

The role of dialogue in reflecting and constituting International Relations: the causes and consequences of a deficient European-Israeli dialogue

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Abstract. The rich literature on the problematic aspects of EU-Israel relations focuses on historical, structural, politico-economic, legal, institutional, geo-political and strategic causes. An attempt will be made in this article to contribute to the existing scholarship by focusing on a novel angle, namely the negative role of the lack of adequate and informed European-Israeli dialogue in constituting European-Israeli relations. Against the backdrop of the theoretical analysis of the role of dialogue in International Relations, this article examines the lack of adequate European-Israeli dialogue, analysing its causes and the negative role that it plays in constituting European-Israeli relations. The article demonstrates that such lack of dialogue is caused not only by mutual ignorance, prejudice, misinformation, mistrust and antagonism, but also causes these same factors to characterise European-Israeli relations.

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Introduction

Traditional scholarship explains International Relations (IR) mainly on the basis of historical, structural, politico-economic, legal, institutional, geo-political, strategic and leadership factors. More recent writings have focused on discourse and dialogue as prominent theoretical concepts in IR¹ and European integration studies.² Such analytical focus may be seen in its wider context, namely what Yosef

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¹ Jennifer Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods', *European Journal of International Relations*, 5:2 (1999), p. 225; Alexander Wendt, 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', *The American Political Science Review*, 88:2 (1994), p. 384, at p. 391; F. V. Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

² Paul Chilton and Ilyin Mikhail, 'Metaphor in Political Discourse: The Case of the Common European House', *Discourse and Society*, 4:1 (1993), p. 7; Thomas Diez, "'Speaking 'Europe'": The

Lapid referred to as the dramatic comeback of culture and identity into the theoretical line of vision of IR.³

An attempt will be made in this article to contribute to the existing scholarship by focusing on a novel angle, namely the negative role of the lack of adequate and informed European-Israeli dialogue in constituting European-Israeli relations.⁴ This article will attempt to analyse the causes and consequences of that lack of dialogue, or its deficient manifestations, against the backdrop of a general analysis of the role of dialogue in IR.

A methodological *caveat* is in order. As Kratochwil argues, it is always difficult to make analogies between IR and interpersonal relations.⁵ This difficulty is particularly acute in the EU-Israeli context. The EU is not a generic, unitary entity and its Member States have different relations with Israel, due, *inter alia*, to their different pasts. Likewise, Israeli society is complex and varied. It is therefore difficult to draw the precise parameters of the EU-Israeli dialogue and to prove the causal link between that dialogue and EU-Israeli relations. Such dialogue may, for example, differ along socio-economic, religious or national-ethnic lines and vary from one context to the other (for example, the European-Israeli political establishment, European-Israeli bureaucracy, European-Israeli socio-political elite, European-Israeli organised civil society or the European-Israeli masses). Moreover, existing high-calibre, primary empirical work on the European-Israeli dialogue and on the EU's image in Israel is scarce and usually one-dimensional.⁶ The picture drawn in this article, which focuses primarily on what Norman Fairclough termed 'lifeworld discourses', namely exchanges which circulate in the commonplace interactions of the private domain rather than in public, institutional

Politics of Integration Discourse', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 6:4 (1999), p. 699; Drulák Petr, 'Motion, Container and Equilibrium: Metaphors in the Discourse about European Integration', *European Journal of International Relations*, 12:4 (2006), p. 499; Milliken, *The Study of Discourse in International Relations*, p. 225; Thomas Risse, "'Let's Argue": Communicative Action in World Politics', *International Organization*, 54:1 (2000), p. 1.

³ Yosef Lapid, 'Culture's Ship: Returns and Departures in International Relations Theory', in Yosef Lapid and F. Kratochwil (eds), *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1996), p. 3.

⁴ For early writings, see Gisela Dachs and Joel Peters, *Israel and Europe, The Troubled Relationship: Between Perceptions and Reality*, Working Paper (Tel-Aviv: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, The Centre for the Study of European Politics and Society, Ben Gurion University, 2004), available at: {<http://hsf.bgu.ac.il/europe/uploadDocs/iepnpgdjp.pdf>}; Raffaella A. Del Sarto, 'Setting the (Cultural) Agenda: Concepts, Communities and Representation in Euro-Mediterranean Relations', *Mediterranean Politics*, 10:3 (2005), p. 313; Dimitris Keridis, *Europe and Israel: What Went Wrong?* (Ramat-Gan: The Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University, 2004).

⁵ Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions*, p. 58.

⁶ For excellent surveys, see Sharon Pardo, 'Report on the EU through Israeli Eyes', in S. Lucarelli and L. Fioramonti (eds), *Research Report on the Project: The External Image of the EU – Phase Two* (Florence: GARNET, 2009). See also, Dror and S. Pardo, 'Approaches and Principles for an Israeli Grand Strategy towards the EU', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 11:1 (2006), p. 11, relying on a public poll and Gisela Dachs and Joel Peters, *Israel and Europe, The Troubled Relationship: Between Perceptions and Reality*, Working Paper (Tel-Aviv: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, The Centre for the Study of European Politics and Society, Ben Gurion University, 2004), available at: {<http://hsf.bgu.ac.il/europe/uploadDocs/iepnpgdjp.pdf>}. See also, T. Sadeh, 'Taking Stock of the Action Plan: An Israeli Perspective', in R. Nathanson and S. Stetter (eds), *The Middle East Under Fire? EU-Israel Relations in a Region Between War and Conflict Resolution*, 2007, p. 29, interviewing public officials. For a European perspective, see Raffaella A. Del Sarto, 'Israeli Identity as Seen through European Eyes', in Avineri and Weidenfeld (eds), *Integration and Identity* (Bonn: Europa Union Verlag, 1999), p. 59.

spheres,⁷ is based on multiple sources, including close examination of the Israeli press, public polls, media coverage, secondary scholarly sources, political statements and this author's experience in studying and lecturing in the EU and in teaching thousands of Israeli students in numerous academic institutions.

The importance of dialogue

Notwithstanding recent positive developments,⁸ European-Israeli relations too often remain characterised by mutual ignorance, prejudices, misrepresentations, mistrust and antagonism,⁹ leading some scholars to describe them as 'troubled waters',¹⁰ an 'expanding abyss'¹¹ and a 'growing malaise'.¹² Abundant literature analyses the problematic aspects of these relations through historical,¹³ politico-economic,¹⁴ legal,¹⁵ institutional,¹⁶ geo-political, structural and strategic prisms.¹⁷ This article will add to existing scholarship by focusing on an additional factor, namely the lack of adequate European-Israeli dialogue. The argument advanced is that such dialogue is not only caused by these negative attributes, but also, in turn, causes these factors to characterise these relations.

The literature on the concept of 'dialogue' and its philosophical, cognitive and other aspects is abundant.¹⁸ Our examination is confined to a focus on the role of dialogue in constituting IR. For that purpose we rely on the typology of dialogue offered by Wendt. According to him dialogue includes discussion and persuasion, education, ideological labour, political argument and symbolic action.¹⁹ All of these manifestations of dialogue will prove to be relevant for the purpose of this article.

⁷ Norman Fairclough, 'Discourse and Text: Linguistic and Intertextual Analysis within Discourse Analysis', *Discourse and Society*, 3:2 (1992), p. 193, at p. 203.

⁸ For analysis, see Guy Harpaz and Asaf Shamis, 'Normative Power Europe and the State of Israel: An Illegitimate EUtopia?', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48:3 (2010), p. 579.

⁹ I. Greilsammer and J. H. H. Weiler (eds), *Europe and Israel: Troubled Neighbors* (Berlin, Walter De Gruyter, 1988); Keridis, *Europe and Israel: What Went Wrong?*; Dachs and Peters, *Israel and Europe*, p. 12.

¹⁰ Bianca Kühnel (ed.), *Troubled Waters: Europe and its Relations with the US and Israel* (Jerusalem: The Institute for European Studies, 2003).

¹¹ Gerald Steinberg, 'European NGOs against Israel', in Gerstenfeld (ed.), *Israel and Europe: An Expanding Abyss?*, (Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs: Jerusalem), 2005), p. 111.

¹² Keridis, *Europe and Israel: What Went Wrong?*

¹³ Kühnel, *Troubled Waters*.

¹⁴ Tal Sadeh, 'Israel and a Euro-Mediterranean Internal Market – A Survey of Existing Barriers to Trade and Possible Remedies', in Peter Xuereb (ed.), *Euro-Mediterranean Integration – The Mediterranean's European Challenge* (Malta: The European Documentation and Research Centre, 2002), p. 189.

¹⁵ Guy Harpaz, 'A Proposed Model for Enhanced EU-Israeli Relations: Prevailing Legal Arrangements and Prospective Juridical Challenges', *Journal of World Trade*, 40:6 (2006), p. 1115.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Roby Nathanson and Stephan Stetter, *The Middle East Under Fire? EU-Israeli Relations in Region between War and Conflict Resolution* (Tel-Aviv-Berlin: Israeli European Policy Network, 2007).

¹⁸ Gilbert Weiss and Ruth Wodak (eds), *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity*, 2nd edition (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Marcelo Dascal, 'Cognitive Science in the Philosophers' Mill', *Pragmatics and Cognition*, 3:1 (1995), p. 133, especially pp. 141–4; M. Dascal, *Leibniz – Language, Signs, and Thought* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1987); M. Dascal, D. Gerhardus, K. Lorenz, and G. Meggle (eds), *Philosophy of Language – An International Handbook of Contemporary Research* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1992); E. Weigand and M. Dascal (eds), *Negotiation and Power in Dialogic Interaction* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2001); John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge University Press, 1969).

¹⁹ Wendt, *Collective Identity Formation*.

The emphasis of this article on dialogue and its interface with IR and its attempt to add to scholarship, which customarily employs interpretative methods in order to unravel collective meaning, actors' identities and political interests and processes,²⁰ fits neatly into the following basic assumptions of the Constructivist IR School of Thought.²¹

According to Constructivism, States must not be perceived as structurally or exogenously given, as neo-realists argue, but rather as constructed by historically contingent socio-political interactions;²² the material world is shaped not exclusively by physical reality but also by human action, reaction and interaction, which are themselves dependent on dynamic normative and epistemic collective knowledge and interpretations of the material world.²³ The key structures of States should thus not be seen as merely material but rather intersubjective.²⁴ It is social communication that allows such intersubjectivity to exist and persist.²⁵ Language and discourse are thus one component of the foundation of the social construction of knowledge, reality, identity and ideology.²⁶ Collective knowledge, acquired through social interactions, may constitute the identity of the actors and define the basic rules of the game according to which they interact,²⁷ thereby serving as an engine for socio-political action and change.²⁸

The questions remain: what precise political role does dialogue play? What weight should be ascribed to it as an instrument determining future identities, conduct, policies and relations?²⁹ An attempt will be made to address these questions as they arise in the European-Israeli context.

