemplified by a possible cancellation of EU's Association Agreement with Israel, is not seen as realistic by Rocco Polin (38:00). *"Let us be realistic; we are not surrounded by Switzerland's, and a strict and moral application of conditionality, would probably wipe of our Southern neighbourhood"* (Polin 36:50).

The preference for a strict strategic self-interest of economic trade is thus explicitly identified as a main reason for why the EU is not defending their position on the two-state solution, the values of democracy and human rights and international law. Along with the preference of following the US and a realisation of powerlessness. (Polin 36:50, 19:15, Van Winckel 1, 20:00).

*Conclusion*

A disconnect between EU positions and their way of action in the conflict is identified by all our groups of informants on the West Bank. It is expressed as frustration over the EU positions and statements on international law and human rights, due to the significant presence in the oPt's, both economically and technically, while not applying any political pressure on Israel and the US and not recognizing the Palestinian state, thus maintaining a status quo that is making the prospect of a two state solution increasingly more difficult (Jubran 47:20, PFLP 2018: 1-2, Bahour 05:00, Khadijeh 26:00, Saafin 41:00, Van Winckel 2, 08:52). As to why the EU does not act to back up their positions and values with political actions, there are some clear ideas that is consequent from all our informants, including the EU officials themselves. These are; a lack of consensus amongst member states regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict, as a result of different interest amongst member states, a preference for not pressuring the US or Israel politically, exemplified by not protecting their investments, due to a strategic self-interest of trade and diplomatic relations, and finally a perception of the EU as a powerless actor in the political arena (Polin 36:50, Van Winckel 2, 20:00, Malhelm 5:30, Saafin 41:00, Jubran 47:20). This perception by our informants is in line with Richard Youngs' analysis of EU external policy as one that is mainly guided by strategic self-interest (Youngs 2004). It is also in accordance with Youngs' analysis, that EU support has become increasingly technical and functional and aligned with security concerns, which means that the EU has a preference maintaining the status quo (Youngs 2010). The

powerlessness of the EU is also confirmed by Persson, who concludes that EU has discursive power, but no power to change realities on the ground (Persson 2017: 11). The identified reasons for non-action are also described by Yacobi and Newman who describe two of the biggest limitations the EU faces in the conflict as the US limiting the political manoeuvring space of the EU and a preference for economic involvement and trade (Newman & Yacobi 2009:174, 183).

In short, the perception is that the EU is based on and committed to international law (EEAS 2017) but not upholding it while realizing the core struggles of the Palestinians, thus sustaining a deteriorating status quo in the conflict and undermining the opportunity for a two-state solution. This entails the narrative of the EU's positions not aligning with its actions.

## The EU will not change direction

This narrative stems from our preconception of the EU as an actor, that does not easily change position on issues like the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Our theoretical starting point for our second part, is clearly connected to this narrative. The concept, path dependency, comes from historical institutionalism and it entails that institutions like the EU is predisposed to follow one singular "path". This idea can also be found in Youngs (2002). He outlines a debate on the International role of the EU, where the intergovernmental oriented scholars argue, that the lack of quality majority voting, makes the EU not inclined to change policy direction on the CFSP area.

Further Newman and Yacobi (2009) discusses, how the EU cannot act, because the US leaves little political manoeuvring space.

### Recipients of EU funding:

All of the civil recipients pointed to areas where the EU could, as an actor, change their direction to the better. These points of critique often came with some hesitation, possibly because of the uneven power relation between the informant and the EU.
The EU's intentions are viewed positive (Jubran 43:00), but it is also made clear, that the informants do not deem it likely, that the EU has a preference for a change in policies (Khadijeh 40:20, Shiha 18:40, Jubran 47:24).

This point was spelled out by Jubran from DCA: *"The intentions are there, but its politics not. There are different interest amongst states. I do not expect they will sabotage their relation with the Israelis."* (Jubran 47:24). This misalignment is also shown in the interview with the Khalil Shiha: *"The member states has relations with Palestinians, but at the same time, they have relations with Israelis, they have to balance that"* (Shiha 21:19).

The informants wish for the EU to change policy direction is often coupled with a concrete suggestion of the EU to put more pressure on Israel, as shown in the quotation above and in several others (Sbitan 21:35, Rabi 25:10, Shiha 24:08). The representatives from PalVision further elaborate their understanding of why the EU does not just change their direction and put more pressure on Israel:

*"We expect the EU to play a much more political role, and not to continue just supporting or the views of the US regarding the solutions, because the US is totally biased to the Israelis"* (Shiha 1:06:30). The informants view the EU having a preference for supporting the views of the US even when it is not what the Palestinians ask for (Jubran 47:24, Khadijeh 26:30, Shiha 1:07:49).

*PA representatives*

The relationship between the EU and PA representatives, in the light of our narrative, is one that is complicated. The PA representatives recognizes the EU as a positive entity towards the PA (Khatib 10:21, 12:20, Malhelm 21:25), but this perception of positiveness is not uncontested; the context of the referenced part of the PLC interview, is mentioned as a critique of the EU not being pro-active in the political discussion.

