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EU's Conflict Resolution Capacity: the Cases of Cyprus and Israel/Palestine

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the role of international organisations in a conflict. In particular, it is examined the role of the EU in the Cyprus conflict and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during the period 2005-2010. By using the theoretical model of Diez, Stetter and Albert regarding the four possible paths of EU involvement in a conflict (i.e. compulsory, enabling, connective and constructive), it is examined whether the EU has affected the aforementioned conflicts and if so, to what degree. In addition, they are discussed the circumstances under which EU's impact has been positive, resulting in this way in the improvement of the parties' relations, or negative which would therefore imply the escalation of the conflicts.

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1. Introduction

This thesis examines the role of international organisations in a conflict, and specifically the role of the European Union (EU) in the Cyprus conflict and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Its purpose is to investigate whether and under what circumstances the EU has affected the aforementioned conflicts throughout the period 2005-2010 and has contributed to their resolution. For this reason, it was chosen the methodology of Diez, Stetter and Albert as developed in their article titled "The European Union and Border Conflicts: The transformative Power of Integration". In their article, the authors rely on the forces of integration and association as a means of transforming a conflict. By testing five conflict cases, they contend that the EU can indeed influence the course of a conflict through four possible paths, namely the compulsory, enabling, connective and constructive influence, which can eventually lead to the improvement of the conflict parties' relations and thus, to the resolution of their conflict in the long-term. Under the compulsory impact the EU induces the conflict parties to resolve their conflict by providing them the incentive to become members of the Union. At this stage, the EU follows a carrots and sticks policy during which it can threaten to withdraw the membership offer in case the conflict parties engage in provocative actions towards each other. The second pathway is connected with the ability of political actors within the conflict societies to pursue and also, legitimise desecuritizing moves via the reference to the EU *acquis*. Through the connective influence the EU provides financial aid to the conflict parties' civil society actors with peace-oriented agendas. The Union's aim is to foster cross-border collaboration and to build bridges among the societies, which will in the long-term result in the amelioration of their relationship. Finally, the constructive impact envisages the deeper change of the conflict parties' identities. Through the thorough internalization of the European normative framework, the parties will learn a new way of articulating their former conflictual identities and reconstruct them in a manner that permanently sustains peaceful relations between them. These four impacts, which are discussed in detail in the following part, are the methodological tools for the examination of the Cyprus conflict and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Those cases were selected with the view to illustrating whether the Union's impact is stronger on conflicts located within the European borders and thus, some degree of integration into the EU has occurred (Cyprus conflict) and if the EU manages to affect a conflict even if it is located outside its borders, where little or no integration has taken place (Israeli-Palestinian conflict). Furthermore, this time period was chosen due to the occurrence of two incidences of the utmost importance that shaped the course of the conflicts. Concerning the Cyprus issue, it is the country's accession to the EU in 2004. Notwithstanding the latter's unsuccessful attempt to resolve the conflict before Cyprus accession, it is noteworthy to investigate if the Union, through the parties' deeper integration, has eventually managed to change their policy vis-à-vis each other and lead to a conflict-diminishing relationship between them immediately after 2004. With respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the 2005 Israel's unilateral disengagement from Gaza is considered to be a historic event, since many

actors in the international community believed that a peace treaty would soon follow. Hence, it would be interesting to assess the role of the EU in this context, whose influence has always been constrained due to the involvement of other actors in the conflict, with the most prominent of them being the US. Although five years is a short period of time in order to examine whether the attitude of the parties towards each other has fundamentally changed through the thorough internalization of the EU norms as described by the constructive impact, this thesis primarily looks at their intentions to pursue a conciliatory policy along with EU's assistance.

It is concluded that the EU has not contributed to the resolution of both conflicts during the period 2005-2010. Its impact has been very limited, albeit there were some occasions through which the Union provoked the amelioration of the conflict parties' relations. Also, it is argued that there was no great difference on the degree of intensity of the EU impact on the two conflicts, regardless of whether the countries were EU members or not.

As far as the structure of the thesis is concerned, firstly there will be a summary of the international relations theory regarding its views on the role of international organisations in a conflict. Specifically, this part will briefly delineate the views of constructivism and neo-liberal institutionalism on this topic. After this brief description and in the same part, it will be discussed in detail the methodology of Diez, et al. so as to better understand its application to the Cyprus issue and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This part is followed by the examination of the two cases, and finally I conclude with the results concerning EU's role on the transformation of these conflicts.

2. Integration as a "Force for Good"

In this part there will be a summary of neo-liberal institutionalism's and constructivism's claims about the role of international organisations in a conflict, since Diez, et al. base their theoretical model on those theories which in turn, makes it necessary to see on which arguments their theory has been built. There will be no reference to neo-realism due to its views about the impotence of international organisations to foster inter-state cooperation which, according to its supporters, emanates from the anarchic nature of the international system (Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 1990 & 1994/1995), and thus its arguments are rendered inapplicable for this thesis. Afterwards, the theoretical model of the EU's transformative power of a conflict will be described and we will see the process of its construction in detail.

Neo-liberal institutionalists emphasize the beneficial effects of the international institutions and maintain that they are capable of fostering cooperation among the states. In fact, they support the view that institutions can affect states' behavior by providing them various incentives and disincentives. Via a number of mechanisms, institutions can exert influence on the formation of states' interests and strategies in a way that is not contradictory or incompatible with those of other states, thus promoting

in the long run cooperative relations (Konstas & Arvanitopoulos, 2002, p. 256; Keohane & Nye, 1974; Keohane & Nye, 1987; Keohane & Martin, 1995). Particularly, international institutions promote cooperation between the states by reducing the transaction costs and increasing the amount of information related to states' interests and strategies, which in turn decreases the level of uncertainty between the members of an institution. Additionally, neo-liberal institutionalists emphasize the issue of reputation within the context of an international institution which deters states from engaging in illegitimate actions, as well as the issue-linkage that gives states the ability to retaliate in case they are cheated (Keohane, 1984, pp. 89-97; Nye, 2006, pp.46-47).