Inspired by a performative approach to language, various researchers regard relations between States as constituted by language and dialogue.³⁰ Discourse

²⁰ Emanuel Adler, 'Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics', *European Journal of International Relations*, 3:3 (1997), p. 319, at p. 325.

²¹ Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground*; Wendt, *Collective Identity Formation*; Stephen D. Krasner, 'Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables', *International Organization*, 36:2 (1982), p. 185.

²² Timothy Dunne, 'The Social Construction of International Society', *European Journal of International Relations*, 1 (1995), p. 367.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ For further analysis, see Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground*, pp. 322–3.

²⁵ See, Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground*, pp. 337–9: An authoritative, political selection process of innovation of public understandings, domestic and international diffusion, political selection and effective institutionalisation, all may create the intersubjective understanding upon which the political interests, practices and behaviour are based.

²⁶ See, for example, Emanuel Adler, 'The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control', *International Organization*, 46 (1992), p. 101; Fairclough, *Discourse and Text*, p. 211. Piki Ish-Shalom, 'Theory as a Hermeneutical Mechanism: The Democratic-Peace Thesis and the Politics of Democratization European', *Journal of International Relations*, 12:4 (2006), p. 565, at p. 571 who defines public conventions as general background knowledge about the world that is taken for granted and that shapes the commonsensical codes of thinking and behaviour.

²⁷ 42 Risse, *Let's Argue*, p. 5.

²⁸ Ish-Shalom, *Theory as a Hermeneutical Mechanism*, p. 567; Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground*, pp. 322–4.

²⁹ See, Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, 'The Rational Public and Beyond', in Stephen L. Elkin and Karol Edward Soltan (eds), *Citizen Competence and Democratic Institutions* (Pennsylvania, University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1999), p. 93, at pp. 111–2.

³⁰ Lapid and Kratochwil, *The Return of Culture*; J. Weldes, 'The Cultural Production of Crisis: US identity and Missiles in Cuba', in J. Weldes et al. (eds), *Cultural Security* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 35; Nicholas Onuf, *The Republican Legacy in International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

therefore serves as a system of signification and as a means to political ends,³¹ constructing socio-political realities and shaping world politics.³² Accordingly, language employed during dialogue is not epiphenomenal, nor is it merely a mirror of social reality, as some Realist writers contend. Instead, it constitutes a medium of its own, producing, reproducing, transforming and constituting social structures, knowledge, ideologies, collective ideas and identities.³³ Drawing on diverse and conflicting perspectives, Linguistic Constructivism considers social reality as embedded in dialogue and discourse,³⁴ while language does not merely reflect reality, but also shapes it.

In the absence of informed knowledge, misunderstandings and stereotypes do prevail. *Per contra*, public deliberation may, as Benjamin Page and Iris Young argue, ensure that the public's policy preferences, upon which democratic decisions are based, are informed and enlightened.³⁵ Knowledge acquired through deliberations may serve, as Emmanuel Adler argues, as a requisite for the transformation of international actors, institutionalised patterns, political identities and interest.³⁶ Dialogue, both in the public sphere and in diplomatic circles, may assist the parties involved in challenging views, interests and identities, dispelling misunderstanding and unfounded perceptions and stereotypes, mitigating conflicting interests and bridging opposing perceptions and different identities, thereby enhancing the chances of improved cooperation among human agents and among States.³⁷

The public knowledge and convictions acquired during the deliberative process are amenable to political mobilisation.³⁸ Politicians, as Piki Ish-Shalom demonstrates, take advantage of public conventions, transforming them into political convictions suited to their own interests.³⁹ Politicians may, for example, manipulate prevailing metaphors used in dialogue, thereby shaping mass opinion and

³¹ John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 132–6; Diez, *Speaking Europe*, especially p. 603.

³² Milliken, *The Study of Discourse in International Relations*, p. 229; Ronald R. Krebs and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, 'Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric', *European Journal of International Relations*, 13:1 (2007), p. 35, at pp. 39–40; Searle, *Speech Acts*; Diez, *Speaking Europe*, especially p. 601.

³³ Thomas Diez and Jill Steans, 'A Useful Dialogue? Habermas and International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, 31:1 (2005), p. 127; Andrew Linklater, 'Dialogue Politics and the Civilising Process', *Review of International Studies*, 31:1 (2005), p. 141; Fairclough, *Discourse and Text*, pp. 209–11; Michelle Pace, 'The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Common Mediterranean Strategy?', *EU Policy from a Discursive Perspective*, *Geopolitics*, 9:2 (2004), p. 292; Milliken, *The Study of Discourse in International Relations*; Diez, *Speaking Europe*, especially p. 600; J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 3.

³⁴ P. Rabinow and N. Rose, *The Essential Foucault: Selections from Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984*, (New York: New Press, 2003).

³⁵ Benjamin I. Page, *Who Deliberates? Mass Media in Modern Democracy* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996); Iris Marion Young, 'Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy', in S. Benhabib (ed.), *Democracy and Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 120, 128: Deliberation adds to the social knowledge of all participants and the resultant social objectivity increases their wisdom for arriving at just solutions to collective problems.

³⁶ Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground*, p. 348.

³⁷ See, Elinor Ostrom, 'A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action', *American Political Science Review*, 92:1 (1998), p. 1, at p. 7 who argues that the exchanging mutual commitment, increasing trust, creating and reinforcing norms, and developing group identity appear to be the most important processes that make communication efficacious.

³⁸ Ish-Shalom, *Theory as a Hermeneutical Mechanism*, p. 567.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 572. Ish-Shalom argues that theory affects public convention, while the latter affects political convictions.

mobilising public support for their policies.⁴⁰ Dialogue and its resultant collective perceptions, convictions and identities can also be used by them as a means of ‘rhetorical coercion’, seeking as Krebs and Jackson establish, to ‘twist arms by twisting tongues’, thereby limiting the range of possible responses and policy options.⁴¹

In all these usages, language is employed politically in a top-to-bottom manner. However, contrary to the arguments of various scholars, discourse does not solely operate in such a manner.⁴² Instead, the relationship between discourse and political practice is dialectical.⁴³ Identities, interests and conduct are socially constructed by collective meaning, interpretations and assumptions about IR.⁴⁴ Public dialogue and resultant public conventions may both enable and constrain politicians,⁴⁵ providing them with a menu of what the public perceives as acceptable and unacceptable, legitimate and illegitimate, normative or non-normative,⁴⁶ thereby framing and limiting the range of alternative policy options.⁴⁷

It will be argued below that these potential benefits of transnational dialogue and their socio-political ramifications are valid in the European-Israeli context too. It must, however, be emphasised that the central role of dialogue and the potential, practical benefits that may stem from it, both in our context and others, must not be overstated.⁴⁸ Public convention results from both objective and structural conditions (material factors) and subjective or intersubjective processes of analysing, understanding and evaluating those conditions (ideal factors).⁴⁹ Dialogue should thus be seen as part of a large panoply of instruments mirroring and constituting IR. The limits of the importance and usefulness of dialogue will be further elaborated below.

EU-Israeli relations: the lack of an adequate dialogue

EU-Israeli bilateral legal and trade relations appear at face value to be comprehensive and impressive, while recent years have witnessed an improvement in

⁴⁰ Chilton and Mikhail, *Metaphor in Political Discourse*; Andreas Musolff, ‘Promising to End a War = Language of Peace? The Rhetoric of Allied News Management in the Gulf War 1991’, in Christina Schaffner and Anita L. Wenden (eds), *Language and Peace* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1995), at p. 93; Krebs and Jackson, *Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms*, p. 37; Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Use of Politics* (Urbana Ill: University of Illinois Press, 1964).

⁴¹ Krebs and Jackson, *Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms*, pp. 39–42.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴³ For support, see Drulák, *Motion, Container and Equilibrium*, p. 501; Fairclough, *Discourse and Text*; Risse, *Let’s Argue*, p. 5 and p. 10.

⁴⁴ Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground*, p. 324.

⁴⁵ Ish-Shalom, *Theory as a Hermeneutical Mechanism*, p. 572ff; Krebs and Jackson, *Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms*, p. 44.

⁴⁶ Ish-Shalom, *Theory as a Hermeneutical Mechanism*, p. 574.

⁴⁷ Diez, *Speaking Europe*, especially p. 603; Ish-Shalom, *Theory as a Hermeneutical Mechanism*, p. 567; Krebs and Jackson, *Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms*, p. 47: ‘A political policy has therefore a better chance of “winning” if it is compatible with the audience’s prior normative perception’.

⁴⁸ For a critical view of this theme, see Del Sarto, *Setting the (Cultural) Agenda*, p. 326. Barbaras argues that the empirical evidence on deliberation presents a mosaic of resultant opinion changes in some cases, the absence of change in others. See Barbaras, *How Deliberation Affects Policy Options*, p. 688.

⁴⁹ Ish-Shalom, *Theory as a Hermeneutical Mechanism*, p. 574.

Israel's political and strategic relations with the EU and with some of the more influential Member States.⁵⁰ To add to this seemingly favourable account of these relations, Israel is currently working with the EU to further strengthen these ties and to expand such cooperation into institutional, legal, cultural, educational and aviation fields of activity.⁵¹ Yet notwithstanding this state of affairs, positive as it is on the face of it, Israeli-European relations are too often marred by either a lack of or a deficiency of dialogue.

Most of the channels which once served to promote constructive, grass-root dialogue fail nowadays to serve that role. Consequently, as analysed below, ordinary Europeans and Israelis simply do not routinely interact other than for superficial contact. Private, grass-root, 'lifeworld discourses' between ordinary Europeans and Israelis and between the collective Israeli society and Europe are not too common.

The same is true with respect to dialogue between EU officials and the Israeli public. Little meaningful dialogue is conducted by European policymakers with the Israeli masses or with the ordinary Israeli. The significant human and financial resources that Europe invests in Israel are spent preaching to the choir, namely the elitist, liberal Left. European efforts are directed at supporting fringe NGOs that share its own views,⁵² at writing editorial letters to the daily, prestigious, yet low-circulation *Haaretz*, and at attending social events with Israel's political and business elite. Even when the EU attempts to initiate such a dialogue it finds itself in the unenviable position of being perceived as a paternalistic preacher.⁵³

This lack of adequate dialogue and resultant inability of many European politicians to be attuned to Israel's collective existential fears and sensitivities, to listen rather than preach, influences in turn the internal and external grass-root dialogue that takes place in Israel regarding Europe, contributing to the widespread Israeli narrative of naïve, judgmental, declaratory Europe.⁵⁴

The intergovernmental nature of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy only makes matters worse.⁵⁵ Europe's inability to speak with one voice and its difficulties in formulating a coherent policy towards the Middle East contribute to the widespread Israeli perception that EU policies reflect the lowest common denominator and that the EU itself excels in words and preaching and not in

⁵⁰ Harpaz and Shamis, *Normative Power Europe and the State of Israel*.