The PA representatives perceive the EU as an actor with preferences that favours their self-interest, and the PLC accredits the fear of migration and terrorism as two of Europe's preferences: *"At the end of the day, they would favour their own interest and not ours. They would like to support us, help us. But at the end they have their own calculations. Actually, the two main priorities for the Europeans are migration. And terrorism"* (Malhelm 52:49). Not only is the preferences of the EU a factor in the EU's changes, but also the national level is a hindrance in colliding preferences: *"Mogherini cannot really in her policy, ignore the other member-states in their points of views [the views of radical right-wing]"* (Malhelm 25:02), and this is holding back the EU. And while its believed the EU has a preference towards the PA opposed to NGO's, there is no further belief the EU has any interest in

changing its approach (Mohamed 52:18), as it is afraid of breaking the institution of having privilege with Israel and the US (Khatib 41:40).

*Civil/Political Actors*

Most of the Civil and Political actors in Palestine pointed to areas where they would like to see the EU change their direction, specifically calling on the EU to recognize the Palestinian state and adopt a more political interventionist role in the conflict (Hourani 1:20, 32:15, Bahour 34:30, 26:30, PLFP: 1, Saafin 01:00).

But the general perception was, that the EU would not change anything, because the goals and preferences of the EU does not entail a change in its policies:" *The EU has so little political leverage with the US, that they keep praying every day, that the US find a leader that makes Israel do what it needs to do",* as expressed by Sam Bahour (Bahour 34:00). Bahour perceives the EU's preference of following the lead of the US, stemming from a lack of political leverage with the US, similarly identified by Yacobi and Newman as the EU's lack of manoeuvring space caused by US presence (Yacobi & Newman 2009: 174). This preference for non-action by the EU caused by US presence is also perceived by Khitam Saafin (Saafin 29:10) and Lama Hourani (Hourani 35:45, 37:29) A preference for good Israeli relation was also perceived as a main reason why the EU does not change direction. "*Politically they [the EU] prioritize Israel, not Palestine, this is why they do as they do"* (Saafin 42:00) The PFLP similarly views the EU's preferences for economic trade agreements with Israel as a greater goal than promoting Palestinian rights (PFLP: 1). And the PFLP does not consider it likely that this preference will change due to domestic politics in Europe, that are considered to be increasingly neoliberal, capitalist and racist (PFLP: 1). Sam Bahour feels, that the preferences of the EU are increasingly impacted by a foreign pro-Israeli lobby, that is infiltrating key EU member states: *"If we are not careful, individual countries in the EU will stop following own strategic interest, but that of a foreign lobby"* (Bahour 14:40). Additionally, he views the EU as having preference for compliance with Israelis, so EU actions in the West Bank being aligned with what the Israelis want and not international law (Bahour 04:30). In short, the Civil and Political actors do not consider it likely that the EU will change direction due to a preference for compliance and trade with Israel, compliance with the US and domestic politics in Europe.

*EU representatives*

As it relates to our narrative that 'the EU does not change direction" our two EU representatives were explicit in explaining, that the EU will not embark on a new course in the conflict (Van Winckel 2, 29:00, Polin 25:40), despite the fact that there is a new political landscape, that has made it much harder EU to reach its goals of ending the occupation of Palestine, a two state solution with an independent Palestinian state, including East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza (Newman & Yacobi 2009:1 84).

*"We are civil servants implementing the position of our governments, and our governments are not willing to take risks on this conflict,"* (Polin 25:40) this is how Rocco Polin express the prospect of a change in EU policy.  He makes it clear, that EU member states has no preference for taking any political risks in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Joris Van Winkel, EU representative from the EU representation for Gaza and the West Bank in East Jerusalem, paints the same picture. He responded in the following way, when asked about what the EU would do about the deteriorating prospect for the two-state solution: *"We are all in damage control mode (...) It is about preserving what we have, rather than stepping up our game"* (Van Winckel 2, 26:30).

Different explanations are offered, as to why the EU will not engage more actively a with greater political force. One, is that the Israel-Palestine conflict that has strong domestic resonances, and the preferences, goals interest amongst member states differ greatly on the subject. As Rocco Polin explains: *"There are very different opinions even within the parliaments of each member states. So, finding a consensus is difficult even at a national level, let alone at European level"* (Polin 15:10).  Joris van Winckel identifies the same problem (Van Winckel 2, 02:00).