Constructivism attributes high importance to the role of international institutions, since its proponents maintain that they have the ability to influence not only state behavior but also state identity. In the contemporary era, state practices are constrained by some acceptable standards of behavior, namely the norms. Institutions are connected with those behavioral rules by virtue of their power to create, redefine and propagate the norms to the states (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999, pp. 711-715). Through the process of socialization international institutions persuade or pressure the states to adopt the promoted norms (Checkel, 2005), while the latter adhere to those rules due to reasons of international legitimation, conformity and esteem (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, pp. 902-904) or out of feelings of legitimacy, which as Hurd explains it is defined as the "normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed" (1999, p. 381; Tsakonas, 2008, p. 226). Therefore, institutions affect the way with which states interact by constituting the appropriate and legitimate state behavior, which has a direct impact on the formation of their identities and interests (Wendt, 1992).

Diez, Stetter and Albert discuss the EU's ability to transform a conflict by focusing on the forces of integration and association. Although they acknowledge that the theoretical model developed for this purpose, poses some restrictions to their research due to its emphasis on the subjects of integration and association, they contend that more precise results can be derived from this. Indeed, the application of their theoretical model to five cases of conflict located either within the EU's borders, at its borders or at its neighbourhood (i.e. the case of Northern Ireland, the Greco-Turkish conflict, the Cyprus issue, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the dispute between the then enlarged EU and Russia) has produced a number of insightful results regarding the conditions under which EU's influence is expected to be stronger and positive, leading to the amelioration of the relations between the conflict parties and eventually to the resolution of their conflict, but also negative where the EU acts as conflict-enhancing factor. With the view to measuring EU's impact, they created four possible paths through which the latter can exert influence on the conflict parties and then they applied it to the aforementioned five cases of conflict.

In order to define the positive impact of integration and association on border conflict transformation, Diez, Stetter and Albert first specify the term of conflict. By distinguishing themselves from the authors who regard violence as a necessary characteristic of the conflict and maintain that the

latter is the result of "objective predispositions rather than actual communication" (2006, p. 565), they suggest that the conflict is the construction of incompatible identities or interests between two actors. The same incompatibility of identities or interests is observed in a border conflict situation between the states, when the latter disagree over the extent of each other's territory. In the case of Cyprus, the border conflict relates to the border that separates the northern part from the southern part of the island already from the Turkish military invasion of 1974, which subsequently led to the establishment and self-declaration of independence in 1983 of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), a territorial entity comprising of the northern Cyprus and recognized only by Turkey. As far as the border conflict between Palestinians and Israelis is concerned, the areas of West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, which Israel occupied during the Six-Day War and both parties claim as their own, is the cause of this longstanding territorial dispute.

Since their definition of conflict considers the actual communication between two conflicting parties an important element in concluding whether an incompatibility of interests or identities exists, the authors maintain that one way of measuring the conflict communication is securitization. The latter is defined as the "representation of the other as an existential threat justifying extraordinary means" and according to them "when actors articulate an incompatibility by referring to another as an existential threat to the self" a conflict emerges (2006, p. 566). Owing to the significance they attribute to communication, they examined the levels of securitization in public discourse where the former can gain support and legitimization not only by the political actors but the society as well, and the perceptions of the other as an existential threat as well as the frequency of the securitization moves can be assessed.

These three characteristics constitute the basis for the construction of their conflict stages model, which is connected with the EU's four ways of affecting a border conflict. The first stage of this model is the conflict episode, which is an instance of conflict at the lowest level of securitization. At this stage neither an articulation of the other as an existential threat has taken place nor has securitization infiltrated the societal life. The second stage is the issue conflict, where the levels of securitization increase, albeit to a small or a negligible extent, and the conflict discourse revolves around a specific issue. In the third stage, namely the identity conflict, the conflicting parties regard their identities as incompatible to each other and the representation of the other side as an existential threat to the self augments. This in turn results in an increase of the securitization moves and a greater infiltration of conflict discourse in societal life. Finally, in the subordination conflict, securitization is at its highest level. The existential threat posed to the self legitimizes the use of extraordinary means, while conflict discourse is evident in every aspect of societal life.

The purpose of the conflict stages model is not to categorize each case of conflict in a specific stage, as the authors maintain. Instead, they attempt to illustrate the positive and negative impact of integration or association. For instance, when there is a decrease both in the securitization moves and

the conflict discourse or when identities become part of the conflict and conflict communication grows rapidly as opposed to the era when the dispute of the two parties was about an isolated incidence, it is argued that integration has had a positive and negative impact respectively.

After having defined and developed the concepts of conflict and border conflict as well as the conflict stages model, the authors elucidate the conditions of positive and negative impact through the construction of the four pathways of EU influence on a conflict. They suggest that the impact of integration does not differ from the impact of ideas and propose two dimensions that characterize the pathways. The first dimension refers to "whether the impact is generated either by concrete EU measures or an effect of integration processes that are not directly influenced by EU actors" and the second dimension relates to "whether the impact is on concrete policies or has wider social implications" (2006, p. 571).

Under the compulsory impact – the first pathway of EU impact – the conflicting parties are obliged to follow a non-provocative and less securitized approach towards each other through the processes of integration or association. The EU manages to persuade the conflicting parties to follow such a policy by providing them the incentive to become members. In fact, during the membership negotiations or when the conditions are set for the opening of membership negotiations the prospective member states must settle their territorial disputes (if any). This is a condition embedded in the EU legal and normative framework which the aspirant states are required to adopt. In other words, their membership is conditional upon the resolution of the border disputes. In order for the carrots and sticks policy to be successful three preconditions are necessary: (1) the conflict party has a genuine intention of becoming a member, which therefore means that the incentive of membership is sufficient for altering its policies vis-à-vis the other party, (2) the conflict party should regard the membership offer as credible, and (3) the thorough internalization of the EU acquis by the domestic actors. Finally, the authors have concluded that the compulsory impact is stronger during the membership negotiations. It is possible that states follow an instrumental approach during this period in order to be granted the valuable membership status and once it has been achieved, they pursue again a provocative policy. Nevertheless, the success of the compulsory impact is feasible even in such a case. Through the process of socialization deeper reforms might be brought about in the long term, which will eventually lead to the complete alteration of perceptions of the other and resolution of the conflict. At this point it is useful to point out that the compulsory impact is connected with the constructive impact as well as the fact that it is provoked by concrete EU measures and it has an effect on the political level where the policies are constructed. The two latter relate to the dimensions of the four pathways discussed above.

Regarding the association agreements or the financial and free trade agreements as a means of exerting influence on the conflicting parties, it is argued that they are not as strong as the membership prospect, even though they are widely used to states outside the EU borders. The benefits granted to

the states through these forms of association are not comparable to the benefits of being a member state, which could in turn constitute a basis for the adoption of a conciliatory policy.