⁵¹ See Statement of the EU, General Secretariat, Brussels (16 June 2008), of the Council, Eighth Meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council, Luxembourg (16 June 2008). For the proposed model for enhanced relations, see G. Harpaz, 'A Proposed Model for Enhanced EU-Israeli Relations: Prevailing Legal Arrangements and Prospective Juridical Challenges', 40:6 (2006) *Journal of World Trade*, p. 1115.

⁵² Steinberg, *European NGOs against Israel*.

⁵³ See the words of the previous Head of the Delegation of the EC Commission to Israel, Ambassador Giancarlo Chevallard: 'Most of my professional time is spent refuting allegations, explaining policies [...] trying to remove the EU's image from zero-sum game logic of 'either you are with us or against us'', as quoted in Dachs and Peters, *Israel and Europe*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ Such perception of 'declaratory Europe' is reflected in the words of the Israeli novelist Amos Oz, author of *The Slopes of the Volcano* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2006), pp. 53–56 [in Hebrew].

⁵⁵ Robert Kagan, 'Why the US and Europe See the World Differently', *Policy Review*, 113 (2002), p. 7; Elena Aoun, 'European Foreign Policy and the Arab-Israeli Dispute: Much Ado about Nothing?', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 8:3 (2003), p. 289, at p. 296.

deeds: 'The Europeans are strong when it comes to politics and declarations, however when there is a concrete opportunity to do something and help alone, they shy away'.⁵⁶

Such a European portrait is conveyed by the political establishment to the general Israeli public and moulds its perception of Europe, thereby evoking, once again, less dialogue and increased mutual ignorance.

Consequently, too few Israelis are familiar with the successes of the EU neo-functional model of peaceful cooperation based on regional economic integration and of the potential applicability of that model to other parts of the world, including the Middle East. The vast majority of Israelis have not heard of the Euro-Med Barcelona Process or of the Union for the Mediterranean,⁵⁷ let alone of Europe's desire to position itself in the Middle East as a civilian power.⁵⁸ More specifically, very few Israelis are cognisant of the impressive economic and trade figures governing EU-Israeli relations, of the degree of EU-Israeli cooperation in research, of Israel's participation in the Galileo Project⁵⁹ of support by the European Investment Bank for projects in which Israel participates⁶⁰ or of the useful role played by the EU in the aftermaths of the Second Lebanon War (2006) and of Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza (2009). To make matters worse, and due to the ignorance and egocentric perspective of many Israelis, the internal Israeli debate about Israel's appropriate status in Europe is rather limited.⁶¹

In a similar manner, too many Europeans misunderstand Israel. Many of them erroneously believe that the problems of the Middle East commenced with Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights, West Bank and Gaza Strip (1967), and that the end of the occupation will terminate the conflict. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a territorial dispute, but this dispute is conducted against the backdrop of a religious-cultural divide, a backdrop that not sufficient Europeans fully appreciate. In the same vein, too few Europeans understand Israel's id, ego, superego and phobias and Europe's own contribution to shaping them.⁶²

The next Section will analyse some of the principal causes of this deficient European-Israeli dialogue, while the subsequent Section will analyse its consequences.

⁵⁶ Zohar Peri of the Israeli Ministry of Trade and Industry, *Jerusalem Post* (3 August, 1995).

⁵⁷ See Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference, 27–28 November 1995, Barcelona, 28 November 1995, final version.

⁵⁸ For further analysis, see Amichai Magen, 'The Shadow of Enlargement: Can European Neighbourhood Policy Achieve Compliance?', *Columbia Journal of European Journal*, 1:2 (2006), p. 384.

⁵⁹ {http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/galileo/index_en.htm} last accessed on 15 September 2010.

⁶⁰ {<http://www.eib.org/infocentre/search-page.htm>} last accessed on 15 September 2010.

⁶¹ See the words of Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Bilateral Relations between Israel and the EU, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, 27 February 2007, SPEECH/07/108: 'I would like Israel to conclude that it can come closer to Europe and share its future with a bloc of nations of common values and interests [...] But it is not a question that outsiders are qualified to answer. Only Israel can decide how close it wants to move to Europe and I suspect that that will require a great deal of soul-searching and debate', appearing in {<http://www.europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/07/108&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN>} last accessed 15 September 2010.

⁶² For support, see the words of Fania Oz-Salzberg, 'History's Obligation: Europe Should Step in – and Look Israelis in the Eye', *International Herald Tribune* (29 March 2002), {http://www.iht.com/articles/2002/03/29/edfania_ed3_.php} last accessed on 15 September 2010.

Causes of the deficient dialogue

The shadow of the past

As Thomas Risse persuasively argues, dialogue can be facilitated by ‘common lifeworld’, common experiences with the world and its history and a common system of values and norms to which actors can refer in their communications.⁶³ This is, however, not always the case in the Jewish-European context. As analysed elsewhere at greater length, the Israeli public and political establishment tend to associate contemporary Europe, European policies and initiatives, particularly those pertaining to the Middle East, with past Jewish persecution, pogroms and anti-Semitism.⁶⁴

In the eyes of many Israelis, anti-Semitic events that took place in Europe and in particular the Holocaust, are not mere relics of the past, but have been primary, moral and historical catalysts in the foundation of the State of Israel, in its development and in the formation of its collective identity.⁶⁵ The extermination of six million Jews on European soil during the Second World War is the seminal event in the formation of the individual and collective identities of many Israelis.⁶⁶ The extinction of almost two thirds of European Jewry during World War Two generated what is possibly a collective Israeli anxiety complex.⁶⁷ This dominance of the trauma of the Holocaust influences in turn, Israeli foreign and security policies.⁶⁸ Thus Israel’s frequent reluctance to compromise on the question of its borders, its nuclear project, like its pre-emptive attack on Egypt in 1967, may all be seen as cases in point.⁶⁹ New anti-Semitism in Europe is regarded at times by many Israelis as a continuation of the longstanding hatred of Jews embedded in European culture.⁷⁰

This link between Europe’s past and present Israeli policies comes up again and again in Israeli public discourse on Europe, casting a shadow over Israeli-European

⁶³ Risse, *Let’s Argue*, p. 14. For example, the exchange of memories of World War Two has been a regular feature of East-West negotiations during the Cold War, *ibid.*, at p. 15.

⁶⁴ For analysis, see Harpaz and Shamis, *Normative Power Europe and the State of Israel*.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ For an interesting account, see Avraham Burg, former Chairperson of the Jewish Agency and Knesset Chairman noted in his controversial book *Victory Over Hitler* (Tel-Aviv: Yedioth Ahronot Books and Chemed Books, 2007) [Hebrew], pp. 19, 72, 120.

⁶⁷ Burg, *Victory Over Hitler*, at pp. 39–40.

⁶⁸ The Holocaust experience has a clear impact on what Ariel Levite calls Israeli Offensive-Defensive Policy, which embodies two main principles, deterrence and self-reliance. See, E. Landau, ‘Culture and Security Policy in Israel’, EuroMeSCo Papers, 2003, p. 21; A. Levite, ‘Offensive and Defensive in Israeli Military Doctrine’, *JCSS*, 1989, p. 12.

⁶⁹ Prime Minister Begin convinced his ministers to initiate the 1982 Lebanon War using the following words: ‘Do you know what I have done and what we have all done to avoid war and bereavement, but it is our fate that in the Land of Israel there is no alternative other than to fight with perseverance. Believe me that the alternative is Treblinka and we have decided that there will not be another Treblinka’, quoted in Burg, *Victory Over Hitler*, at pp. 44, 97.

⁷⁰ As Shavit and Reinhartz describe in their recent account on Jewish-European history: ‘This is Europe which even fifty or more years after the Holocaust continues to be replete with hatred for the Jews, and it transpires that this is an integral part of its condition. It is therefore desirable to relate to Europe if not with odium and hate, at least with suspicion, mistrust and by keeping one’s distance’. Jehuda Reinhartz and Yaacov Shavit, *Glorious, Accursed Europe: An Essay on Jews, Israelis Europe and Western Culture* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publisher, 2006), p. 14 [Hebrew] (author’s translation).

contemporary dialogue, over bilateral relations and over the willingness of the average Israeli to listen to European criticism and to permit the EU to contribute constructively to the Middle East in political terms.⁷¹ The past continues to cast a shadow over EU-Israeli dialogue, both reflecting and constituting contemporary Israeli perceptions of issues of peace and security. This contributes to a prevalent Israeli narrative that EU's critical policies towards Israel reflect European double standards, immorality, and contemporary anti-Semitism.⁷²

The link identified above and explored below between Jewish-European history and the contemporary deficient dialogue and its resultant contested relations, matches Constructivist literature according to which states are not structurally or exogenously given but constructed by historically contingent interactions.⁷³ Moreover, and as will be demonstrated in the following Section, the dominance of the memories of the Holocaust are at times abused by politicians to counter critical European approaches towards Israel and towards most forms of European intervention.

The decline of the command of European languages (other than English) in Israel

The global spread of European languages, especially English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, makes Europe an important cultural magnate and enables intercultural dialogue and enhances the EU's soft powers.⁷⁴ Yet this is not necessarily the case within the European-Israeli context.

Most of the founders of the State of Israel were European Jews who spoke a European language as their mother tongue. The massive waves of immigration from Europe, following Israel's creation, brought with them hundreds of thousands of Jews who spoke French, Polish, Russian, Czech, Hungarian, Rumanian, Bulgarian and many other European languages. *Yiddish*, a mixture of Hebrew and German, widely used by European Jews in Central and Eastern Europe, was widespread in Israel during the period leading to the establishment of the State and in the years following 1948. The prevalence of European languages in the evolving Jewish State facilitated close Israeli-European dialogue and strengthened Israel's affinity to Europe.

However, prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Zionist Movement invested much effort in depicting the Diaspora Jew as weak and dependent and in glorifying the image of the 'new Jew', the Jewish-Palestinian pioneer who toiled the soil to lay the foundations of the State in the making, as brave, independent and powerful.⁷⁵ With this aim in mind, it strove to spread

⁷¹ See, Yoram Kaniuk, *Der Letzte Berliner* (Tel-Aviv Yedioth Ahronot Books and Chemed Books, 2004) [in Hebrew], pp. 205, 220–1.

⁷² Robert Wistrich, 'An Annual Research Journal of the Vidal Sassoon', International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2004), p. 95; Gerstenfeld, *Israel and Europe*, p. 11.