Another obstacle for changing policy directions is identified as being the US dominating the political agenda in the region, while the EU has no preference for challenging this. Joris van Winckel says that *"The US has discredited itself as a broker; the Palestinians look at the EU to step in and fill the vacuum, but the EU cannot do this because there is no consensus (...) we cannot rise to occasion"* (Van Winckel 2, 25:00). Similarly, Rocco Polin says that *"there is no attempt to replace the Americans"* (Polin 21:00). Rocco also the perceives the lack political manoeuvring space the US creates for the EU, as a reason why the EU cannot take further action*: "EU can try to be in the driving seat, only if there are conditions that would allow you to be in the driving seat"* (Polin 21:00). As Yacobi and

Newman, the US dominated political arena is seen as a great challenge to EU influence in the region (Yacobi & Newman 2009: 174).

However, Polin and Van Winckel do name one positive move by the EU, which was the reaction by the EU when Trump announced his move of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; the EU managed to preserve the consensus of keeping embassies in Tel Aviv, and not follow the US. As Rocco Polin Explains: (...) *The pressure that was applied by Israelis, which has some cards to play in some important bilateral agreements with member states, by the Americans, which, you can only imagine how much the can pressure on member states, and yet, the consensus held"* (Polin 21:30). This was similarly expressed by Joris Van Winckel (Van Winckel 2, 26:40). Another preference guiding non-action, identified by Van Winckel, is that the that the EU also has a preference in keeping the status quo, keeping the peace in the region as a short-term consideration (Van Winckel 2, 33:00).

Concerning the future, Rocco Polin does not know what is going to happen, because the US is in the 'driving seat' and they do not know where the US are driving to (Polin 19:15). The preference for compliance with US policies would, in this perception, take over and pressure the actors, US and Israel, towards a two-state solution. Joris Van Winckel has a more outright dire prognosis for the EU's path in the coming years in the unfavourable political landscape. He perceives the EU as being in a bad place politically in the conflict, paying the price for keeping the two-state solution alive, while it becomes less and less feasible (Van Winckel 2, 36:00). He describes this conundrum through the analogy of the 'frog experiment' - the EU as the frog, and the water heating up is support for Palestine in a deteriorating situation: *"The frog is put in water and the water slowly heats up until the frog is cooked, but if you throw in the hot water, it will jump up"* (Van Winckel 2, 39:30). The path, that the EU is on, is no longer viable, the water is boiling, but it has been in it for too long to react to it. *"Our support for the PA is still a means to goal, if the goal is out of the window or disappearing on the horizon, is it still justified to continue supporting the PA for an elusive two state solution? Because if there is no longer a two-state solution, there is no longer a reasonable justification for it"* (Van Winckel 1, 18:30). The EU's preference for supporting the Palestinians technically and economically is thus, according to Van Winckel, only there if the two-state solution is still viable, which recent political developments has seriously jeopardized, which entails a dire prognosis for the EU in the conflict.

In short, both EU representatives do not see the EU change path as result of the political developments, while citing a lack of consensus amongst member states, short term considerations and a preference of following the US politically.

*Conclusion on the first part of the analysis*

Throughout our groupings of interviews, similar perceptions of the EU shows. The EU does not seem to have any preference for changing their politics or approach. The recipients of EU funding view the EU positively, in general, but with significant asterisk. Our sources believe the EU has shortages in their preferences in the Palestinian perspective.

The EU should, according to both the Recipients of EU funding and the PA representatives, be more proactive, yet it may not be in the horizon. The EU is projected to be to have a strategic interest at heart, as explained here by Suha Malhelm from the PLC: *"(...) at the end of the day, they would favour their own interest and not ours. They would like to support us, help us. But at the end they have their own calculations"* (Malhelm 52:59) and this focus on own interests, puts them in a dilemma; all our sources points to the relationship between the EU and Israel as problematic for the situation: "*Politically they [the EU] prioritize Israel, not Palestine, this is why they do as they do*" (Saafin 42:00). This pro-Israeli aspect is not only a deterrent for the EU as a whole, but also appears on a national level, where it plays into the hands of the disunity of the EU. Our sources point to the problem of creating consensus in the EU, when nations have different goals and preferences. This greatly limits the EU as an actor.

As we have uncovered in our literature review, there is a tendency the academic world. The EU and the current outlook for Palestine is under the control of the US, where Miller notes: *"EU policymakers need not measure their international standing in terms of how much leverage they have in the peace process or how much attention Israeli and Palestinian leaders pay to them. Europe is denting only its own self-confidence when it tries, and fails, to match the United States' role in the Middle East."* (Miller, 2011: p 10). This dependency towards the US is seen in our data as well; our sources express concern for the EU's possibility to change their policies without the US, as exemplified by Sam Bahour: *"The EU has so little political leverage with the US, that they keep praying every day, that the US find a leader that makes Israel do what it needs to do"* (Bahour 34:00).

In general, the perception is positive towards Europe, but without any belief in changes coming from the EU. Our informants unequivocally point to changes for a more politically loaded approach towards Israel, yet they all mark the pro-Israeli side in the individual nations as a large part of why there has been little action so far.

