



## The troubled relationship between Israel and the European Union: an empirical explanation

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A peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli Conflict has eluded the international system for sixty-seven years. As time passes, insoluble physical and political conditions in the region risk the achievement of a lasting peace. Standing in the way is the European Union's (EU) tempestuous relationship with Israel. In order to forge a peaceful settlement of the conflict an understanding of EU foreign policy toward Israel is necessary. This thesis seeks to explain the permissive cause of EU foreign policy toward Israel using the case study of the Arab-Israeli Conflict between 1973 and 2010. In the context of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, three widely held international relations theories that demonstrate explanatory power for EU foreign policy are realism, constructivism, and liberalism. The case study illustrates, however, that in conformance with the principles of liberal internationalism EU foreign policy with respect to Israel is framed around the tenets of democracy, interdependent economic systems, and the employment of international institutions, which explains the volatile nature of the bi-lateral relationship. While the EU engages Israel with the breadth of its institutions and pursues an enduring economic relationship, Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, perceived human rights violations, and settlement activity violate European democratic truths and strain the relationship.

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