⁷³ Wendt, *Collective Identity Formation and the International State*, p. 385.

⁷⁴ Nye, *Soft Power – The Means to Success in World Politics* (Public Affairs, 2004), pp. 75–6, 100.

⁷⁵ For further analysis, see Oz Almog, *The Sabra: A Profile* (Tel Aviv: 1997) [in Hebrew]; Avner Horowitz, 'Competing Israeli Structures of Identity', in Shlomo Avineri and Werner Weidenfeld, *Integration and Identity: Challenges to Europe and Israel* (Bonn: Europa Union Verlag, 1999), p. 50.

Hebrew in Palestine, while portraying European languages as a foreign element and a relic of the past.

The Zionist Movement may be seen in many respects as a remarkable success story. Yet its success came at the expense of, *inter alia*, Israelis' command of foreign languages. Whilst many of the generation of European Jews of the early twentieth century spoke four, five, or even more languages, the generation of their sons and daughters who immigrated to Israel from Europe, tend in many cases to speak three languages, while their grandsons and granddaughters who were born in Israel speak in most instances no more than Hebrew and (Americanised) English.

The demise of European languages other than English, and the rise of the latter in daily life in Israel contribute to a deficient dialogue between Continental Europeans and Israelis, to the Americanisation of Israeli society and Israeli academia, to deficient media coverage of Europe, and to the shift of young Israeli tourists away from Europe. All these trends, which not only reflect the inadequate Israeli-European dialogue, but also constitute it, are analysed below.

Israel's evolving collective identity: the de-Europeanisation of Israel society?

This sub-section will explore the impact of the evolution of Israeli collective identity on the lack of European-Israeli dialogue. Identity is examined for our purpose according to a dynamic, Constructivist's perspective, through which it is not determined *a priori*, but is rather the end-product of a dynamic process of social construction.⁷⁶

European influence on Israeli nationality has been substantial. In fact the birth of Zionism as a secular ideology is deeply rooted in nineteenth century European political and social thought.⁷⁷ When Zionism matured into an independent Jewish State, Israel's original socio-political, legal and cultural landscape was largely European.⁷⁸ That link was never entirely severed.⁷⁹

Yet, especially from the early 1990s onwards, Israel has been going through a process of Americanisation, which involves the importation of features of American mass culture in spheres such as consumption, entertainment and leisure.⁸⁰ This process of diffusion of American cultural themes, codes, norms, and values, which has brought about a major change in the ideological and cultural

⁷⁶ Del Sarto, *Setting the (Cultural) Agenda*.

⁷⁷ For further analysis, see Hedva Ben Israel, 'Zionism and European Nationalisms: Comparative Aspects', *Israeli Studies*, 8:1 (2003), pp. 91, 94–5.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* For further analysis, see Horowitz, *Competing Israeli Structures of Identity*, p. 53: The fact that most of the population had come to Palestine from Europe and was familiar with the political and ideological discourse created a defined field for the shaping of identity.

⁷⁹ Israel now maintains close cultural ties with the EU and its Member States, Israelis are avid consumers of European products, while Europe has long been Israel's preferred tourist destination. Israel is heavily involved in European cultural and sporting events, such as football, basketball and the Eurovision contest, Israelis are avid aficionados of European culture, while European films, music, and theatre shows are well-known and admired by the Israeli public.

⁸⁰ Maoz Azaryahu, 'McIsrael? On the Americanization of Israel', *Israel Studies*, 5:1 (2000), p. 41, at pp. 42–4.

make-up of Israeli society,⁸¹ is manifested in all aspects of Israeli daily life, including popular culture,⁸² civil society,⁸³ media,⁸⁴ politics,⁸⁵ religious practice,⁸⁶ literature,⁸⁷ and gender relations.⁸⁸ As demonstrated below, the same holds true for Israeli academia.⁸⁹ Consequently, the collective, European social model which once served as Israel's socio-economic apparatus has been gradually replaced by the contemporary individualist American model.⁹⁰ This state of affairs further reduces the attractiveness of frank and intensive Israeli-European dialogue.⁹¹

A *caveat* is, however, called for. Israeli society should not be seen as a 'McDonald's society', as some suggest,⁹² but rather as a rich mosaic of cultures, including in particular American, European and Mediterranean pieces.⁹³ This rich social mosaic includes one important part, namely the *Sephardim*, or Oriental Jews. This segment of the population suffered for many years from institutional discrimination at the hands of the *Ashkenazim*, or European Jews.⁹⁴ Yet as of the late 1970s, their socio-economic status has been gradually improving, with the resultant erosion of the dominance of Western elements of the Israeli society.

Such a development, while positive for the purpose of creating a more ethnically egalitarian society, is not always entirely conducive to European-Israeli dialogue. From an Israeli perspective, the re-emergence of Oriental identity, supported by political parties, such as *Shas*,⁹⁵ and by NGOs, such as the *Oriental Rainbow*,⁹⁶ brought traditional European values and identities, which were so prominent in Israel, under attack. This development portrayed these values and identities as domineering, patronising, repressive, unsuitable to the local geography, used and abused by the European-based elite as social engineering instruments *vis-à-vis* the Oriental immigrants.⁹⁷ This social development within Israeli society

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Myron Joel Aronoff, 'The Americanization of Israeli Politics and Realignment of the Party System', *Israel Studies*, 5:1 (2000), p. 92; James S. Diamond, "'And never the twain shall meet'?: Reflections on the Americanization of Israeli Culture', *Israel Studies*, 5:1 (2000), p. 330.

⁸³ Michael M. Laskier, 'Israeli Activism American-Style: Civil Liberties, Environmental and Peace Organization as Pressure Groups for Social Change, 1970s–1990s', *Israel Studies*, 5:1 (2000), p. 128.

⁸⁴ Azaryahu, *McIsrael?*, at p. 44.

⁸⁵ Ibid., at p. 50.

⁸⁶ Ephraim Tabory, 'The Influence of Liberal Judaism on Israeli Religious Life', *Israel Studies*, 5:1 (2000), p. 183.

⁸⁷ Mira Kubovy, 'Inniut and Kooliut: Trends in Israeli Narrative Literature, 1995–1999', *Israel Studies*, 5:1 (2000), p. 244.

⁸⁸ Yael S. Feldman, 'From the Madwoman in the Attic to the Women's Room: The American Roots of Israeli Literary Feminism', *Israel Studies*, 5:1 (2000), p. 266.

⁸⁹ Azaryahu, *McIsrael?*, p. 52; Walter I. Ackerman, 'The Americanization of Israeli Education', *Israel Studies*, 5:1 (2000), p. 228.

⁹⁰ Horowitz, *Competing Israeli Structures of Identity*, pp. 54–5.

⁹¹ For a critical, minority view regarding Israeli-US relations, see Burg, *Victory over Hitler*, pp. 73, 314.

⁹² For analysis, see, for example, Uri Ram, 'Glocommodification: How the Global Consumes the Local – McDonald's in Israel', *Current Sociology*, 52:2 (2003), p. 11.

⁹³ For an interesting account of this theme, see Burg, *Victory over Hitler*, p. 347.

⁹⁴ Rafaella A. DelSarto, 'Israeli Identity as Seen through European Eyes', in Avineri and Weidenfeld (eds), *Integration and Identity*, p. 59, at p. 67.

⁹⁵ {<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Politics/shas.html>} last accessed on 15 September 2010.

⁹⁶ {<http://www.ha-keshet.org.il/>>} last accessed on 1 September 2009.

⁹⁷ See, Horowitz, *Competing Israeli Structures of Identity*, p. 54: The Zionist identities that the political elites viewed as revolutionary, were seen by the immigrants as a brutal attempt to forcefully uproot them from their traditional world and replace it with a context reflecting the cultural hegemony of Eastern European Jews. See also Reinhartz and Shavit, *Glorious, Accursed Europe*, p. 161: 'The Ashkenazi Jews brought with them or adopted in the Land of Israel negative European values, such

only reinforced the social and cultural differences between Europe and Israel, further complicating European-Israeli dialogue.⁹⁸

The Americanisation of Israeli academia

Higher education can and should serve as a platform for public dialogue and civic engagement, producing enlightened, informed and critical citizens.⁹⁹ Moreover, a strong and appealing system of education, open to the participation of foreigners, constitutes an important component of a country's social and cultural appeal and of its soft power.¹⁰⁰

The potential role of education is relevant to Israel and to its relations with Europe. Israeli academia was founded on European models, especially those of Germany and to a lesser extent those of Great Britain.¹⁰¹ As such it served for many years as a platform for European-Israeli dialogue and as an instrument for socio-cultural and ideological affinity.

Continuous, intensive interactions between Israeli and European students, scholars and policy makers in the field of education could have provided the much-needed instrument for the frank dialogue between Europe and Israel needed to reduce prevailing, mutual suspicion.¹⁰² Such a dialogue could, for example, reduce European ignorance of the Jewish contribution to the formation of modern, enlightened Europe and of modern Israel, and expose more Europeans to the Middle East's complex and nuanced realities on the ground. It could also assist Europeans to become cognisant of Israel's concerns, fears and phobias.

Europe is, however, losing ground on the educational front. Israeli academia and Israel's higher education system (like Israeli society at large), nowadays

as the Nationalist and Socialist ideologies and their collective and integrative ethos, the model of collectivist political rule as well as the model of secular national Judaism.. Those values served as a tool for the repression of the values and traditions of the East as characterised in the communities, such as tolerance and a traditional-religious nationalism. The European cultural hegemony is a superficial imitation of the West based on values foreign to Eastern culture. That is the hegemony that turned its back on the particular character of the Land of Israel (East) and on the special character of the local culture (Arab-Muslim). That hegemony imposed itself on that part of society that emigrated to Israel not from Europe and that had no part of its values, and compelled it to convert its cultural identity'.

⁹⁸ See Keridis, *Europe and Israel: What Went Wrong?*, p. 9: 'The passing away of the first generation of Zionist pioneers, who were European in origin and culture, secular and socialist in preference, and elitist in outlook [...] Oriental Jews gradually increased their share of the total Israeli population [...] the Oriental Jew's political emancipation revolutionized Israeli politics and led to the demise of the old Labor hegemony and the rise of the Likud and its right-wing coalition. This change has distanced Israeli politics from the European mainstream ... Europeans could better understand the old, Labor-dominated politics than they can the new Likud Ones.'

⁹⁹ Maarten Simons, "'Educating through Research" at European Universities: Notes on the Orientation of Academic Research', *British Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 40:1 (2006), p. 31; H. A. Giroux, 'Selling Out Higher Education', *Policy Futures in Education*, 1:1 (2003), p. 179, as analysed by Gert Biesta, 'Towards the Knowledge Democracy? Knowledge Production and the Civic Role of the University', *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 26:5 (2007), p. 467.