In total, the EU's possibility and preferences for changing (or rather not changing) their policies and approaches, boils down to a couple of factors. The EU are caught politically in a hairy situation, where they have become the 'payers' and not the 'players' in regards to the US and Israel (Yacobi & Newman 2009). The neutered role of the EU stems back to the creation of the Oslo Accord; the Oslo Accord was created post-Soviet, and therefore the US could install an international hegemony (or covert institution) in which it was the alpha dog (Morra 2016). This has led to the current situation. But not only the political relation to US holds the EU back from changing policies. The preferences of the EU are Eurocentric, first and foremost. This has meant that the EU is portrayed in a conflict of interest: While they have a clear positive approach to Palestine, their connections with Israel makes for a stronger preference. Thus, there are no real preference for the EU to change from being re-active, nor any preference in changing their approach and policies, according to both our informants and the contemporary literature.

## Institutions

In the following, we will use Levi's key concept of 'institutions' to identify and explain the limitations on the EU's actions shown in our data and backed by the literature.

Our narratives were directed against negative sides to the EU's involvement in Palestine in the eyes of almost all our informants. Therefore, the "institutions", that created the conditions, that our narratives are an expression of, will be characterized like internal or external limitations.

The narrative *"The EU's funding is bureaucratic and ineffective"* finds its institutions in two preferences. The first is a preference for their bureaucracy and the second is a preference for not letting their actions jeopardize their relationship with Israel. This points to two institutions in the narrative; the bureaucratic process of getting funding, which limits the recipients from doing the all work, they feel they could do. And that the relationship with Israel is limiting the actions, that the EU could otherwise take in Palestine. This institution is

both holding the Israelis accountable and an aversion for disregarding the Israeli law.

In "*The EU's position does not align with their actions*" there is an important overlap of institutions. There is a preference for retaining the EU's relationship with Israel and the US over giving the Palestinians the support they ask for. This is coupled with the other preferences in the narrative. Some EU member states, because of their preference for their relationship with Israel, uses the consensus voting in the area of CFSP to hinder further actions from the EU in Palestine.

This shows two institutions. The first is the same as the last one identified in the first narrative, which is that EU will not act as in accordance with its stands on human rights, fearing for their relationship with the Israel. But in this narrative, the US is also a part of the institution. These institutions are affecting both the actions of the EU as a whole and the some of the member states.

Also, the voting-procedure of the EU in the area of the CFSP is touched upon in this narrative. The fact that it only takes one member state to hinder any action through CFSP in Palestine, is perceived to hinder EU's ability to act on their positions on human rights.

*"The EU will not change direction"* shows the same two institutions as above through the preferences. Firstly, our informants note that the national level of some member-states will obstruct the consensus voting procedure of the CFSP area to maintain their relationship to Israel. The second main implication, identified by our informants as resulting in non-action, is EU's relationship with Israel. Based on these preferences, there are two institutions.

The first is the internal voting procedure of the CFSP area is limiting the EU abilities to change direction of its policies, since this demands a consensus, which is deemed not possible. Also in this instance the individual member states relationship to Israel is a component causing the blockade in consensus building. The second institution is the EU's overall relationship with Israel, that also limits the EU from changing direction, since the EU value its relationship to Israel more, than the benefits of changing policy direction in Palestine.

In the following the four major institutions will be distinguished the relevant literature. The four institutions limiting the EU involvement in Palestine have been categorized into two groups for our further analysis, to help the characterization of the EU as an international actor. The two groups are the internal limitations and the external limitations.

*Internal*

The first institution is: The EU is bureaucratic to such an extent, that it hinders those who are recipients of the EU funding, to use the funding to its full capacity. This institution is easily identified, since most of our informants directly called the EU, and especially their funding mechanism, bureaucratic. It is a widely described in academia, that the EU's process overall can be described as bureaucratic (Page 2012).

The second institution limiting the EU is the voting-procedure of the CFSP area. This is identified in our analysis, when our informants' points to the voting procedure, as a hindrance for further involvement in Palestine. As mentioned before, this is a point supported by the more intergovernmental part of the discussion (Youngs 2002). But further it is supported by a point by Yacobi and Newman (2009), where they describe, how the Israeli view of the EU as an overall pro-Palestinian actor, diverts them to focus on key member states, instead of focusing on the EU as one actor. This leads to a disunity, that renders the consensus-voting-process useless, since there is no consensus to be found.

*External*

The first of the external institutions is the EU's relationship with the US. It is seen in our analysis, when our informants argue that the EU does not act according to its goals because of either the role of the US in the international community, or because of a fear for hurting their relationship with the US. The US is leading the negotiation in the conflict and as mentioned before, Morra points to the Oslo-accord to being a product of the US hegemony (Morra 2016). This point is expanded by Yacobi and Newman, that argue when the EU and the US has opposing interest, the US's leading role in the conflict and the international society leaves the EU with few options to enforce policies serving their own interests.

