



BEN- GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV  
FACULTY OF HUMINITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

*The Construction of Local International Normative Powers:  
The EU, the European Higher Education Area, and the Case of the European  
Students' Union*

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY: NETANEL (NATI) GOVHARI

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF: PROF. SHARON PARDO

MARCH 2017



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MARCH 2017

*“The transmission of the European miracle to the rest of the world has become  
Europe’s new mission civilisatrice”*

*Robert Kagan, 2004*

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## *Acknowledgement*

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the department of Politics and Government at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev for providing me with both the will to absorb knowledge and the financial support that enabled me with conducting my master research. A special gratitude is dedicated to Anat Segal, for making the halls of the department feel like home and for assisting as much as she could with bureaucracies and obstacles that I have encountered.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Center for the Study of European Politics and Society (CSEPS) at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, for giving me the opportunity to expand my horizons, develop my personal skills and enrich myself and my research. Every person I encountered in the halls of CSEPS have become a friend and have had a major impact on me. I truly feel that I will be leaving the center a much better person.

My special gratitude is given to the Bologna Training Center (BTC) team members- Hannah Moscovitz, Hila Zahavi, Yoav Friedman and its director Moshe Amir for providing me with a true privilege to live and experience my own research. I deeply appreciate your continuing strive for the enhancement of the students' experience. For me, you all have truly embodied a genuine student centered learning approach.

My deepest gratitude is given to my true partner for life, Sabina Gendler, for her uncompromising support, and for doing everything in her power so that I could sit and learn.

Most importantly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Prof. Sharon Pardo for much inspiration that he has given me, and more importantly for teaching me in example a very old yet important Jewish lesson- that good manners preceded the Torah.

## *Abstract*

*This paper seeks to grant new empirical and theoretical insights to the Normative Power Approach (NPA). First, with addressing normative power as Pouvoir Normatif, a clearer demarcation between military, civilian and normative powers is introduced. Second, the research aims at better establishing the role of civil society in NPA and the foreign relations of the EU. The research outline a theoretical model which starts with the Europeanization processes of civil society organizations, their establishment of a socialization platform that better enables the travel of norms, and their ability to exert ideational diffusion (and hence, contribute to the EU's normative impact potential).*

*Empirically, this research focuses on the realm of higher education and the European Students' Union (ESU) as a case study. It traces the historical evolution of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), its external dimension, and the place of the state of Israel in the process. The research then traces the historical evolution of the ESU- its Europeanization process, its external dimension and its evolution as an international socialization platform. A deepening of the case study is introduced by tracing the relationship of ESU with a member student union, the National Union of Israeli Students (NUIS). An empirical examination based on in-depth interviews and documentary analysis is then applied to measure ideational diffusion that is based on socialization processes.*

*The research finds that Europeanization processes have had profound impact on the ESU. The organization became EU centered, and have also developed mechanisms for socialization, enabling it to serve as a norm entrepreneur and as part of the EHEA external dimension. The organization was able to inflict some impact on the Israeli organization, mainly through exchange of information and 'social pressure' to engage with Bologna issues. In spite of this, local norm entrepreneurs and the constellation of the TEMPUP apparatus, have had much more impact on the Israeli organization and have led to traceable ideational diffusion.*

*With the 'mediated' workings of civil society organizations, and local entrepreneurs, the EU is able to inflict ideational diffusion on future elites and exert changes in conceptions that takes root on the local level, but could be uploaded to the national level, such as in the case outlined in this paper.*

## *List of tables & figures*

### **Tables**

Table 1.      Types of power and forms of diffusion

### **Diagrams**

Diagram 1.    The ‘NPE Chain’

## *Abbreviation*

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| EU     | European Union   |
| US     | United States  |
| EFTA   | European Free Trade Association  |
| IR     | International Relations  |
| EC     | European Commission  |
| NPE    | Normative Power Europe   |
| NGOs   | Non-Governmental Organizations   |
| INGOs  | International Non-Governmental Organizations   |
| IGO's  | Inter-Governmental Organizations   |
| UN     | United Nations   |
| CSOs   | Civil Society Organizations  |
| NATO   | North Atlantic Treaty Organization   |
| EHEA   | European Higher Education Area   |
| ESU    | European Students' Union   |
| WESIB  | West European Students' Information Bureau   |
| ESIB   | European Students' Information Bureau  |
| BM     | Board Meeting  |
| ESC    | European Student Convention  |
| NUIS   | National Union of Israeli Students   |
| ECF    | European Cultural Foundation   |
| IUA    | International University Association   |
| CRE    | Conference of European Rectors, Presidents and Vice-Chancellors of European Universities |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization                         |
| ECSC   | European Coal and Steel Community  |
| CoE    | Council of Europe  |
| EEC    | European Economic Community  |
| DG     | Directorate General  |
| EP     | European Parliament  |