¹⁰⁰ Nye, *Soft Power*, pp. 44–6.

¹⁰¹ B. Kohl-Koch, 'International and European Cooperation in Science, A German Point of View', in Moshe Hirsch, Eyal Inbar and Tal Sadeh (eds), *The Future Relations between Israel and the European Communities – Some Alternatives* (Ramat Gan: Bursi, 2006), p. 233.

¹⁰² See, Audrey Osler and Hugh Starkey, 'Rights, Identities and Inclusion: European Action Programmes as Political Education', *Oxford Review of Education*, 25:12 (1999), p. 199, at p. 202.

increasingly resemble those of the US.¹⁰³ Currently many young Israeli candidates for academic posts in Israel pursue their graduate education at American universities;¹⁰⁴ most comparative teaching is American-based; most reputable Israeli joint degrees between Israeli universities and other universities are with American universities;¹⁰⁵ most Israeli research outside of Israel is conducted and published in the US; most Israeli sabbaticals are spent in the US; most foreign visiting legal scholars are American; most foreign members of review committees of Israeli faculties are American; most private funding is generated from American donations; and, most importantly in practical terms, promotion procedures are largely based on the publication record of the relevant candidate in American ivy-league journals.¹⁰⁶ As a result, those Israeli scholars who completed their graduate education in Israel focus on US scholarship and research topics which dominate the academic discourse in the US. The Americanisation of Israeli academia is exemplified in the disciplines of Law and Economics, both of which are central in Israeli public discourse.¹⁰⁷

Israeli students are increasingly following this trend, pursuing more and more advanced degrees in the US, more often using 'programs' and 'centers' as opposed to 'programmes' and 'centres', and ultimately 'thinking American'. As a result, higher education in Israel is principally shaped by American ideas and theories.¹⁰⁸

Academic boycotts conducted by European institutions of Israeli academic institutions only accelerate the decrease of the European dimension of Israeli higher education and strengthen its American orientation.¹⁰⁹ The decline of European languages other than English, analysed above, reinforces that trend. Israeli academia, which once served as a platform for European-Israeli dialogue and affinity, is nowadays performing the same task but mainly *vis-à-vis* the US. The end result is once again greater Israeli-American affinity and less Israeli-European affinity.

The media

The Israeli and European media play an important role in mirroring and constituting internal and international reality,¹¹⁰ framing, portraying and

¹⁰³ Azaryahu, *McIsrael?*, at p. 52; Ackerman, *The Americanization of Israeli Education*.

¹⁰⁴ See, Oren Gazal-Ayal, 'Remarks on the Past and Future of Economic Analysis of Law in Israel', *Mechkari Mishpat*, 23:3 (2007), p. 661 [in Hebrew], at p. 675 for some statistics in the legal discipline.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, the Law Faculty of Tel-Aviv which conducts a joint LL.M. degree with Northwestern University.

¹⁰⁶ See, Gazal-Ayal, *Remarks on the Past and Future of Economic Analysis*, p. 678. See also, Azaryahu, *McIsrael?*, at p. 52; Ackerman, *The Americanization of Israeli Education*, especially at p. 233.

¹⁰⁷ See Gazal-Ayal, *Remarks on the Past*; see the work of Julia Resnik, 'Discourse Structuration in Israel, Democratization of Education and the Impact of the Global Education Network', *Journal of Education Policy*, 22:3 (2007), p. 215, at p. 229 with regard to the shift from the older European-oriented generation to a new American-oriented generation of scholars in the field of higher education.

¹⁰⁸ Ackerman, *The Americanization of Israeli Education*, p. 233.

¹⁰⁹ Gerald Steinberg, 'The Academic Boycott against Israel', *The Jewish Political Studies Review*, 15:3-4 (2003).

¹¹⁰ See, Fairclough, *Discourse and Text*, p. 204: More attention should be devoted to the examination of the manner in which media messages are taken up, used and transformed in various spheres of life – the family, work, political activities, leisure activities, religion, etc.

constituting European-Israeli relations. They could, for example, stimulate mutual curiosity and better understanding.¹¹¹ Regretfully, the Israeli media in most cases neglect to fulfil its role, contributing to reciprocal misrepresentations, ignorance, prejudices and mistrust.

Very few Israeli journalists have a good command of European languages other than English, very few of them command any meaningful knowledge of the EU and of European integration, and an even a smaller number of them specialise in pan-European affairs, as opposed to the domestic affairs of major Member States such as the UK, France or Germany.¹¹² The various Israeli newspapers, radio channels, T.V. channels and news Internet sites refrain from employing a correspondent in Brussels and neglect to cover the EU routinely.¹¹³ The prestigious, daily newspaper *Haaretz* is an exception, in that it does devote large space to nuanced articles about European integration, but even *Haaretz* maintains its EU correspondent in London rather than in Brussels. The only Israeli daily newspaper written in English which caters to the Anglo-Saxon Israeli community in Israel, the *Jerusalem Post*, is oriented towards the US,¹¹⁴ while the numerous daily newspapers published in Israel in the Russian language attach limited importance to European integration.

Consequently, the coverage in Israel of pan-European affairs is very slim,¹¹⁵ failing to address in any meaningful manner major events such as the attempts to ratify the Lisbon Reform Treaty: 'There is little understanding and reporting of European politics and society within Israel. Europe receives little attention and is of little interest to the Israeli media. The reporting of events that does occur is superficial, displaying little understanding of the dynamics and changes within European politics and society.'¹¹⁶ Major challenges that the EU faces, especially those presented by Muslim immigration, are magnified out of proportion and are portrayed as existential threats to the EU. The limited Israeli coverage of Europe which does exist is egocentric, focused on the Israeli prism of European news (for example, the effect of the euro on the Israeli economy or the ability of Israelis to obtain a European passport due to accession of Eastern Member States).¹¹⁷ European events, initiatives and leaders are judged mostly on the basis of their approach towards Israel.¹¹⁸

To make matters worse, a large part of the limited coverage of Europe is devoted to manifestations of European anti-Semitism. In many instances the EU

¹¹¹ As Dachs and Peters note: 'Europeans and Israelis need to develop a greater curiosity and understanding of one another's values, interests and domestic society. The media is critical in this task. It can help Israelis and Europeans understand not only what unites them but also show how their priorities and concerns differ. By doing so, it can go a long way to ensure that the future dialogue between Israelis and Europeans is better grounded in reality and not distorted by false expectations and mutual misperceptions', Dachs and Peters, *Israel and Europe*, p. 22.

¹¹² See, Gideon Remez, 'The Treatment of Europe by the Israeli Media', published in Guy Harpaz (ed.), *Newsletter of the Israeli Association for the Study of European Integration*, 11 (2004), p. 64 [in Hebrew], available at: {<http://micro5.mssc.huji.ac.il/~iaseil/>}, p. 1; Dachs and Joel Peters, *Israel and Europe*, pp. 20–2.

¹¹³ Remez, 'The Treatment of Europe'; Dachs and Peters, *Israel and Europe*, pp. 20–2.

¹¹⁴ See, however, the articles by Ari Syrquin on the EU, available at: {<http://www.jpost.com>}.

¹¹⁵ For a recent survey, see Pardo, *Report on the EU through Israeli Eyes*.

¹¹⁶ Dachs and Peters, *Israel and Europe*, p. 21.

¹¹⁷ Remez, *The Treatment of Europe by the Israeli Media*, at p. 65; Dachs and Peters, *Israel and Europe*, pp. 21–2.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

is portrayed as an unbalanced, anti-Israeli player which appeases the demands of the Arab world.¹¹⁹ Such a European image presents 'a constant and painful reminder for Israelis of the Jewish experience in Europe', thereby reinforcing the negative impact that the shadow of the past has on contemporary perceptions held by Israelis regarding Europe.¹²⁰

In contrast to the limited coverage of Europe by the Israeli media, the European media devote much attention to Israel. Yet such attention is in too many cases over-simplified, superficial, biased and distorted, once again compromising Israeli-European relations.¹²¹ Such coverage in turn fuels the prevalent grass-root Israeli perspective that Europe is tainted with hypocrisy, anti-Semitism and Arab-appeasement.¹²²

Hence, the media, like other social agents described above and below, play a negative role not only in reflecting European-Israeli dialogue and public images, but also in constituting them, shaping often antagonist European-Israeli convictions, preferences, identities and interests.

Tourism

A country's ability to attract foreign tourism allows it to expose tourists to its local art, literature, music, design, fashion and culinary delights, which enhances its soft power¹²³ and serves as a useful instrument for improving dialogue and relations between countries and societies.¹²⁴

This truism is applicable to European-Israeli relations. Tourism from Israel to Europe and *vice versa* can improve European-Israeli dialogue. Israelis visiting Europe can interact with ordinary Europeans and acquire knowledge not only of the particular countries of their visit, but also of the EU, its *raison d'être*, history, evolution, and socio-economic apparatus, rendering them more interested in and aware of, as well as less alienated from the EU.

Europe was and remains Israel's favourite tourist destination, as can be clearly deduced from the Hebrew heard in the streets of Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Budapest, London, Paris, Prague and other European cities.¹²⁵ Yet a negative trend can be discerned here too.

In the past most young Israeli tourists travelled to Europe. The current young Israeli generation tends to travel for long periods of time through the Far East, South America or in the US, avoiding Europe in many cases.¹²⁶ Admittedly, the

¹¹⁹ Dachs and Peters, *Israel and Europe*, p. 22.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Dachs and Peters, *Israel and Europe*, p. 21.

¹²² Remez, *The Treatment of Europe by the Israeli Media*, at pp. 65–6.

¹²³ Nye, *Soft Power*, pp. 75–6.

¹²⁴ Sashana Askjellerud, 'The Tourist: A Messenger of Peace?', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30 (2003), p. 741; Majid Karshenas, 'A Step Towards Other Cultures to give a Chance to Peace', in M. Robinson, N. Evans and P. Callaghan (eds), *Tourism and Cultural Change* (Sunderland: British Publishers, 1996).

¹²⁵ For some official statistics, see last accessed on 1 September 2009. {http://www.cbs.gov.il/www/tourism_sp/tab16.pdf}

¹²⁶ See, Fania Oz-Salzberger, *Israelis in Berlin* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2001), p. 199 [in Hebrew] (author's translation): 'Young Israelis [...] assumed that it was possible to skip over Europe, to talk above her head with America, or with the Near East, or with the Far East'.

percentage of these tourists out of the entire Israeli tourist body is small.¹²⁷ Yet these young Israeli tourists in certain respects hold the key to improved future relations. Thus, their growing preference for non-European destinations, some of the reasons for which are beyond the scope of this article and others which are closely intertwined with the trends analysed above, mark, once again, Israeli-European dialogue.