The last institution is the EU's relationship with Israel. This is identified in our analysis, whenever an informant explains the lack of action from the EU, EU adhering to Israeli rules in terms of aid, and the EU not protecting their investments from being demolished, because of the EU's preference for trade and good diplomatic relations with Israel. This point is supported by much of the literature - Yacobi and Newman (2009) argues, that the trade relations with Israel hinders the EU from pressuring Israel politically. Bouris (2013) points to the economic relationship between Israel and the EU as a deterrent for the EU to act in a way, that is viewed too controversial by Israel. The reason it is framed "too

controversial" is that, as both Yacobi and Newman and Bouris points out, the Israeli public view the EU as pro-Palestinian.


## Second part of the analysis

In this part of the analysis, we will apply historical institutionalism to our findings in the first part of the analysis. We will focus on path dependency to understand the continuous involvement in Palestine from the EU.

Historical institutionalism is broadly oriented. This will show in this analysis, since we do not have a 'niche' focus, but try to understand the EU as an international actor in the wider aspects of international community and international history, that the involvement in Palestine is part of. Therefore, it must be noted, that we understand the Oslo Accords, as Morra (2016) defines it, as a part of the "new world order" and the whole international engagement in the conflict as an expression of the international community.

Because of the historical focus, this analysis will be guided by a chronological order. This means, that the points of analysis will be presented with a chronological sense and the theory will be applied to them in this order. This will create an approach of sequencing and timing which will hold a focus on the processes and transformation of the EU's involvement over time.

The focus is therefore also a macro focus, since it is a more holistic understanding our analysis thrives after, rather than one that could be achieved with a focus on one single incident or only analysing one institution without taking into account other important actors and institutions.


As mentioned above the first part of the analysis led us to four overall limitations of the EU's involvement in Palestine. Through our chronological structure these will be our points of analysis, as we see them emerge.


### The Oslo accords as a critical juncture

Historical Institutionalism, and with it path dependency, is a theory that builds upon history, and more importantly significant events of history. These events can become critical junctures and create a trench of path dependency for involved institutions and actors. We will

in the following approach explain the Oslo Accords as a critical juncture for the EU's participation in the two-state solution.

While neither the conflict nor the European involvement did start with the Oslo Accords, the current outlook and structure for international involvement was framed by the Oslo Accords. Almost simultaneously with the Oslo Accords, the Maastricht treaty was signed in Europe as well. And in what seemed to become a 'perfect storm' from a path dependency standpoint, the EU encased itself in the beginning of a strong path dependency, by signing both the Oslo Accords and the Maastricht treaty at roughly the same time. Below we will analyse and explain this approach to the critical juncture of the Oslo accords and its problematic connection with the Maastricht treaty.

Critical Juncture

The joint-decision trap, as we explained in our theory chapter, is a paradox of having consensus to make a policy, but not having consensus to change it later on. As the Oslo Accords were agreed upon around the time of the Maastricht treaty, the EU caught themselves in a seemingly picture-perfect joint-decision trap. As we outlined in the introduction, the Maastricht treaty brought along the CFSP pillar, which became intergovernmental and with consensus based decision-making. This, of course, ticks off both unanimity and intergovernmental control of the area, in the criteria of joint-decision traps. So before the actual joint-decision of the Oslo accords, the EU put themselves in a disadvantage; the framework for decision-making they created was rigid and linear, making the possibility of path dependency in the area likely.

The last criteria mentioned by Pollack (2009, 136f) is the continuation of policies in the face of lacking consensus. This aspect is not legislated within the Maastricht treaty, yet it is still present in the situation; the Oslo Accords were agreed upon by the quartet of the US, PLO, Israel and the EU (as described in our introduction), the EU were immediately part of the two-state solution. By 1997 the EU established its first contractual relations, entrenching the critical juncture of the Oslo Accord (EU 1997).

With the institutions uncovered in the first part of the analysis, we can identify the limitations which are rooted in the Oslo Accords and the framework of the Maastricht Treaty. We identify the institutions affected or created by the critical juncture as being both the EU's limited role in the international society, and the disunity between member states. As our literature review and analysis show, there is a general attitude towards the EU being belittled

by the US politically in the conflict, and Israel respecting the US more (Andersen 2:25). Our informant Sam Bahour (2:30) exemplifies a general attitude of the US dominating the peace process, and this attitude is reflected in the literature on the subject; Morra (2016) discusses the one-sidedness that came into effect after the fall of Soviet, and how the US shaped the peace process after this world picture. This critical juncture laid the grounds for an US Dominated arena. The impact of the disunity between member states and its effect due to the unanimity rules in the area of foreign policy, has created the institution of states having preferences towards Israel and its limitations on the EU's ability to change its policies. This originated in the Maastricht treaty, when the unanimity rules were created.