|         |   |
|---------|---|
| OSCE    | Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe                       |
| ERASMUS | European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students     |
| ECJ     | European Court of Justice   |
| CIA     | Central Intelligence Agency   |
| EYC     | European Youth Campaign   |
| CENYC   | Council of European National Youth Committees                             |
| WAY     | World Assembly of Youth   |
| YFEC    | Youth Forum of the European Communities                                   |
| EYF     | European Youth Forum  |
| ECB     | European Coordination Bureau of International Youth Organizations         |
| AEGEE   | Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe                  |
| EYF     | European Youth Forum  |
| ESN     | ERASMUS Student Network   |
| IUS     | International Union of Students   |
| NUS     | National Union of Students  |
| EM      | European Meeting  |
| OECD    | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development                    |
| AIESEC  | International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences |
| DG EAC  | Directorate General for Education and Culture                             |
| TEMPUS  | Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies                  |
| BP      | Bologna Process   |
| HE      | Higher Education  |
| ERA     | European Research Area  |
| BFUG    | Bologna Follow-Up Group   |
| QA      | Quality Assurance   |
| ENQA    | European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education            |
| ESG     | The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance               |
| EQAR    | European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education                  |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| EUA        | European University Association  |
| EURASHE    | European Association of Institutions in Higher Education                                       |
| HE         | Higher Education   |
| EI         | Education International  |
| EESC       | European Economic and Social Committee   |
| OBESSU     | Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions  |
| HEIs       | Higher Education Institutions  |
| SCL        | Student Centered Learning  |
| BWSE       | Bologna with Students' Eyes  |
| EACEA      | Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency  |
| ECTS       | European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System   |
| NQF        | National Qualification Frameworks  |
| LO         | Learning Outcomes  |
| ENIC-NARIC | European Network of Information Centers & the National Academic Recognition Information Centre |
| ARWU       | Academic Ranking of World Universities   |
| FPs        | European Framework Programs  |
| ENP        | European Neighbourhood Policy  |
| NTO        | National TEMPUS Office   |
| NEO        | National ERASMUS+ Office   |
| CHE        | Council for Higher Education   |
| BGU        | Ben-Gurion University of the Negev   |
| BTC        | Bologna Training Center  |
| SUDC       | Student Union Development Committee  |
| MEP        | Member of European Parliament  |
| ICWG       | International Cooperation Working Group  |
| WCHE       | World Conference on Higher Education   |

## ***Part one – Conceptualization***

### ***Introduction***

The world of international relations and the introduction of EU studies to it, entails, as in any research field, different ontologies and approaches. Heated discussions between the different schools of IR, like the realistic approach, the liberal approach, and the constructivist approach, have always taken part in the academic landscape and constituted a continuing debate on the nature of power and behavior of different players in the international arena. Realism, the prevalent approach throughout most of the cold war era, has mostly conceived power in material terms of coercive abilities of players to enforce their will in the international arena (Campbell & O'hanlon 2006). The 70s and the 80s have seen the entrance of new ways of thinking that have tried to widen the discussion and deal not only with the traditional material-physical-coercive ability of states. They have led the introduction of new ways of conceiving power in IR, and have sought to understand better the nature and abilities of new emerging players in the international arena, like that of the European Union (EU). The main approach that has sought to understand power in regard to the 'strange' new polity of the EU was that of Civilian power, introduced by François Duchêne. This approach was based on a liberal worldview and on the premise of a changing international arena that is based on growing inter-dependence, in which the European Community<sup>1</sup> works without a standing military power, but with a great economic power that is based on diplomatic cooperation and trust in supra-national institutions for world development (Duchêne 1972). Commonly to avant-garde notions, this concept encountered criticism from realist approaches, mainly embodied in Hedley Bull, of the English School of IR, maintaining that the European community is not an actor in the international arena and would not be able to become a meaningful actor without the construction of a military force and without further political and strategic integration (Bull 1982). It is this debate between Duchêne and Bull, together with the far-reaching transformations in the international arena<sup>2</sup> that served as the starting point of Ian Manners' argumentation on depicting the EU as a different type of actor and introducing the concept of normative power Europe (NPE). Understanding the EU as a new breed in international relations,

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<sup>1</sup> Future to become the European Union.