The enabling impact is a result of the integration process and affects the policy-making level. Through the second pathway of EU impact political actors use the EU legal and normative framework as a reference point from which they attempt to legitimize desecuritizing moves. As some constructivists maintain, speech is an important tool for persuasion, which political actors employ with the view to "creating new understandings and new social facts that reconfigure politics" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 2001, p. 402). The enabling impact promotes this change in the domestic politics of the conflict parties through the EU acquis. Nevertheless, Diez, et al. note that those who promote a more conciliatory policy in a conflict society might be viewed as traitors or be marginalized. Even worse, in cases of identity and subordination conflict, where the securitization moves abound and conflict communication has permeated the most aspects of societal life, the society urges the government to advance the securitizing moves. However, the authors argue that the enabling impact can be successful if two conditions are fulfilled: (1) the references to integration for the desecuritizing moves are considered legitimate, and this legitimacy gains acceptance not only by the political elite but also the society, and (2) the achievement of integration or association is viewed as a priority for the conflict party, which can lead in a decrease of the dominant conflict discourse.

Through the connective impact the EU provides direct economic assistance to civil society organisations for the materialization of common projects. The aim of this form of influence is to build bridges and to support the contact of the societal actors between the conflict parties. Consequently, the development of peace-enhancing bonds among the conflict societies will eventually lead to the alteration of identities and resolution of the conflict, as envisaged by the constructive impact. The third pathway of EU impact is dependent on two conditions, which relate to the degree to which EU's financial aid is not regarded as a foreign interference in the conflict parties' domestic affairs as well as to EU's ability to persuade all the societal actors to engage in the implementation of desecuritizing activities, including those who would not have done it without its assistance. It is evident that the connective impact is the result of concrete EU measures and has wider social implications.

The constructive impact is a long-term process which if achieved, the resolution of the conflict will occur. Its purpose is to change the conflictual identities that the parties have developed over the years and reconstruct them in a way that they are no longer viewed as incompatible to each other. The EU can provide the framework for the articulation and construction of new identities, which will subsequently facilitate the resolution of the conflict. In addition, the fourth pathway is contingent upon the societal acceptance of the desecuritization policy that the political actors pursue, which implies that the constructive impact was created with the view to affecting the society and not the state's policies.

Nonetheless, the authors argue that EU's influence on the transformation of a conflict is not always positive as outlined above. On the contrary, it can result in the intensification of the relations between the conflict parties, which would thus signify the negative transformation of the conflict.

3. The Cyprus Conflict

In this part it is discussed the impact of the EU on the Cyprus conflict during the period 2005-2010. The four pathways of EU involvement, as outlined by Diez, et al. will be employed to examine whether the EU had any influence on the two populations' policies towards the resolution of the conflict and if so, whether this influence resulted in the amelioration or the intensification of their relations.

3.1 Compulsory Impact

As Diez, et al. argue the compulsory impact was stronger in the pre-accession period for the Republic of Cyprus, whilst after 2004 it lost much of its attraction (2006, p.576). Indeed, throughout the examined period and especially until 2008, it is observed that the Greek-Cypriots used the EU as a leverage against both the Turkish-Cypriots and Turkey with the view to achieving a more satisfactory solution to the conflict than the one offered by the Annan Plan (Kyris, 2014, pp.11-12), while at the same time EU's role and ability to effectively address the conflict have been significantly decreased.

In particular, under the nationalist government of Tassos Papadopoulos (2003-2008), Cyprus by taking advantage of its position as an EU member attempted to advance its interests within the European context and to prevent decisions, which if adopted would have proved detrimental to its status. To start with, the rejection of the Direct Trade Regulation (DTR) (COM (2004) 466 final) which had already been proposed by the European Commission in 2004 is an indicative example of Papadopoulos' strategy. Although the proposal for the DTR was made in 2004 following the referenda on the two communities, it is worth mentioning it since it illustrates the limited impact of the EU on the Cyprus conflict after the latter's accession. The DTR aimed at "putting an end to the economic isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community as it facilitates trade between the northern part of Cyprus and the EU Customs Territory" and "facilitating the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community" (ibid., p. 2). On the grounds that the direct trade between the Turkish Cypriots and the EU would eventually lead to the recognition of the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Cyprus has been blocking the adoption and materialization of the proposal by exercising its veto power throughout the period 2005-2010 (Christou, 2010, p. 67; Diez & Tocci, 2010, pp. 180-182). In addition, the Turkish refusal to open its sea ports and airports to the Greek-Cypriot ships and airplanes respectively, as stipulated in the Ankara

Protocol, is a direct result of Papadopoulos' unwillingness to resume negotiations with the Turkish-Cypriots, which at that time they were stalled. As a response to the Turkish refusal the EU decided to 'freeze' the accession negotiations with Turkey in 8 out of 35 chapters on December 2006 (Anastasiou, 2009, p.141; Axt, 2009, pp.86-87).

The victory of the more moderate, communist party AKEL, whose leader Dimitris Christofias had always been a pro-solution advocate, created some optimism with respect to the improvement of the relations between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot community and the reunification of the island. In fact, Christofias proceeded to the opening of the symbolic Ledra Street crossing point on April 2008, just a few months after his election, and along with his Turkish-Cypriot counterpart Mehmet Ali Talat agreed on the resumption of the peace negotiations on 3 September 2008 (Christou, 2010, p. 71). Despite the conciliatory moves, the approach pursued by Christofias' government did not differ much from its predecessor as it was against any solution on the basis of the Annan Plan (Kovras & Loizides, 2012, p. 416).

These events not only illustrate that the newly-acquired power that Cyprus was enjoying as an EU member was used as a strategic tool against both the Turkish-Cypriots and Turkey – especially under Papadopoulos' government – but also confirm the theory of Diez, et al. about the compulsory impact which states that "If it (candidate country) does follow the EU carrot, this does not necessarily imply that it has altered its views of the other party or its beliefs about the conflict – the change may simply reflect strategic behavior" (2006, p. 572). Cyprus' adoption and implementation of the EU *acquis* in the pre-accession era was instrumental, meaning that only a weak internalization of European norms had occurred which in turn, could not provide the basis of an alteration of the perceptions of the other in the long-term; Papadopoulos' continuous blocking of EU decisions that related to the Turkish-Cypriots and Turkey as well as Christofias' reluctance to compromise under a new Annan-type solution indicate that the Republic was now using the European legal framework in order to advance its own interests, or as Stefanova argues "the Cyprus conflict represents a case of negative, or reverse, Europeanization by means of which member states pursue national interests through a regional framework" (2011, p.144). Within this context, the EU instead of promoting cooperation among the two communities, it unintentionally provoked more tension.