The future impact of the joint-decision trap is our critical juncture. As Pollack (2009: 136) notes, a joint-decision trap can cause a policy to be 'locked in', and in our case, the Oslo Accords caught the EU. As Scharpf writes about a joint-decision trap: *"from which exit is precluded or very costly, non-agreement would imply the self-defeating continuation of past policies in the face of a changing policy environment"* (Scharpf 1988, 265). This self-defeating continuation is described by the EU representatives, exemplified by van Winkel (2, 29:00) who described the Europeans to be in *"damage control"* and *"stuck"*.

So, as we have shown, the criteria for a joint-decision trap came in the CFSP area came in around the same time as the Oslo Accords, and in turn, the two-state solution. The same solution that is described as being in damage control by van Winkel. Thus, the theoretical prediction from Scharpf about self-defeating continuation seems to hit close to home.


The EU's funding mechanisms feedback

One of the most widespread claims throughout our data is the EU's funding is bureaucratic. Our informants felt the bureaucracy was one of the main internal causes for the ineffectiveness of the funding. In this point of analysis, we identify both the functional and the political feedback mechanism. First the focus in this point of the analysis will be on the relationship between the recipients of the funding in the Palestinian society and the EU, and secondly the economic role of the EU in the international society surrounding Palestine cf. their funding of the PA and NGOs in Palestine.

The functional feedback mechanism is where on one side the EU adopts the bureaucratic way of funding early and the recipients subsumes the rationale of the procedure,

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because it will maximize their utilities to receive funding from the EU. This process is self-perpetuating, since the positive feedback comes from the recipients' engagement in the system of funding.

The political feedback is also easily identified, especially in regards of the PA and the overall political elite in Palestine. Many of our informants talked about how the EU funding was not always effective used, because of the recipients, especially the PA recipients was seen as ineffective recipients. Lars Erslev Andersen argues, that the Palestinian elite is only in power because of the EU money (Andersen 26:00). Therefore, the political feedback illustrates how the PA as an actor, reacts to the existing system with positive feedback.

Disregarding that they may not be efficient recipients and to some extent is viewed as corrupt both by a couple of informants and by Troels Dalgaard (Dalgaard 44:40), the EU have over the years posted billions of Euros in the NGO's and the PA, which can be considered *"vested investment"*. The cost to change direction would be rather enormous, since it would require the time and money to tear down and construct a whole new government for Palestine.

On the international side, there is both a functional and a political feedback mechanism. As pointed out in both our literature review and our data, EU is considered the major "payer" for the situation in Palestine, both to NGOs and the PA. This point is further supported by Troels Dalgaard: *"The US decides, the World Bank implement, the EU pays and Israel destroys"* (Dalgaard 02:00).

There is a functional feedback mechanism, since the EU keeps paying, it keeps accepting the US's decisions and do not effectively stop Israel from destroying the products of their funding, the EU's actions keeps the system in place, enforces it. And through this process it just becomes more and more locked in this system/dynamic.

The political feedback comes mostly from the US and Israel, since they, for a small amount of funds, can keep maximising their utilities, while the EU who pays the bill. These two actors have preferences to keep the system afloat along with the rationale behind it. Lars Erslev Andersen explains this dynamic with this quote: *"EU is giant economically, but a dwarf politically, The EU opinion towards the US does not matter"* (Andersen 04:20).

This system is therefore upheld by the perception, that the EU does not have the political power to create a new system, in the view of Lars Erslev Andersen and even if they had, the cost of changing direction would be too costly. The EU clearly have accepted the

leadership of the US, one could argue since the second world war and therefore has a lot of *"vested investment"*.


The EU's relationship with Israel

In 2000, the EU signed an association agreement with Israel to enhance their overall relationship and trade in particular. The relationship with Israel, as already somewhat covered in the part of the analysis focused on the Oslo accords, is identified by our data and literature review as an institution, limiting the EU's actions in Palestine. In the following we will apply historical institutionalism, especially the concept of feedback on this point of analysis. The feedback of the relationship between the EU and Israel cannot and should not be viewed as a dynamic between two equal actors. The West Bank is under the control of the Israeli military and as Troels Dalgaard puts it: *"There is a shell around Palestine, called Israel, which you have to go through whether you like it or not"* (Dalgaard 08:20).


The functional feedback from the relationship is seen in the strategy the EU has adopted towards Israel. The overall system, that has made the EU adapt their strategy towards Israel, is, as pointed out in our data, created by Israel, since the EU subordinates itself to the laws of Israel, when working in Israel. This means, that the EU is reinforcing the rationale of the system, when accepting the Israeli laws. This is a factor many of our informants point to, when saying the EU is actually supporting the occupation and/or status quo, when working as they currently do in Palestine.

The political feedback is the Israelis possible preference for the current system. This is of course a bit speculative, even though parts our data supports this claim. Nonetheless Israel support the current path and is one of the actors who most strongly affects it, together with the US which will be analysed in the next part, therefore, can they as an actor sustain and reinforce the system, which then gives Israel more power to keep the system the way it is.