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the end of the cold war and the fall of the Soviet bloc.

Manners has highlighted the unique historical context of its coming to life,<sup>3</sup> the hybridity of its political formation,<sup>4</sup> and the judicial nature of its existence,<sup>5</sup> as having a great impact on the inception of its international identity which brought it to be based on a set of normative principles.<sup>6</sup> This different, *post-Westphalian* normative basis then stands in the core of the EU's behavior and foreign exchange with the rest of the world (Manners 2002: 240-242; Manners & Whitman 2003: 389). This according to Manners, was what made the difference between the EU and other players in the international arena, and what brought the EU to actively promote those norms in international relations. As Manners stated:

*'The concept of normative power is an attempt to suggest that not only is the EU constructed on a normative basis, but importantly that this predisposes it to act in a normative way in international relations. Thus my presentation of the EU as a normative power has both a positivist quantity to it – that the EU acts to extend its norms into the international system, and a normative quality to it – that the EU should act to extend its norms into the international system'* (Manners 2002: 31).

In his seminal work, Manners has also introduced the agents in the promotion and diffusion processes of its norms,<sup>7</sup> and introduced the mechanisms through which norms diffuse to other players in the international arena. These include Contagion diffusion, Informational diffusion, Procedural diffusion, Transference diffusion, overt diffusion and the workings of the Cultural Filter (Manners 2002: 244; Manners 2013: 315-318). The test of normative power, Manners concluded, is in its impact through ideas and notions and not through the traditional economic and military means, and it lies in the ability to change and shape how others conceive the 'normal' in the international sphere (Diez 2005: 615). The different identity of the Union, the norms it promotes, and its different policy, are all part of this potential to change perceptions of the normal in the international arena (Manners & Whitman 2003: 390).

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<sup>3</sup> The legacy of two world wars and the European shared misery (Birchfield 2013: 910).

<sup>4</sup> Being a *Post-Westphalian* entity that leans on supra-national and international organizations (Birchfield 2013: 910).

<sup>5</sup> A political integration process which is based on agreements and treaties (Birchfield 2013: 910).

<sup>6</sup> The most profound of which are the centrality of peace, liberty, democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, social progress, combating discrimination, good governance and sustainable development (Manners 2002).

<sup>7</sup> These includes all of the EU institutions such as the European Parliament, the European Commission, the CoE, and the member states themselves (Manners 2002: 251).

This new approach by Manners had an enormous impact on the fields of IR and EU studies and has presented the EU as a new breed of international player, a *Sui Generis*, with some scholars relating this nature to the EU's institutional formation and some to the different manner in which the EU sees the world.<sup>8</sup> But this understanding of the EU has also sparked a vivid debate, and much criticism, over the uniqueness of the EU's international identity and actorness. Karen Smith has explored the trade relations of the EU with developing countries as a mean of exposing its normative inconsistency and has concluded that the European normative discourse is nothing but a means of accomplishing economic and strategic interests (Smith 2001: 196-198). Sharon Pardo and Neve Gordon have explored the normative stance of the EU and its objection to Israeli policies in regard to the Palestinian issue, in front of the blooming commercial and economic relations between the EU and Israel, and have concluded that the so-called normative agenda of the EU and its economic activity are conducted in parallel worlds (what they have termed the *normative-economic split*). They have reached the conclusion that the normative discourse of the EU enables it to externalize unity but it exists only in parallel and without interfering the quest for material interests (Gordon & Pardo 2015b: 109).<sup>9</sup> The rise of the European security and defense policy (ESDP/CSDP) during the 2000's has also helped the critical realist approach in reviving Hedley Bull's argumentation that the different behavior of the EU is due to its lack of Military power, and that it will have to construct the military abilities in order to become a true player in international relations. This realist critique has highlighted the gap between the discourse and declarations of the EU and how it actually acts, to prove that the supra-national body in its whole serves as a tool in the hands of the nation states comprising it, to impact their international environment by eventually combining Normative and soft power measures, with a hard one (Hyde-Price 2006). In continuation, further research has found that- the EU approach towards Russia is affected by issues of energy security and creates an inconsistency with how the EU approaches other, smaller central and eastern European states (Zimmermann 2007); that its 'humanitarian' interventions in Africa depends on the geostrategic interests of its member states (Gegout 2009); and that in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU supports authoritarian rulers in the Arab world

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<sup>8</sup> Whitman 1998; Smith 2002; Lavenex 2004; Tocci 2007; Leonard 2005; Cooper 2000; Kagan 2004.