Regarding the EU's influence on the Turkish-Cypriots through the compulsory path, the legal status of the island after the Republic's accession deters us from evaluating this impact on the northern part of the country. Under the signing of the Treaty of Accession to the Union the Republic of Cyprus became a full member of the EU, whereas under protocol 10 of Cyprus' accession the EU *acquis* would be applied only to those areas which the Republic exercises effective control. The acquis would be extended in northern Cyprus as well, only when a comprehensive solution to the dispute will be reached (Yakinthou, 2009, p.316; Melacopides, 2009, p. 99).

3.2 Enabling Impact

The attempt by the political actors in both communities to link the EU to their political agendas and gain legitimization was quite often in the period 2005-2010, albeit it was not always used as a means of desecuritization; rather, it enhanced the already conflicting relations between the Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots.

As it has already been mentioned, both Greek-Cypriot governments that ruled in the period 2005-2010 rejected a solution on the basis of the Annan Plan and insisted on the implementation of a 'European solution'. The ultimate goal would be the establishment of a unitary and sovereign Cypriot state, in which the majority community would govern. The 'European solution' meant the compliance with the EU's laws and principles, and specifically with its four freedoms, namely the freedom of movement for goods, workers, services and capital. However, under the Annan Plan some of these freedoms would have been curtailed so as to satisfy the Turkish-Cypriots as well, who were trying to avoid the majority rule in the island. In fact, the Annan Plan proposed the establishment of a bi-zonal, bi-communal, federal state which would grant equal rights to both communities (Christou, 2010, p. 56; Richmond, 2006, p. 157; Diez & Tocci, 2010, p.182). It is evident that the European rhetoric was used by the Greek-Cypriot governments as a means to further consolidate conflictual views regarding the resolution of the conflict. The 'European solution' was another avenue through which the Greek-Cypriots were trying to advance their interests as well as to legitimize the divisive discourse that dominated the Cypriot society and thus, gain support. Therefore, the enabling impact acted adversely on this occasion.

On the Turkish-Cypriot side, the dynamics for the prevalence of the moderate political parties had already been set in the pre-2005 era when the EU carrot for membership was a strong incentive for the active engagement in conciliatory moves. Even after the Republic's accession, the positive climate with regards to the EU had not decreased significantly and the latter was still regarded as a significant actor in the Cyprus problem. Subsequently, the 2005 presidential elections in the northern part of Cyprus declared as winner the then Prime Minister and leader of the pro-EU political party CTP, Mehmet Ali Talat. The enabling impact of the EU was strong during the elections campaign, since the moderate parties had adopted a European discourse that promoted the resolution of the conflict on the basis of the Annan Plan (Kyris, 2012, pp. 474-478). Nevertheless, the enabling impact was gradually diminishing in the Turkish-Cypriot political scene, something which is attributable to the EU's incapability of ending the international isolation of northern Cyprus as the non-implementation of the DTR illustrates. Hardliner Dervis Eroglu, whose political party UBP won the 2009 parliamentary elections and was an opponent of the Annan Plan, became the Prime Minister of northern Cyprus (Axt, 2009, p. 84).

Finally, it is noteworthy to refer to the importance of the societal support in the enabling impact. As Diez, et al. maintain, the success of the enabling impact depends on whether the reference to the acquis – that legitimizes the desecuritizing moves – is perceived as legitimate by the majority of the society as well, and not only by the political elite (2006, p. 578). During Papadopoulos' presidency the moderate camp, including AKEL, had been silenced. The latter even though it had a long tradition in bi-communal activities, it followed the nationalist government's line until the 2008 elections and disengaged from any attempt for the resolution of the conflict. Amid a divisive climate in which 'yes' supporters were branded traitors (Kovras & Loizides, 2012, p.416) and extreme nationalism had permeated all aspects of Cyprus and most importantly the society, it is not surprising that AKEL decided to follow Papadopoulos' hard-line strategy given the limited societal reach that the former had.

3.3 Connective Impact

The connective path through the direct funding of civil society programmes and initiatives in the conflict parties aims at building bridges between them. The aim of this type of impact is to promote contact between the civil society actors which, if sustained, is likely to have a broader societal effect that it will eventually result in the alteration of perceptions of the other and resolution of the conflict (Diez, et al., 2006, p. 573). During the five-year period investigated, the EU has financed numerous projects for this purpose in both communities, albeit to a larger extent in northern Cyprus, but it has not affected significantly the course of the Cyprus conflict.

To begin with, the European Commission has been the most significant donor of the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP). This bi-communal project, whose ultimate goal is to facilitate the reconciliation of the two communities through the active involvement of both Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots in the Committee's procedures, has been the most successful initiative in terms of the increased contact between the two Cypriot parts (CMP, n.d.; Kovras & Loizides, 2012, p. 418). Despite the fact that the CMP reinitiated its activities in 2004, it is useful to mention it since its impact on the amelioration of the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots' relations was particularly evident during the five-year period 2005-2010. Another civil society organisation (CSO) where the EU provides financial assistance is the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR). In this CSO the EU has been directly involved by providing economic assistance for the materialization of AHDR's projects (AHDR, n.d.).

However, the most significant tool with which the EU exerts influence on the Turkish-Cypriots through the connective path is the Cypriot Civil Society in Action Programme. With the view to strengthening the voice of the civil society in northern Cyprus and promoting the reconciliation, dialogue and trust in both communities, the EU allocated €311 million in the period 2006-2011 for that

purpose. In addition, the Council of the European Union adopted the Financial Aid Regulation (FAR) in 2006 which provided €259 million to the Turkish-Cypriots and aimed at ending the international isolation of the Turkish-Cypriots; part of that money were destined for the support of the civil society. In order to distribute the financial aid designated in the FAR, the EU established the EU Programme Support Office (EUPSO) in Nicosia on October 2006 (Lidén, et al., 2016, p. 282; European Commission, n.d; Yakinthou, 2009, p. 317).