An obvious question must therefore be, why does the EU not change direction, if their utilities are not maximized in the Israeli dictated system? One reason can be attributed to the trade relations with Israel, which have made the EU too invested in Israel to wanting to break off with the state of Israel, since it is a good trading partner. Another side of this is it would be expensive to find another negotiating partner, if not impossible due to the Israeli

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occupation of Palestine. It is once again the *vested investment* that roars its head and creates an incentive for the EU to keep supporting the status quo.

The EU's relationship with the US

Across all our interviews with Palestinians in the West Bank and EU officials in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the US was pointed out as a one of the greatest external institutions that limits EU influence in the region. This is both in terms of the US backing Israeli policies and the EU's reluctance to stand up to the US in any significant political manor, and accepting that the US sets the political agenda in the region and drives the peace process. This is confirmed by our literature, that describes the US as greatly limiting the manoeuvring space of the EU (Yacobi & Neman: 174) and Middle East expert Lars Erslev Andersen who states that *"The US is running all negotiations in the area"* (Andersen 03:30). The question that remains is why the EU, as an economic giant in the region and as a neighbour to the region, does not have a preference for challenging the US politically to reach their political goals? Using the theory of Path Dependency, functional and political feedback mechanisms can help explain this non-action. As many of our informants have pointed to, the EU do not want to lose their trade relations with the US, and individual member states wants to score 'brownie' points with the US (Van Winckel 2, 26:00).

This points to a functional feedback, where the EU and the member states has adopted a strategy that maximizes their utility in the system as it relates to the US. This in turn results in positive feedback, reinforcing the status of the US as the dominant actor in the system and as having a hegemony on the political agenda and the peace process. This functional feedback has a self-sustaining effect, that can help explain why the US is still in the driving seat politically (Pollack 2009).

In this political system, the US is naturally inclined to protect its status as the hegemon by protecting the system that grants it this role. This sparks the US to seek positive political feedback by using its power to guarantee the continuation of the structure of distributing power, a distribution of power that favours Israel (Pollack 2009). Naturally, Israel also favours a system that gives them positive political feedback, which means that the prefer to have the US in charge. Middle East expert Troels Dalgaard considers Donald Trump's move of the US embassy to Jerusalem as *"(...) an approbation of Israel's policies (...)"* and as the US saying *"(...) what they do is completely fine and we support it"* (Dalgaard

26:30). This is an example of the US seeking positive feedback from Israel thus sustaining the system and the status quo.

The question remains how the EU accepts a system where they are a *"(...) giant economically, but a dwarf politically,"* as Lars Erslev Andersen puts it (Andersen 04:20). This can arguably be explained by the feedback mechanisms, that see EU nations maximizing their utility with the US, and the cost of creating an entirely new system would be too high, both economically and politically. As to why the EU does not simply stop paying for the Palestinian state-building project, after the US made the political situation dire for the two-state solution; it could be argued that since project has been going on for almost 25 years, the actors within reflect and reinforce the logic of the project. Also, the societal actors adapt and develop an interest in the continuation of the EU project, as it is in their own self-interest. Even a big exogenous shock like the embassy move, did not prove enough to spark a political challenge from the EU. The institutional rule of the US has thus proven to be highly change resistant. This can help explain why the situation is, in Troels Dalgaards words, one where *"(...) the US decides, the World Bank implements, the EU pays and Israel destroys"* (Dalgaard 02:00).

Conclusion on the second part of the analysis

With a starting point in the findings of the first part of the analysis, we have through the historical institutionalism explained the EU's involvement and characterized its behaviour as an international actor.

On the basis of historical institutionalism, one can understand the EU as path dependent regarding its involvement in Palestine. The Oslo accords can be viewed as a critical juncture, that unanimity voting caught the EU in a joint decision trap, which then leads to feedback mechanisms, then further entrenches EU in the system set up by the Oslo accords. The feedback mechanisms are on one side up-held by the EU itself, since it continues to operate within the system, because of its reliance on its self-build system to deploy aid, its near-impossible exit mechanism (based on consensus again) and the *vested investment*. On the other side, it is up-held by the other actors involved in the system, identified as Israel and the US.

**Discussion**

There are, amongst many others, two questions, that has been answered after our analysis.

*Is the EU positive force in Palestine and what alternatives exists?*
*Is the international world order a hindrance for the EU?*

The discussion about whether or not the EU is effective in their foreign policy, is not a new one (Youngs 2002). Yacobi and Newman tries to handle this discussion, by dividing the influence in different pathways, to highlight the different tools the EU can apply internationally (Yacobi & Newman 2009). They argue, that on normative levels the EU has a positive effect on Palestine, which is supported by writings of Youngs (2004, 2010), while also acknowledging the EU does not have a lot of hard power in the situation.

None of our informants argued, that the EU did not have an impact on the situation and the overall consensus was that it was good, but most had reservations. In our third interview we kept a line of questions about the ineffective, if not harmful, impact of the EU, which lead to this: *"Saying they are not tackling the main issue [the occupation] doesn't mean they aren't tackling any issues"* (Khadijeh 1:03:01).

