

Thesis Proposal

Maya Hadar

The Europeanization of Germany's Foreign Policy toward the Israeli– Palestinian Conflict

Research question:

How did four decades (1970-2010) of European foreign policymaking towards the Israeli Palestinian conflict impact on Germany's national foreign policy?

Background:

There are few policy areas where the interaction of German national foreign policy with collective European foreign policy has been as profound and longstanding as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Israeli–Palestinian conflict has been among the first international issues addressed collectively by the Europeans in the framework of the European Political Cooperation, the forerunner of today's Common Foreign and Security Policy, established in 1970. Even though research has pointed to many insufficiencies in terms of effectiveness and outcomes of the EU's common policy towards the Israeli – Palestinian conflict (Allen & Pijpers, 1984; Aoun, 2003; Tocci, 2009), several scholars have also highlighted the important 'internal dimension' of Europe's common foreign policy (Greilsammer & Weiler, 1984: 133; Dosenrode & Stubkjaer, 2002). It was claimed that foreign policy cooperation at the European level encourages greater convergence of the substance and practices of the member states' national foreign policies (Musu, 2003).

As a founding member state and one of the largest EU countries, Germany's sustained involvement in Europe's common conflict resolution policy raises important questions about the interplay between national and European foreign policy.

Using the Europeanization concept as framework of analysis, the thesis will examine continuity and change in Germany's national foreign policy in the context of Europe's collective policy toward the Israeli – Palestinian conflict.

Methodology:

*“Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted”
(Albert Einstein)*

The thesis will examine important foreign policy developments over a considerable time period. I will examine my research question through the lenses of the international relations framework level of analysis. I will use the qualitative research method and conduct Case studies of time periods via current literature.

The case-study tradition has been popular among scholars because it allows different research approaches, such as experiment, survey, and content analysis, to do in-depth and longitudinal investigation into specific cases (Baxter & Babbie, 2004, p. 304). Triangulation of the findings from different research approaches is made possible so that readers are provided a systematic way of looking at the cases to find out “What’s going on here” in each case’s real-life context (Wimmer & Dominick; 2005, p. 129).

In a study that involves multiple cases, general questions are developed for observing all the cases, and then questions specific to each case are developed to address the uniqueness (Baxter & Babbie, 2004, p. 304-305). The researcher “typically presents a detailed description of each case separately (known as the within-case analysis), followed by a thematic analysis across cases (known as the cross-case analysis)” (Baxter & Babbie, 2004, p. 304). A case study does not aim to find a pattern. Therefore, it usually involves fewer than 10 cases to avoid redundancy and to reduce cost (Yin, 2008, p. 51-53).

In the thesis I will examine the variations in Germany's national Foreign Policy toward the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict during 4 decades, as a consequence of European foreign policymaking towards the conflict at hand.

References

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