According to a research conducted by Gillespie, et al. in 2011 for the International Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) regarding the role of the civil society in Cyprus, the CSOs had managed to enhance the social cohesion of the two communities and to further develop their relationship with the international funding bodies such as the European Commission, which is of great importance considering the significant role the latter plays in the peace process and finally, to build bridges between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot community. One of the CSOs that succeeded in advancing the connection between the two communities was the AHDR, which facilitates the goal of sustained contact between the civil societies of the two communities through the connective impact.

Furthermore, with respect to the relation between the EU-funded CSOs and the EU it is interesting to note that the latter has influenced the work and nature of the civil society in Cyprus, but this influence has not always brought positive results. In particular, as Lidén, et al. argue, the EU has a narrow support approach, meaning that it only funds CSOs that are bi-communal in their nature – which is the solution that the EU promotes for the Cyprus conflict – while it rejects those that remain ethno-nationalistic. Whereas this narrow approach deters the spreading of the nationalist sentiments and attitudes, it has led the CSOs to adjust their agendas to their donor's agenda. Consequently, it is created a power imbalance where the CSOs' proposals might not be taken into account if there is no conformity with the EU's agenda. Most importantly, the fact that the CSOs are forced to adjust their activities has created a hostility and suspicion by the Cypriot society, which regards them as "externally driven", "not Cypriot" or "imposed by the Americans" (Lidén, et al., 2016, pp. 283-286). From this last sentence it can be derived that the connective impact has not been successful on this occasion, since the theory of Diez, et al. suggests that in order for the connective impact to be successful it has to be regarded by the recipient country as a "legitimate tool rather than as external interference into domestic affairs" (2006, p. 581).

Finally, the disproportionate funding of the Turkish-Cypriots' civil society activities as opposed to the Greek-Cypriot activities has led to the intensification of the relations between the two communities (Lidén, et al., 2016, p. 292), which further illustrates the inadequacy of the EU's connective impact.

3.4 Constructive Impact

The EU-induced alteration of identities towards a more tolerant and peace-enhancing type of identity that will eventually lead to the resolution of the conflict, as the constructive impact envisages, has not been achieved in neither part of Cyprus during the period 2005-2010.

To begin with, the education sector is an interesting field for the assessment of the constructive impact, since it depicts the perceptions of the other via the description of historical events and shapes the attitude of the young people towards other populations. The Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot schoolbooks instead of providing positive images of the other community that will result in the changing of mentality and finally in the reconstruction of identities, they perpetuate the division between 'us' and 'them'. In particular, the Greek-Cypriot schoolbooks while favouring the rule of Greeks on the island, they describe the rule of all the other populations – including the Turks – as oppressive. Thus, by implicitly denying their Cypriot descent, they suggest that the Turkish-Cypriots are inferior to the Greek-Cypriots and that they do not belong to the island. Likewise, the Turkish-Cypriot schoolbooks accentuate the brutality of the Greek-Cypriots, especially during the period 1963-1974, and argue that the history of Cyprus begun when the Ottomans arrived on the island (Gillespie, et al., 2011, pp. 5-6). Notwithstanding EU's attempt to change the Turkish-Cypriot history textbooks on 2004 by rewriting them and introducing the ideas of Euro-centricity, bi-communality and inter-communal coexistence (Yakinthou, 2009, p.319), it did not bring any tangible result. The Turkish-Cypriots were eager to implement the changes proposed by the EU due to the carrot of membership, but their attempts were obstructed by the Greek-Cypriot government (ibid., pp. 319-320).

Furthermore, it is useful to mention the Educational Reform launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) of Cyprus in 2003. Although the effects of the reform were not evident in the five-year period of 2005-2010, since the new curriculum would be incorporated in the schoolbooks in 2010, it is noteworthy to refer to the ambivalence that characterizes the Greek-Cypriots with respect to the educational reform. Initially, the aim of the reform was to eliminate the Hellenocentrist and Hellenocypriocentrist approach existing in the schoolbooks and replace it with a European and Cypriot identity with an emphasis on Cyprus' multiculturalism.[1] In the years 2008-2010

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[1] The main approaches that were prevalent in the Cypriot politics and society from 1960 onwards were the Hellenocentrist, Hellenocypriocentrist and Cypriocentrist approach. The former focuses on the Greekness of Cyprus and its people, while at the same time it is characterized by an exclusion of those who do not meet its ethnocultural criteria – namely the Turkish-Cypriots among others – such as the common religion and language. This approach was used as a means to legitimise the union with Greece (Enosis). The second one does not differ much from Hellenocentrism since it emphasizes the common culture, religion and race with Greece, but also highlights Cyprus' differences from the latter on political, socio-economical and territorial grounds. The most important thing to note here is that both approaches exclude the Turkish-Cypriots. Finally, Cypriocentrism aims

the MEC introduced an additional goal for the education reform, namely the development of peaceful relations between the two communities which will result in the reunification of the island. Indeed, MEC's goal was the "cultivation of a culture of peaceful co-existence, mutual respect and cooperation between Greek-Cypriots aiming at ending the occupation and reuniting our homeland and our people" (2009 cited in Philippou & Klerides, 2010, p.228). In order to achieve the aforementioned goal, the ministry sought to enhance the notions of democracy, tolerance and cooperation in the new curriculum, which are highly interrelated with the notions upon which the EU was built, as well as to highlight the European dimension in the Cypriot education. However, the proposal for the educational transformation did not come without a cost. The negative reactions were several, but they were mainly brought about due to the elimination of the Greekness from the national identity. Additionally, a disagreement was provoked between educators, parents and academics, among others, on whether the reform should follow the resolution of the conflict, or the reform should precede the resolution as a means of facilitating the latter (Philippou & Klerides, 2010, pp. 227-228; Hajisoteriou, 2011, p. 74).

All these indicate a willingness to Europeanize the sector of education; nonetheless, the rhetoric was stronger than the actual work done in this field. Because of the absence of EU coercive mechanisms that would prompt the officials of the MEC and the educators to comply with the EU values on the education sector and thus, implement the respective reforms, Cyprus had the chance to slow-down decision-making and implementation processes related to the Europeanization process. As Philippou argues, the only reforms through which the country has adjusted its policies to EU standards are the introduction of EU languages in school curricula and participation in EU teacher and student exchange programmes (2007 cited in Hajisoteriou, 2011, p.72/75-77) leaving in this way untouched the sensitive issue of identity. Subsequently, not only Cyprus perpetuates the divisive and nationalist character of the Cypriot schoolbooks, but also it becomes apparent the limited internalization of the European norms and values which is not restricted in the institutions' policies – on that case MEC's policies – but in the society as well, due to the continuous depiction of the other as enemy.