Eight of our informants were funded by the EU and supported the EU's involvement. As we have noted, these may be more supportive of the system to maximize their utilities, but the other informants did not directly oppose the above, not even PFLP (PFLP 2018). In the eyes of the Palestinians it is better with the EU than without it, even though the EU actions can be reinforcing the occupation. As Rocco Polin says: *"The kind of law, they would pass in the Knesset [if the EU was not involved in the conflict]. When something does not happen, it is impossible to say, what was it? (...) Is the EU not stopping settlement expansion or reducing it to 2000 units?"* (Polin, 38:48). It would be guesswork whether Palestine would be better off without the EU's involvement. On one hand, none of our informants thinks so, yet our analysis shows that the EU is retaining the current system, of occupation and violations of human rights. Therefore, the question must be: Is there an alternative?

As our second part of the analysis points out, it would be viewed costly for the EU to create a new way, because of the vested investment and the exit costs. When taking into account the joint-decision trap, one could ask if it would be impossible for the EU to change. It would take an alternative to the Quartet, which probably means an alternative to the UN. This would also mean, that the EU would take opposition to the US, which neither informants

or literature make seem likely.

This leads us to the question: What is the relationship between the EU and the world order? The idea of human rights and democracy is deeply embedded in the EU, as explained earlier. And the Oslo Accords can be seen as a result of the end of the cold war and the "new world order" (Morra 2016). And as we mention in the introduction, academics like Fukuyama thought around that time, that the liberal democracy would reign forever on this planet (Fukuyama 1992). At the same time the Maastricht Treaty came and the EU could step onto the international scene as a knight in shining armour, ready to fight for human rights and democracy. But the world order, as it functions in Palestine, does not make this possible for the EU, as shown in our analysis.

The path of the EU since those noticeable years where the Soviet Union fell, the Oslo accords saw the world, and the Maastricht treaty was signed, has been laid out - as our analysis shows. But is it as Leonard and McCormick argue, a path towards a leading role in the international system or is it doomed and lead to the EU playing second violin to the US?

Troels Dalgaard highlights, that one be must be willing to pay the cost of creating new democracies, but as he argues, looking at Germany and Japan, there is a lot to gain from it (Dalgaard 1:06:20), when speaking in favour of continuously providing support for Palestine. As we assume the actors to be rational in historical institutionalism, this could be an incentive for the EU.

This leads to a perspective not included in our analysis; the EU has changed its path in Palestine towards a more humanitarian focus from a strict development focus (Dalgaard 38:03, Bahour 1:50, Hourine 16:20, Rabi 05:30). This change is also described by Youngs. He sees it as a shift towards more short term goals, as a part of a move away from supporting democracy abroad (Youngs 2010). One could argue, that there has been a change of rationale. The EU did not get the benefits of supporting democracy, therefore they tried to maximize their utilities through a shorter term perceptive.

So perhaps it is not the world order that is the hindrance for the EU. It could the EU forgetting enforcing the liberal world order is a long-term involvement. From this perspective, Leonard, McCormick and perhaps even Fukuyama, could end up on the right side of history. It may just be a matter of time.

## Conclusion

*How do institutional actors understand the current European involvement in Palestine, and how can this involvement be explained by a path dependency approach?*

We have answered the research question by conducting 16 interviews, the bulk of them in East Jerusalem and the West Bank with different informants working in the PA, NGOs, political organizations, two EU officials and two experts. With Levi's theory of Analytical narratives*,* these interviews have been analysed and three key narratives have been identified. These are: *The EU's funding is bureaucratic and ineffective; The EU's position does not align with its actions* and *The EU will not change direction.* On the basis of these narratives, four major institutions, per Levi, have been identified. These are: The EU's own ineffective bureaucratic procedures for funding projects, the intergovernmental nature of- and unanimity-voting procedure on the CFSP area, the EU's relationship with the US, and the EU's relationship with Israel. To sum up, our informants understand the EU's involvement as limited, and to some extent hypocritical and inflexible.

These *institutions* were then analysed with path dependency, where the Oslo accords were identified as a joint-decision trap, which led the EU to a path dependency. This path dependency is being reinforced and more entrenched by both functional and political feedback mechanisms, deriving from the bureaucracy of the EU, the US and Israel. The EU's involvement can be explained as path dependent, because of both internal and external factors.

Our discussion revolved around the current political scene internationally and if the EU involvement is a positive. We centred the discussion around the US hegemonic position in the "new world order" and if it is truly is a hindrance.

The Iranian Nuclear deal provides an interesting case study; what is the prospective after the US pulled out? What happens to the path in path dependency, when a major player and influencer exits?

And due to the impact the surrounding political environment has had on the EU in Palestine, how would the EU react to change in the international hierarchy? Is the US and EU so path dependent with one another politically, that they would go down together?

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