It must be stressed that a similar trend exists with respect to young European tourists. In the 1950s and 1960s many Christian European tourists travelled to Israel, spending time as volunteers in a *Kibbutz*, travelling around Israel and learning about the touted social model of the young Jewish State. These tourists served as yet another medium for close dialogue between Europeans and Israelis. Unfortunately this medium is also in a decline. Due to the security situation in Israel, the decline of Israel's image in Europe, the decline of the *Kibbutz* Movement and the rise in the cost of goods and services in Israel, those young Christian Europeans no longer visit Israel as often they did in the past.¹²⁸ Most of the tourists who do come to Israel are in fact North American and French Jews.¹²⁹ They contribute to the Israeli economy and to its relations with the Jewish Diaspora, but they cannot serve as a bridge between Europe and Israel, as did the young Christian European tourists in the 1960s.

The consequences of the deficient dialogue

European-Israeli dialogue not merely mirrors socio-political European-Israeli realities, but also has a mutually constitutive, detrimental impact on the collective convictions, preferences, interests and identities of the actors involved, on their conduct, policies and on their ultimate relations. European-Israeli relations are, as indicated above, embedded in discourse and dialogue and when these elements are either non-existent or deficient, the parties are prevented from realising the benefits of dialogue, and are unable to engage one another in what Risse termed 'truth-seeking discourse' aimed at reaching mutual understanding based on a reasoned consensus.¹³⁰

From a European perspective, it is sometimes difficult to accept Israel's nationalism, its heavy reliance on military force, and the importance attached to territory. The Six Days War (1967) may be seen as the watershed in that regard. As Del Sarto argues, the expansion of Israel's territory following that War enhanced within Israel the national-religious forces and the perception of the Land of Israel as sacred.¹³¹ These developments compromised in turn the willingness and ability of many Europeans to understand Israel: 'Europe's cultural alienation from Israel should be attributed to Israel's alleged militarism and readiness to use force; to the perceived decline of secularism and egalitarianism in Israel [...] to Israel's

¹²⁷ For official Israeli statistics, see {http://www.cbs.gov.il/www/tourism_sp/tab14.pdf} last accessed on 1 September 2009.

¹²⁸ For official Israeli statistics, see {http://www.cbs.gov.il/www/tourism_sp/tab04.pdf} last accessed on 1 September 2009.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Risse, *Let's Argue*.

¹³¹ Del Sarto, *Israeli Identity*, p. 68.

closeness to the US, replete with its radical, unilateralist anti-U.N. wing, and to Israel and the US' different approach to terrorism, which insist on viewing terrorists acts out of their historical and political contexts [...] for many Europeans, especially those on the Left, Israel is a Sparta-like military republic with the Palestinians as its Helotes in an age of heightened emphasis on human rights and self-determination.¹³²

These different perceptions and Europe's resultant inability to fully appreciate Israel's actions create an abyss between the parties with resultant wide-spread frustration in Israel.¹³³ Constructive dialogue could have mitigated this state of affairs to some extent, but such dialogue is lacking.

The dark past that forms a backdrop to European-Israeli opposing mindsets on matters of sovereignty, nationalism, peace and security sours EU-Israeli relations and compromises the ability of the EU to serve as a Normative Power in the Middle East.

Moreover, the critical narratives used by European politicians in their discourse about Israel are not at all times an innocuous outcome of misunderstanding but are part of a deliberate political design which exploits prevailing deficient dialogue and resultant overall ignorance. Discourse and dialogue may be seen in that respect, as Jennifer Milliken demonstrates, as an instrument that silences and excludes,¹³⁴ utilised by some European leaders in an exclusionary manner, in order to differentiate Europe from the 'others', thereby forging Europe's 'imagined community' and its collective identity.¹³⁵ As Michelle Pace argues, the EU's very identity is constituted and reconstituted through foreign policy productions of 'otherness' and in that respect the constructed instability in the Mediterranean, of which Israel is a central component, is perceived as a factor that establishes the EU Member States' collective identity through cultural defensiveness.¹³⁶ Such use, which is high in demand in times of EU's enlargement fatigue and in the face of doubts and challenges regarding the EU's constitutional order and European identities and economic forte,¹³⁷ once again compromises EU-Israeli relations.

From an Israeli perspective, the inadequate dialogue contributes to the inability of most of Israeli society and of the political establishment to understand the ethos of European integration and the building of a collective European identity.¹³⁸ Likewise, most Israelis find Europe's quasi-supranational decision-making

¹³² Keridis, *Europe and Israel: What Went Wrong?*, pp. 6–8.

¹³³ For an intriguing account of this theme, see Hedva Ben-Israel, 'Summing Up', in Kühnel, *Troubled Waters*, p. 102–4.

¹³⁴ See, Milliken, *The Study of Discourse in International Relations*, p. 229. See also, Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground*, p. 341: The political selection process is influenced in addition by the political leaders' expectations of progress of ideas and institutions that conform to concepts that have been brought to public awareness.

¹³⁵ Pace, *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, p. 297ff.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Del Sarti, *Israeli Identity*, p. 62: 'Israelis may find some difficulties in assessing the concept of national identity prevailing in Europe, including its various facets. The widespread irrelevance of religious narratives for the definition of national identities, the importance attached to the civic notion of citizenship, the relevance of cultural homogeneity, the perceived threat of mass immigration, the existence of a somewhat hybrid and overarching European identity – along with the obvious absence of a "European people", these features of collective identities in Europe may be deeply puzzling for Israelis'.

regarding sensitive national issues perplexing.¹³⁹ The heavy reliance of the EU on civil, peaceful means to tackle issues of peace and security is therefore dismissed by many as unrealistic and as naïve Kantian ideology which does not fit the Hobbesian Middle East.¹⁴⁰ In a similar manner, most Israelis appear to hold the opinion that Israeli-Palestinian relations are a zero-sum game, and hence that any European support of the Palestinians, although perceived by Europe as also advancing Israel's cause, is a manifestation of an anti-Israeli approach.

Thus, the inadequate dialogue contributes to the formation of a collective, distinct Israeli identity and to an overall negative Israeli approach to Europe. Such (lack of) dialogue and resultant mutual ignorance contribute once again to an overall sceptical perspective of European integration and generate Israeli antagonism towards most forms of Europe's intervention in the Middle East, thereby compromising the normative role of the EU in the Middle East and ultimately adversely affecting EU-Israeli relations.¹⁴¹ As Shavit and Reinhartz state in their book entitled *Glorious, Accursed Europe*: 'It may be that the fact that the State of Israel is in the situation in which many states of Europe found themselves to be before the First World War and thereafter and is engrossed as they were in a battle for sovereignty and territory, is what has brought many observers to follow in disbelief the process of unification and to ignore the revolutionary change that the entire continent underwent from the 90s of the Twentieth Century, and to emphasize what appeared to them as failures and retreats'.¹⁴²

Ultimately the deficient dialogue and its resultant collective images, perceptions and interests are reflected in Israeli policies, initiatives and responses to European initiatives *vis-à-vis* Israel and the Middle East and are used and abused by many Israeli political leaders in formulating their somewhat antagonistic policies towards European intervention in the Middle East.

Critical, constructive, European approaches towards Israel, which are at times fair and well-based, are perceived by the general public as an unbalanced outcome of a European surrender to vested Arab interests, as an instrument designed to clear Europe's own conscience and to create its own identity, and as a reflection of European *naïveté*, double standards and its preference for preaching and declaration over concrete actions.¹⁴³ European normative efforts in the Middle East continue to encounter a widespread narrative that prevails in the Israeli political sphere, as well as in broad segments of the Israeli society: the policies of the EU and most of its Member States are simply unbalanced, anti-Israeli and at times anti-Semitic.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ Gerald Steinberg, 'Kantian Pegs into Hobbesian Holes: Europe's Policy in Arab-Israeli Peace Efforts', a paper presented at the conference 'The EU in Regional and Bilateral Dispute Settlement', organised by the Israeli Association for the Study of European Integration in cooperation with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, The EU-Israel Forum, The German Innovation Centre and the Interdisciplinary Centre, Herzlia (24–25 October 2004), at pp. 8, 20, available at: {<http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/iasei/index.html>}. See, Y. Dror, 'The EU and Israel: Radically Different Worldviews', in Gerstenfeld, *Israel and Europe*, pp. 25, 31–2, 35.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Guy Harpaz, 'Normative Power Europe and the Problem of a Legitimacy Deficit: An Israeli Perspective', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 12:1 (2007), p. 89.

¹⁴² Shavit and Reinhartz, *Glorious, Accursed Europe*, p. 176.

¹⁴³ Harpaz, *Normative Power Europe*.

¹⁴⁴ Harpaz, *Normative Power Europe*. It may be argued with some force that this critical narrative is more widespread amongst those belonging to the Israeli right-wing camp, the Orthodox religious

Due to the widening psychological gap between Europe and Israel, the legitimacy deficit from which the EU suffers, the deficient dialogue and resultant mutual, deep-seated prejudices, ignorance, and mistrust, Europe's aspiration to greater involvement in the Middle East is not welcomed in most instances by Israel.¹⁴⁵

One example, albeit extreme, certainly by today's standards, of that impact on the contemporary Israeli approach towards European intervention was the Israeli Government's reaction to the EEC's Venice Declaration of 1980. In that Declaration, the then nine Member States of the EEC recognised the Palestinian right of self-determination, and the Palestinian Liberalisation Organisation as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian People. The right-wing Israeli government led by Prime Minister Begin responded furiously, linking the PLO and Nazi Germany.¹⁴⁶ Begin's political reliance on the memories of the Holocaust and on Holocaust-related terminology in this political context and in many others,¹⁴⁷ genuinely manifested his own personal and family experience in the Holocaust.¹⁴⁸ After all, political agents are themselves embedded in the very same social structures that they wish to affect and in the same public conventions that they wish to mobilise.¹⁴⁹

Yet such reliance and terminology may also be seen as a shrewd if not manipulative top-to-bottom political use of the Israeli public images, perceptions and memories of Europe to advance political causes, namely the dismissal of European critical stances and intervention in the Arab-Israeli conflict as anti-Semitic. In that sense, prevailing popular Israeli metaphors, perceptions, images and memories are being manipulated for the development and justification of non-compromising, anti-European intervention policies.¹⁵⁰ Such use correlates with what Krebs and Jackson termed 'rhetorical coercion', seeking to twist Europe's arm by twisting tongues, thereby limiting the range of possible European responses and policy options.¹⁵¹

community and lower socio-economic layers of the Israeli society, and less prevalent amongst those belonging to the left-wing camp, secular community, and elitist layers of the Israeli society, see Keridis, *Europe and Israel: What Went Wrong?* Similarly, an argument is made that Jews of a European background are less critical of Europe than those originating from Arab countries. Nonetheless, it is still submitted, based on a close examination of the Israeli press, on scholarly works, on media coverage, on my own experience with teaching thousands of Israeli students in numerous academic institutions, and on the outcome of public polls, that this negative narrative is not confined to specific ethno-religious or socio-economic quarters of the Israeli society but is prevalent in wide social, academic and political circles in Israel. For public polls, see Y. Dror and S. Pardo, 'Approaches and Principles for an Israeli Grand Strategy towards the EU', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 11:1 (2006), p. 11, at pp. 28–30.