Finally, in northern Cyprus the attitude of the population towards the EU was relatively positive, albeit not to the extend it was in the pre-accession years. Owing to the inability of the EU to terminate the isolation of the Turkish-Cypriots and to promote their economic growth through the implementation of the DTR as well as the suspension of the eight chapters in Turkey's accession negotiations, a public discontent towards the EU was generated. Indeed, according to a survey conducted by the European Commission in 2007 regarding the perceptions of the Turkish-Cypriots towards the EU, the latter was viewed positively by 66% of the respondents in early 2007, whereas in autumn 2007 this percentage fell to 55%. In addition, other surveys conducted with respect to the EU's

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at elevating the Cypriot identity of both communities, based on their common traditions, customs and territory to name a few, whereas it recognizes the different religion, descent and language between them (Philippou & Klerides, 2010).

image in northern Cyprus indicate that the Turkish-Cypriots mistrust the EU, whilst only 29% of the population regards as positive the settlement of the dispute on the basis of the Annan plan (Axt, 2009, pp. 84-85). This description was done with the view to indicating whether the EU is considered an attractive option for the Turkish-Cypriots. It can be concluded that in northern Cyprus the positive image of the EU has been gradually diminishing and thus, the ability of the latter to induce any change on the identity level has been decreased as well.

4. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

In this part, by looking at the events that unfolded throughout the period 2005-2010, I examine to what degree the EU influenced the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the application of the four types of EU impact.

4.1 Compulsory Impact

As it has already been discussed, this avenue of intervention is stronger in the cases where the conflict parties will eventually become members of the Union and thus, the necessary incentives have been provided to them, whilst within the context of the association agreements it is quite limited. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a case in point, where the compulsory impact did not prevent the deterioration of the conflict parties' relations.

To begin with, neither Palestinians nor Israelis aspire to join the EU. Despite of its interest to join the EEC already from 1957 as a means of gaining international recognition and legitimacy as well as escaping from the isolation that the Arab states had imposed on it (Pardo, 2013, p. 902), Israel has not expressed such a desire during the period 2005-2010 – apart from some isolated incidents[2] – and neither was the EU willing to deepen its economic and political relations with Israel through a membership offer. Although a 2009 poll revealed that 69% of Israelis supported the option of joining the EU and only 18% opposed it, the general Israeli attitude towards the EU is ambivalent. Specifically, 34% of Israelis argued that the EU has not contributed to the progress of the peace process while 36% considered its role beneficial. Added to that, when Israelis were asked whether they would relocate to Europe and change their currency with the Euro in case Israel was acceded to the EU, 44% replied positively whereas 43% were against it (Jewish Virtual Library, n.d.). This tendency can be explained by the fact that, as Tocci notes, most Israelis even though they wish to join the EU they do not realize that the membership prospect requires some political reforms inter alia, which they

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[2] One example of a pro-EU politician is the then deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Avigdor Liberman, who in November 2010 stated his desire for Israel to join the EU due to the strong economic and cultural ties between them. In addition, Benjamin Netanyahu was another politician who was in favour of Israel's EU accession in the previous years (Pardo, 2016).

are unable or uninterested to undergo. Instead, they would prefer a loose economic and political relation, in which the EU grants them the benefits which the membership entails without using its conditionality. The Palestinian case, on the other hand, is a more explicit example in which the desire of EU membership has never been stated (Tocci, 2007, pp.115-116), although Palestinians were in favour of a more active EU political involvement in the conflict so as to overshadow US's pro-Israeli policies (Tocci, 2009, p. 391).

In the case of Israel, in spite of not being EU member or aspirant member, the Union could still influence it by using the conditionality included in the bilateral and multilateral agreements signed with the country. Within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU has strengthened its economic, social, cultural and political ties with Israel (Tocci, 2007, pp. 113-114). However, the unwillingness or inability of the Union to use its conditionality towards Israel has deterred it from influencing the conflict efficiently. Indeed, the EU has not imposed any sanctions against Israel and neither has suspended any agreement by invoking the 'human rights clause' included in the association agreements[3], despite the latter's human rights violations, democracy and international law violations. Instead, it has relied on a declaratory policy and political dialogue as a means of influencing Israel. As a result, conditionality loses its credibility and most importantly, EU's compulsory impact is unable to affect the Israeli policy (Tocci, 2007, pp.116-117). The only exception is the 2009 decision to suspend the upgrade process of the EU-Israeli relations within the context of the ENP which had already been proposed from June 2008. With a view to exerting pressure on Israel and following the 2009 war on Gaza, the EU linked the upgrade process with the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and specifically with the implementation of a two-state solution. Yet, the EU policy towards Israel did not change much after 2009, since it continued to avoid using its conditionality (Clingendael Institute & Truman Institute, 2009, p.36; Mueller, 2013, pp. 30-31).

To sum up, the compulsory impact operated less in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict because of the type of relationship between the parties and the EU as well the inefficient use of the tools that the EU has its disposal for exerting influence.

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[3] The 'human rights clause' consists of two articles, namely the 'essential elements' article and the 'non-execution' article. The first one refers to the "human rights and democratic principles as essential elements of the agreements", and the second one grants the EU the right to adopt "appropriate measures" in case there is a violation of human rights or democratic principles. In other words, through the 'non-execution' article the EU has the ability to suspend the agreement when the essential elements of an association agreement are violated (Tocci, 2007).

4.2 Enabling Impact

The overall EU impact on the transformation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be detected through the enabling path on the Palestinians. As Yacobi and Newman contend, the EU-Palestinian relationship is based on the provision of financial and technical assistance that aim at establishing a strong and secure Palestinian state with democratic institutions and a stable economy so as to ensure Israel that there is a credible partner in the peace process with whom it can collaborate and reach an agreement.[4] Hence, the EU intervenes in the conflict by providing economic aid to the Palestinians for the materialization of reforms, which will contribute to Israel's security by establishing a democratic and viable Palestinian neighbor. Most importantly, since the Palestinian Authority (PA) relies on this money for its daily existence as well, and the Hamas' government in the Gaza Strip depends on the EU's humanitarian assistance after the Israeli blockade in the area from 2007 and the Gaza war of 2008-2009, the Union manages to exert its enabling influence on the political level of both entities by threatening to withhold its aid (Yacobi & Newman, 2008, pp.188-190; Tocci, 2009, p. 391).

During 2005-2010, the EU has provided substantial amounts of money to the Palestinians. In particular, from 2000 to 2009 the European Commission has provided €3.4 billion (Clingendael Institute & Truman Institute, 2009, pp. 44-45), while specifically for the years 2005-2007 the EU disbursed approximately €1 billion mainly for humanitarian reasons and to support the deteriorating Palestinian economy following Israel's decision to withhold PA tax revenues and the former's assault on the Gaza Strip on July 2006 (Tocci, 2007, pp.120-121; Altunişik, 2008, p.114). Additionally, the most important economic tool for the materialization of reforms is the PEGASE mechanism which was launched on 2008 and aims at supporting the PA in the implementation of the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP)[5] (European Commission, n.d.).

Furthermore, the EU has been actively engaged in the state-building process of Palestine via the establishment of the European Union Police Coordination Office for Palestinian Police Support (EUPOL COPPS) and the European Union Border Assistance Mission in Rafah (EUBAM Rafah) as well as the launch of the 'Seyada' programme. EUPOL COPPS was established within the broader context of the security sector reform on January 2006 with the purpose of enhancing the capabilities of

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[4] Israel has frequently referred to the fact that there is no Palestinian "partner for peace" due to the latter's weak political, economic and security structures. According to its political leaders, this gives Israel the right to proceed to unilateral actions, such as the 2005 unilateral disengagement from Gaza (Tocci, 2005 & 2007).

[5] The PRDP is an initiative by the PA which designated the budgetary priority areas of the government for the years 2008-2010, namely the sectors of governance, social affairs, economic and private sector development and infrastructure. The PEGASE mechanism along with providing financial aid directly to the PA for its budget deficit, it channels assistance from the EU member states for the support of the reforms as outlined in the PRDP (European Commission, 2008).

the Palestinian Civil Police in maintaining the public order. EUBAM Rafah was another EU civilian mission which was operational from November 2005 until June 2007, when it was suspended following Hamas' takeover of Gaza. The EU's role in this initiative was to monitor the Rafah border crossing point along with Israel and Egypt. It is important to note here that through this role the EU managed to become a more active player in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since it was the first time Israel viewed positively its actual presence on the field and allowed for its participation. Finally, the 'Seyada' programme was part of the judiciary sector reform and consisted of two phases, which lasted from 2006 to 2012. The aforementioned initiatives have been relatively successful and contributed to the improvement of the security and judiciary sector of the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) and subsequently to the enhancement of Israel's security. Most importantly, Israelis recognized the beneficial contribution of the EU in the field (Bouris, 2012). Therefore, the enabling impact managed to positively transform the conflict by improving the Israeli-Palestinian relationship via the active EU engagement in the state-building process. Also, the latter acquired a more proactive role where its image as an objective, conflict-diminishing actor in the conflict was emphasized, and consequently its credibility in the eyes of Israelis was enhanced. Yet, it was unable to prevent the eruption of violence between the parties in 2006 and on December 2008 - January 2009.

4.3 Connective Impact

The EU exerts its connective influence through the support of Palestinian and Israeli NGOs that aim to create a peace-enhancing environment in both societies. Nonetheless, EU-funded NGOs in Israel are not considered to be legitimate and trustworthy agents who are capable of fostering peace among the two populations. In addition, cross-border projects could not be successfully materialized throughout the period 2005-2010 due to practical difficulties.

One of the EU's instruments for building bridges among the two societies and facilitating the peace process is the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme within the ENP framework, which has now been replaced by the European Peacebuilding Initiative. From its inception in 2004, the PfP programme has been efficient in promoting cross-border collaboration on various sectors, such as in health, environment and economy to name a few. Furthermore, there is the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), whose purpose is to provide support for civil society initiatives aiming at strengthening the rule of law, democracy and human rights (European Commission, n.d.; EU Neighbourhood Info Centre, n.d.).

However, as it has already been mentioned, EU-funded NGOs are not widely accepted by the Israeli public. On the grounds that they promote their own interests, ignore the Israeli security concerns and adopt the Palestinian narrative in the conflict, the opponents of those NGOs contend that they are harmful for their country. Through the money they are granted by the European institutions

and governments, NGOs have the power to distort the truth and present a misleading image of Israel internationally through their publication of reports that falsely accuse the latter of human rights violations. This in turn, affects Israel adversely in various levels, such as in the diplomatic level where its position in the international organizations and its relations with other states are jeopardized. Even worse, so the argument goes, they decrease the prospects of conflict resolution by provoking tensions and inciting violence between the two societies (Steinberg, 2011 & 2013).

It is evident that the connective impact is rendered ineffective in such a context. At this point it would be useful to refer to the factors that have contributed to the creation of a hostile environment for the EU-funded NGOs. The Israeli collective memory entails feelings of perpetual victimhood, isolation and persecution which have been created from common historical experiences with the most prominent of them being the Masada Syndrome[6] and the Holocaust. This collective memory has been politicized and employed by political agents in order to promote and legitimise their interests. Indeed, as Harpaz and Jacobsen note "the fusion of the perception of a hostile world with the powerful assertion of 'Never Again' (will there be a Masada/Holocaust) has created a strong political narrative of constant threat and the need for strength and self-reliance" (2016, p.9). Consequently, it is not surprising that Israeli leaders consider of the utmost importance the enhancement of the country's security to counter the hostile states surrounding it, and the role of the Israeli army for the accomplishment of this goal. Within this context, the EU-funded NGOs that accuse the Israeli army of human rights violations do not take into account Israeli security concerns. On the contrary, they are detrimental to Israel's security and sovereignty, and hinder its right and ability to defend itself. As a result, EU's interference in the country's domestic politics provokes the Israeli resentment (ibid, pp. 5-11).