¹⁴⁵ Ambassador Chevillard, 'The EU's relations to Israel', in Bianca Kühnel (ed.), *Troubled Waters: Europe and its Relations with the US and Israel* (Jerusalem: The Helmut Kohl Institute for European Studies (2003).

¹⁴⁶ See Resolution Number 796, Israeli Reaction to the Decision of the European Countries in Venice (15 June 1980) (with the author).

¹⁴⁷ Ofer Grosbard, *Menachem Begin – A Portrait of a Leader – A Biography* (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2006), pp. 95, 154, 164, 213.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, especially at pp. 63–78.

¹⁴⁹ Ish-Shalom, *Theory as a Hermeneutical Mechanism*, pp. 573–4.

¹⁵⁰ Chilton and Ilyin, *Metaphor in Political Discourse*, p. 10; See Pace, *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, p. 306 with respect to such a use by Israeli Prime Minister Sharon.

¹⁵¹ Krebs and Jackson, *Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms*, p. 39ff.

It should be emphasised that such political use is not exclusively that of the Israeli Right. Political leaders from the centre of Israel politics also tend to dismiss European attempts to intervene in the Middle East conflict, based on the aforesaid Israeli perception of Europe. The late Abba Eban, for example, Israel's dovish, former Foreign Minister, referred, in response to a German newspaper interview, to the call upon Israel to return to the borders of pre-1967 War as a call to return to 'Auschwitz borders'. The former Prime Minister and current leader of the Labour Party and Defence Minister Ehud Barak expressed his opinion that European countries cannot contribute much to conflict resolution because of their modest investment in military capabilities,¹⁵² and that 'only the US can bring Israel and Syria together'.¹⁵³

More recent EU interventions in the Middle East have served to reinforce such strong Israeli antagonism born of past events. Javier Solana's visit to Damascus and his call for Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights, captured from Syria in 1967, like the EU's stance towards the construction by Israel of the Separation Barrier (or, as the International Court of Justice choose to term it, the 'Wall') are two cases in point.¹⁵⁴ *Per contra*, Europe's recent constructive contributions in South Lebanon (2006) and in Gaza (2009), as well as its efforts to contain Iran's nuclear programme, are either ignored or dismissed by most Israeli politicians and journalists and by ordinary Israelis. After all, these European efforts and initiatives do not match Europe's past and present images. The Israeli political leaders are thus trapped in a discursive *cul-de-sac* partly of their own making.

Admittedly, there are occasions on which Israeli leaders are visionary and bold, being willing to convey to the general public the beneficial positive aspects of European-Israeli relations and the positive impact of European intervention in our region.¹⁵⁵ One recent example relates to the Israeli-Hamas conflict of January 2009. It is still too early to draw conclusions from the European involvement in this conflict, yet it may still be argued, with the required caution, that the EU and its Member States succeeded in building upon their successful involvement in the Lebanon war of 2006. The EU's critical declaratory diplomacy was toned down and was once again supported by concrete involvement on the grounds, displaying *vis-à-vis* Israel a highly critical, yet supportive and sensitive approach. The President of the European Council, the President of France, the Chancellor of Germany and the Prime Ministers of the Great Britain, Italy and Spain gathered in the Israeli Prime Minister's official residence, to express in front of the cameras

¹⁵² *Haaretz* (13 October 2004).

¹⁵³ Quoted in Alfred Tovias, 'Israel and the Barcelona Process: The First Five Years', in Klaus Boehnke (ed), *Israel and Europe – A Complex Relationship* (Frankfurt: DUV, 2003), p. 37, at p. 43.

¹⁵⁴ See also the response of the Israeli Foreign Ministry to the EU stance with regard to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the Israeli Separation Barrier: 'Israel is particularly disappointed by the European stand. The willingness of the EU to fall in with the Palestinian position [...] raises doubts as to the ability of the EU to contribute anything constructive to the diplomatic process', as quoted in Dror and Pardo, *Approaches and Principles*, p. 24, fn. 24.

¹⁵⁵ See, for example, the very warm welcome by the Israeli political leadership of the German Chancellor Merkel during her visit to Israel in February 2008. See also former Prime Minister Olmert's reaction to European intervention in the January 2009 conflict between E. Olmert (2009), 'Statements by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the European leaders in Jerusalem following meeting with Egyptian President Mubarak in Sharm el-Sheikh' (18 January 2009), available at: {http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2009/Statements_PM_Olmert_European_leaders_18-Jan-2009.htm}.

Europe's support for the nascent and shaky cease-fire and of the peace process. Europe's unitary commitment to assist in meeting Gaza's humanitarian needs and in fighting military arms trafficking and smuggling to Gaza displayed a more pro-active, constructive and balanced approach, enabling European leaders such as Nicholas Sarkozy and special Envoy of the Quartet to the Middle East, Tony Blair, to contribute to the efforts to promote the ceasefire. Such an approach was indeed warmly welcomed by Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister of that time: 'I wish to express my personal appreciation and the appreciation of the people of Israel to you, leaders of the European countries, for demonstrating your impressive support for the State of Israel and your concern for its safety. The united front which you represent and your uncompromising stand with regard to the security of the State of Israel warms our hearts and strengthens us at this sensitive time [...] Our personal friendship may at times exceed that which is accepted in the recognized diplomatic protocol, but they are friendships which are beyond price. I feel a pleasant obligation to thank each and every one of you, both for your personal friendship and your friendship towards the people and State of Israel'.¹⁵⁶

Yet these occasions are the exception that proves the general rule. Consequently, and despite some recent positive indications and trends to the contrary,¹⁵⁷ most forms of European intervention in political issues in the Middle East continue to encounter the same generally negative Israeli approach.¹⁵⁸

It may, however be argued that the use of Israeli perceptions and images is not solely a top-to-bottom one. Rather, Israeli policies may also be seen as the end result of the dialectical interface between the general public, dialogue and political practice.¹⁵⁹ Viewed in this manner, reliance on the memories of the Holocaust and on Holocaust-related terminology is also to be seen as a bottom-to-top end-product, constituted and reinforced by the general attitude of the Israeli public, which is itself influenced by the shadow of past European-Jewry relations.

This bottom-to-top process allows policies to be influenced by public's knowledge and convictions. As such it is in line with a model which is premised on the assumption that the competition for public legitimisation ensures that the Israeli public occupies a central position in the political scenery, setting the limits for the policy stances that political actors may employ.¹⁶⁰ In that respect it is the public which sets the contours for Israeli political anti-European pronouncements.¹⁶¹ This assertion is also in line with the Constructivist's approach under

¹⁵⁶ E. Olmert, 'Statements by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the European leaders in Jerusalem following a meeting with Egyptian President Mubarak in Sharm el-Sheikh' (18 January 2009), available at: {http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2009/Statements_PM_Olmert_European_leaders_18-Jan-2009.htm}.

¹⁵⁷ For analysis, see G. Harpaz, 'Mind the Gap: Narrowing the Legitimacy Gap in EU-Israeli Relations', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 13 (2008), p. 117.

¹⁵⁸ Zalman Shoval, former Israeli Ambassador to Washington, Agence France Presse (12 February 2003), Jerusalem, as quoted in Aoun, *European Foreign Policy and the Arab-Israeli Dispute*, p. 310: 'The attitude of a number of European countries..has proven once again to Israel that it is impossible to trust Europe. [...] This behaviour can only further reduce Europe's role in relation to that of the US regarding any settlement with the Palestinians'.

¹⁵⁹ Drulák, *Motion, Container and Equilibrium*, p. 501; Fairclough, *Discourse and Text*.

¹⁶⁰ For comparison, see Krebs and Jackson, *Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms*, pp. 46–7.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

which identities, interests and the conduct of political agents are socially constructed by collective meaning, interpretations and assumptions about the world.¹⁶²

In sum, indirectly and in the long-run, the deficient European-Israeli dialogue which is shaped both by top-to-bottom and bottom-to-top processes mars European-Israeli relations. Discourse, dialogue and the resultant social knowledge and perceptions are, however, not rigid.¹⁶³ Learning generated from dialogue may increase the capacity and motivation to comprehend competing alternatives to a prevailing inference and in that manner it may become a creative and transformative socio-political process.¹⁶⁴

Risse's truth-seeking dialogue may be relevant to our context. According to Risse, who draws inspiration from the work of Habermas,¹⁶⁵ such dialogue is a distinct and complementary mode from that which March and Olsen defined as strategic bargaining, utility maximising (rational choice) or rule-guided behaviour (sociological institutionalism).¹⁶⁶ The participants in such a dialogue are engaged in truth-seeking with the aim of reaching mutual understanding of the factual situation, based on reasoned consensus, being open to be persuaded by the better argument, willing to change their views, normative beliefs, their preferences, interests and identities. Power and hierarchies recede during deliberations.¹⁶⁷

Thus improved, frank and intensive dialogue and exchanges between the EU and Israel, between Europeans and Israelis are needed in order to reveal the true colours of EU-Israeli relations and in order to deconstruct the current polarisation between legitimate criticism of Israeli policies and anti-Semitic approaches masked with political terminology. Such a dialogue may reduce mistrust, antagonism and heterogeneity between Europeans and Israelis with the resultant impact on their identities, interests, and behaviour.¹⁶⁸ Such cooperative dialogue and behaviour may, drawing on the findings of Wendt, enable Europeans and Israelis to simultaneously learn to identify with each other and to see themselves not as 'others'¹⁶⁹ but as 'we', bound by certain common norms,¹⁷⁰ rendering it more difficult for Israeli politicians to dismiss legitimate critical approaches as old-fashioned anti-Semitism.

¹⁶² Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground*, p. 324.

¹⁶³ For analysis, see Diez, *Speaking Europe*, especially p. 611.

¹⁶⁴ Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground*, pp. 322, 325.

¹⁶⁵ Risse, *Let's Argue*; See also Diez and Steans, *A Useful Dialogue?*

¹⁶⁶ Risse, *Let's Argue*, analysing the distinction offered by James March and Johan P. Olsen, 'The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders', *International Organization*, 52:4 (1998), p. 943. According to the rational-choice approach, participants in any given socio-political interaction are strategically engaged in communicative behaviour on the basis of their fixed identities and perceptions in order to realise and maximise their preferences and interests, by convincing others to change their perceptions, interests and identities (the 'logic of consequentialism'), *ibid.* Traditional Social Constructivism on the other hand perceives social interaction as an instrument that assists in defining what is considered as a legitimate truth claim (the 'logic of appropriateness'), *ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, at pp. 1–2 and 7–8. See also, J. Habermas, as quoted and translated by Risse, *Let's Argue*, p. 9: Thus communicative actions '[...] are not coordinated via egocentric calculations of success, but through acts of understanding. Participants are not primarily oriented toward their own success [...] they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can co-ordinate their action plans on the basis of shared definitions of the situation'.

¹⁶⁸ Wendt, *Collective Identity Formation*, p. 390.

¹⁶⁹ Iver B. Neumann, 'Self and Other in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2:2 (1996), p. 139.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Some reservations with respect to the importance of dialogue as a means for enhancing European-Israeli relations are, however, called for. Exclusive academic reliance must not be placed on such dialogue. This article subscribes in that respect to Adler's Constructivist "Middle Ground" in dismissing the relativist, post-modernist and post-structuralist stances, according to which individual subjectivity is completely constituted by discourse and dialogue structures. In the same vein, the article does not adopt a Habermasian approach to the role of language, an approach which may be considered utopian.¹⁷¹

Socio-political agents, including European and Israelis, do not conduct their dialogue in an 'ideal speech situation'.¹⁷² Dialogue is influenced instead by previous identities, knowledge, institutions and interests.¹⁷³ Dialogue cannot therefore produce an objective truth based on verified facts which are not affected by value preference. The parties to the dialogue called for in this article already believe that they know the truth and they select 'facts' accordingly. Hence, intensive exchange may not at all times advance understanding and affinity. It might instead breed frustration rather than 'truth-finding'. Thus, the call in this article for improved dialogue must not overlook the risk that such dialogue may not serve as an engine for reform, but may instead or in addition perpetuate social and identity dividing lines,¹⁷⁴ imposing or cementing questionable interpretations of regional and international politics.¹⁷⁵

The participants in the European-Israeli dialogue should therefore display a genuine open-mindedness, enabling them to discard their inaccurate factual perceptions and rigidly-held political views, transforming unreflective preferences into enlightened deliberative judgments.¹⁷⁶ Dialogue should furthermore be seen as part of a large panoply of instruments mirroring and constituting European-Israeli reality. Consequently, in addition to the use of dialogue as a Constructivist instrument to develop common values and understanding, Europeans and Israelis must tackle concrete socio-economic and political problems of EU-Mediterranean and EU-Israeli relations.¹⁷⁷

Conclusion

The rich literature on the problematic aspects of EU-Israel relations focuses on historical, structural, politico-economic, legal, institutional, geo-political and

¹⁷¹ For criticism of the Habermas' model when applied to concrete negotiations or dialogues, see R. Wodak and V. Koller (eds), *Handbook of Communication in the Public Sphere* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008).

¹⁷² Yet it must be remembered that Habermas, too, treated lifeworld as background knowledge required to perform communicative action.

¹⁷³ Krebs and Jackson, *Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms*, pp. 39–40.

¹⁷⁴ See Del Sarto, *Setting the (Cultural) Agenda*, pp. 322–3; William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 26: An inter-cultural dialogue allows parties to face each other *qua* their previously defined differences. Any type of interaction, including dialogue, contributes to a sense of solidarity and similarity within each group.

¹⁷⁵ Del Sarto, *Setting the (Cultural) Agenda*, pp. 323, 326.

¹⁷⁶ Jason Barbaras, 'How Deliberation Affects Policy Options', *American Political Science Review*, 98:4 (2004), p. 687, at pp. 689, 699.

¹⁷⁷ Del Sarto, *Setting the (Cultural) Agenda*, p. 322.

strategic causes. This article contributes to existing literature by focusing on an additional factor, namely the lack of adequate European-Israeli dialogue. Premised on the theoretical assumptions that dialogue may not merely reflect IR, but may also contribute to the socialisation of norms in different socio-political settings, and that meaningful discursive interactions not only reflect images, perceptions, convictions, preferences, interests, identities, policies and IR, but also constitute them, the article examined these assumptions in the context of European-Israeli relations.

An attempt was first made to analyse the causes of the lack of adequate dialogue, pointing in particular to the haunting shadow of the past, the Americanisation of Israeli society, academia and media, and recent trends in the utilisation of European languages in Israel and in Israel's tourism map. All these trends contribute to the formation of a collective, distinct Israeli identity and to an overall negative Israeli approach to Europe, compromising the ability of Europeans and Israelis to conduct a meaningful, intensive and frank dialogue.

The article then probed the consequences of that deficient dialogue, contending that European-Israeli dialogue is not epiphenomenal, nor merely a mirror of social reality. Instead, it constitutes a medium of its own, producing, reproducing, transforming and constituting social structures, knowledge, ideologies, identities of Europeans and Israelis and ultimately European-Israeli relations.¹⁷⁸ The lack of adequate dialogue is not only caused by mutual ignorance, prejudices, misrepresentations, mistrust and antagonism, but also causes relations to be characterised by these same attributes. Thus, indirectly and in the long-run, such lack of dialogue mars European-Israeli relations, negates improved cooperation and contributes to Israel's knee-jerk reaction towards most forms of European intervention.

These consequences are brought about through a top-to-bottom process: The deficient dialogue and its resultant collective images, perceptions and interests are used and abused by Israeli political leaders in dismissing European criticism and intervention (while European politicians abuse prevailing ignorance to forge European identity). Concurrently, these consequences are also caused by a bottom-to-top process: policies are being socially constructed by the collective, negative meaning, interpretations and assumptions of the Israeli public at large about Europe.¹⁷⁹

The prevailing state of affairs analysed in the article is by no means static. Relations could indeed be rather different, should ordinary Israeli and Europeans have the desire and venue to meet, discuss and argue about the past, present and the future. This can be learned from the rather unusual, lively social interactions and intensive dialogue between a not inconsiderable number of Israelis and Germans conducted on a daily basis in Berlin.¹⁸⁰

European-Israeli relations must not therefore be perceived as structurally or exogenously given, but rather as constantly constructed by historically contingent socio-political interactions. The manner in which their reciprocal material world is shaped is not entirely determined by physical reality but also by human action, reaction and interactions which are themselves dependent on dynamic normative

¹⁷⁸ See note 33 above.

¹⁷⁹ Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground*, pp. 322–4.

¹⁸⁰ For an interesting account of this theme, see Oz-Salzberger, *Israelis in Berlin*, p. 39.

and epistemic collective, intersubjective knowledge and interpretations of their material world.¹⁸¹ Collective knowledge, ideas, concepts and norms, partially shaped by European-Israeli dialogue, may thus serve as an engine for socio-political action and change.¹⁸² European-Israeli relations may be socially constructed by collective, more informed understanding of the socio-political world, which may then be subject to political selection processes and thus to an evolutionary change.¹⁸³ Applying Adler's insights to our context, it may be argued that knowledge-based Israeli political practices are the by-product of interacting individuals and epistemic communities, and when the Israeli and European epistemic communities diffuse a new normative view of a certain socio-political reality, both the norm itself, and its political carriers could bring about a change in the interests, identities and practices of the political agents.¹⁸⁴ After all, culture and identity should be perceived, as Lapid informs us, as socially emergent and constructed, as opposed to primordially given; optional as opposed to deterministic; diversifying as opposed to integrating and dynamic and interactive as opposed to static.¹⁸⁵

Thus an improved, frank and intensive dialogue and exchanges between the EU and Israel, between Europeans and Israelis is needed. Such improved dialogue may allow, for example, prevailing beliefs, views, interests and identities to be challenged and reformulated, thereby enhancing the chances of improved co-operation.¹⁸⁶ This is true not only at the level of political and bureaucratic elite, but also at the popular level. Europeans and Israelis should reconstruct those social agents and traditional channels, described above, which were once so effective and beneficial in assisting dialogue and producing affinity but which nowadays distance them from each other. Such a proposed line of action, which may find support by the Israelis diplomatic corps,¹⁸⁷ scholars¹⁸⁸ and leading Israeli novelists¹⁸⁹ can assist

¹⁸¹ Adler, *Seizing the Middle Ground*, pp. 322–7.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 322–4; Ish-Shalom, *Theory as a Hermeneutical Mechanism*, p. 567.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 325–44.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Lapid, *Culture's Ship*: pp. 3, 7–9.

¹⁸⁶ See, by analogy, Risse, *Let's Argue*, p. 7: 'Arguing implies that actors try to challenge the validity claims inherent in any causal or normative statement and seek a communicative consensus about their understanding of a situation as well as justifications for the principles and norms guiding their action. Argumentative rationality also implies that the participants in a discourse are open to being persuaded by the better argument and that relationships of power and social hierarchies recede in the background. Argumentative and deliberative behaviour is as goal oriented as strategic interaction, but the goal is not to attain one's fixed preferences, but to seek reasoned consensus. Actors' interests, preferences and perceptions . . . is no longer fixed, but is subject to discursive challenges.'

¹⁸⁷ Former Israeli Ambassador to the EU, Oded Eran, 'The Role of the EU in the Middle East', the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, Jerusalem (10 January 2005): '[. . .] What I think is needed above all is a quiet and intimate dialogue between Israel and the EU to ensure that Europe's potential contribution can be fully benefited from', as quoted in Dror and Pardo, *Approaches and Principles*, at pp. 33–4.

¹⁸⁸ Dachs and Peters, *Israel and Europe*, p. 12.

¹⁸⁹ See Oz, *The Slopes of the Volcano*, pp. 63, 79–80: '[. . .] our discussion with Europe is not closed and should not be closed. We have much to talk about. We certainly have issues to dispute, and there is room for pain and anger. But the time has come to renew our conversation with Europe – and not only at a political level. We have to talk about the present and about the future. And it is fitting for us to talk in depth about the past – on one condition: that we always remember that our past belongs to us, and we do not belong to it [. . .] I believe that putting ourselves in the place of others, imagining that we are those others, provides a very strong antidote to bigotry and hate. I believe that

in dispelling misunderstanding, mitigating conflicting interests, bridging opposing perceptions and constituting more harmonious perceptions, convictions, preferences, interests, identities, and ultimately more cooperative European-Israeli policies and relations.

authors who have us imagine we are others immunize us to some degree from Satan's pranks, including those of the inner Satan, the Mephistopheles in our hearts [...] (author's translation from Hebrew); Kaniuk, *Der Letzte Berliner*, p. 216: 'Were Israeli and German authors and poets to sit down together for a prolonged debate something would be cleared up, but most of the German authors have sat with American or French authors, not with us' (author's translation from Hebrew).