The cross-border collaboration, moreover, is facing some practical difficulties, deriving from the ongoing violence and the overall securitizing relationship between the parties. For instance, the unencumbered movement of Israelis and Palestinians is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of joint programmes. However, the restrictions on movement imposed on both of them impede the coordination of those programmes. Added to that, the suspension of the international financial aid – including EU's aid – to the PA along with the deterioration of the Israeli-Palestinian

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[6] Masada Syndrome refers to the Jewish rebellion on Masada Mountain, which is located in the Judean desert. In 66 AD Jews revolted against the Romans, who at that time were ruling Palestine, and used as their fortress the Masada Mountain. They lived in the Mountain for six years and when in 73 AD the Romans conquered the mountain they found out that the Jews had committed suicide and burnt the fortress. This historical event has been dominant on the formation of the Israeli collective mentality and is used to indicate the perpetual victimhood and isolation of the Israelis throughout the years. The siege mentality is the most proper way to describe the Israeli mentality whose meaning can be best summarized in the phrase 'the whole world is against us' (Harpaz & Jacobsen, 2016).

relationship following Hamas victory on the 2006 elections led to the temporary halt of the cross-border activities (Coskun, 2008, p. 407). Even though the aforementioned difficulties are exogenous factors to the EU's connective policy, they nevertheless contributed to isolating the two populations by minimizing their contacts and thus, making their reconciliation doubtful.

4.4   Constructive Impact

Throughout the period 2005-2010 the EU's constructive impact has been weak. Although there were instances where the EU constituted a positive reference point from which the reconstruction of identities could have initiated, it did not manage to influence the transformation of the conflict. This is due to the type of relationship between the parties and the EU, which has not advanced to a membership status and thus, the internalization of the EU norms has not occurred. Additionally, the view that the EU is anti-Semitic and the ensuing Israeli mistrust towards it work counterproductively for the constructive influence.

EU's contribution to the Israeli-Lebanon war of 2006, where France along with the US helped in the signing of a final cease-fire among the parties and the EU member states deployed a substantial number of troops to the UNIFIL peacekeeping operation, as well as the positive Israeli reception of the EU initiatives for the state-building process of Palestine could be a motive for the initiation of a constructive relationship between Israel and the EU, which would not be restricted in the areas of culture, technology and trade but it would expand in the sectors of politics and security. Furthermore, the Union's pledge to fight military arms trafficking and smuggling to Gaza is another instance of positive EU interference (Harpaz, 2011, pp.1877-1878). Finally, the increasing number of Israelis that have applied for an EU passport after the 2004 enlargement and the non-negligible number of 320,000 Israelis that already had an EU passport in 2012 (Del Sarto, 2014, pp. 204-205) points to the fact that the constructive influence could had been strong among the Israeli people.

However, these events were not adequate for changing the overall negative perceptions of the EU in Israel, which as Harpaz notes derive from the EU's legitimacy deficit (2007). The Union's involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is regarded by the Israelis as biased and favourable to the Palestinian interests as illustrated by the EU policies throughout the years, such as the Venice Declaration of 1980 which constitutes the basis of the EU's position in the conflict. On the one hand the declaration accepted Israel's "right to existence and security" and on the other hand recognized "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people". It also stated EU's desire for the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to be included in the peace settlement and declared the illegality under the international law of the Israeli settlements, among others (Altunişik, 2008, p. 106). Added to that, the European attitude towards Israel after 2001, when NGOs released reports that accused Israel of human rights violations, is indicative of the prejudiced EU policy as Israelis argue. Indeed, soon after 2001

there was a campaign of boycotts, divestments and sanctions against Israel in which some EU countries participated (Steinberg, 2011.pp. 35-38). The European belief, moreover, that it can resolve the conflict by using its soft power is unrealistic and naïve as many Israelis suggest. Last but not least, the memory of the Holocaust is another factor that enhances the Israeli mistrust against the EU. These are some of the reasons that the EU lacks the capability of becoming a legitimate actor in the conflict (Harpaz, 2007, pp. 98-106).

5. Conclusions

This thesis examined the role of international organisations in a conflict and under what conditions their involvement can be positive and result in the resolution of the conflict. In particular, it was used the four pathways model of EU influence by Diez, et al. in the cases of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Cyprus dispute. As it was mentioned in the first part, five years is a short period of time to examine thoroughly EU's impact; yet, even under these circumstances it is concluded that in both cases the intentions of the parties to move towards the resolution of their conflict was limited, which in turn, renders the EU incapable of bringing about the resolution of the conflicts. Apart from some successful instances of EU interference, its overall picture as a peace promoter is doubtful.

With respect to whether integration can lead to a stronger EU effect on a conflict, the Cyprus case illustrates that the Union was unable to exert influence on the parties' policies and put pressure on them so as to adopt a more conciliatory attitude. Thus, a country's accession to the EU does not automatically result in the resolution of the conflict through the adoption of the European normative and legal framework. It is true that through a long-term process of socialization the establishment of a peaceful relationship can occur. However, the initial findings on this topic are not encouraging. Concerning the association as a means of transforming a conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian case shows that EU's influence is very limited. This loose type of relationship between the parties and the EU, make the latter unable to resolve the protracted conflict. The benefits provided within the context of the association agreements are not enough – in comparison with the benefits entailed in the membership offer – to persuade the conflict parties to engage in desecuritizing moves.

The Cyprus case is a distinct example of a de facto divided country within the European borders. The Greek-Cypriots, who are fully integrated with the EU, used the latter as an avenue for reinforcing their differences with the Turkish-Cypriots. Therefore and in accordance with Diez, et al. when only one party of the conflict is an EU member it has the chance to advance its interests at the expense of the other party and further emphasize the divisions between 'us' and 'them' within the European framework. Another factor of negative impact is the perception that the EU is supportive of one party and prejudiced against the other. Israeli mistrust towards the EU derives from this perception.

As far as the occasions of positive EU impact are concerned, it is concluded that it is contingent upon the value the conflict parties attribute to their relation with the Union. For instance, given the dependence on EU's financial aid, Palestinians are more likely to follow a non-provocative policy as opposed to Israelis. This, however, does not mean that Israelis do not value their ever expanding relationship with the Europeans, but due to their already advanced economy and strong institutions they are able to 'resist' EU's interference in their domestic politics. In addition, it is important that the EU takes into account the concerns and views of the conflict parties' societies when it comes for the implementation of joint projects, rather than coercing them to adjust to its own policies. Not only will the materialization of those projects will be smoother, but also EU's activities will no longer be viewed as foreign by the societies. Last but not least, the adoption and internalization of the European democratic norms is a prerequisite for a successful EU influence, not only for the constructive impact, but also for its overall influence on a conflict.

Finally, it is important to note that the absence of coercive mechanisms for the implementation of reforms and the inability or unwillingness to impose sanctions where needed, gives the opportunity to the respective conflict party to continue its divisive policy and defy EU's laws. In turn, the Union cannot have any impact on the conflict at all.

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