<sup>9</sup> See also Pace, M. (2009). Paradoxes and contradictions in EU democracy promotion in the Mediterranean: the limits of EU normative power. *Democratization*, 16(1), 39-58.

for the sake of holding back migration across the Mediterranean or safeguarding oil supplies (Hollis 2012; Pace 2007; Diez 2013: 197).

This debate has remained the bone of contention between the traditionalist understandings of the EU as an entity that sees the world through the same lenses that nation states do, as a *Hobsian* international arena, and therefore strives for acquisition of material interests, or a new *Post-Westphalian* entity for which the world is a *Kantian* society where the EU strives for the promotion of normative values, so to make the world society a better place.

In an attempt to understand this contradiction, scholars of constructivism, underlining the changing and evolving nature of players and the international arena itself, have tried to fill this gap by illuminating the importance of the social process and identity construction in political entities. This could shed more light on the inner process of the EU and might explain the gap between what the EU presents as its aims in the international arena and its actual behavior, for as mentioned before, the EU might '*play the same game*', but in a different manner and for totally different reasons than other players (Haukkala 2011: 50). This was exactly the understanding of Thomas Diez and Michelle Pace who claimed that this NPE discourse has contributed to European identity construction and brought the EU to percept itself as a 'force for peace' and therefore actively engage in worldwide conflict resolutions (Diez & Pace 2011). This constructivist understanding of NPE maintains that we need to examine the notion of NPE as a political constructive tool that might change reality and identity. With this approach, the alleged constitutive normative principles of the EU are in terms of an ideal type that the EU strives to reach eventually, but not easy to live by in the real world. Nevertheless, this normative gap does not contradict the EU's normative essence as an international actor (Diez 2005).

*... 'the most interesting question about normative power, therefore, is not whether Europe is a normative power or not but how it is constructed as one...' (Diez 2005: 626).*

This construction (and not only how the EU acts in the world stage) is what raised the interest for approaching the field of NPE in this research. To some extent, the ontological debate on whether the EU really promotes normative principles or strives for material rationalist interests would probably endure as it has endured to this day,

after a decade abundant of very smart people trying to solve the riddle. But if we try to refocus our perspective to inner processes, and not only to the workings of the official makeup of the EU,<sup>10</sup> we might be able to answer some of the ‘...*questions that, while most difficult to answer, are very much worth raising*’ (Orbie 2011: 161), or one very interesting question about Normative power, recently raised by Edward Keene- ‘*why do some...have more of it than others?*’ (Keene 2013: 942).

Engaging with the inner process of the EU and seeking to utilize it for answering NPE questions, forces us to broaden our perspective and our interest and to look, as mentioned above, not only on the official makeup of the EU but also to the inner forces that might be shaped by it (as a ‘top-down’ process) and of course, that might be shaping it in return (as a ‘bottom-up’ process).

*‘Normative Power is also propelled from below, at the level of European citizenry and members of the European Parliament (MEPs), and is no longer the sole prerogative of the Council, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR), the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS)’* (Gordon & Pardo 2014)

In other words, we need to take a look at the *Power of the Local* - at the role of civil society in this process. And indeed, this endeavor is considered to be scarce in the body of literature on NPE (Diez 2013: 204) and that is in contrast to the wide understanding in IR of the role that international and civil society organizations have acquired in world politics.

Kim D. Reimann has mapped the ‘explosive growth’ of nongovernmental (NGOs) and international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), in quantity, in influence, and in activeness, since the end of the cold war and especially by the western international society. She has shown that NGOs have obtained a profound role in the implementation of policies of different states and state-like polities, like that of the EU, for instance, that ‘dramatically increased’ its support of NGOs during the post-cold war decades (Reimann 2006). One very important contribution of Reimann’s work was also in understanding the reasons for this trend, whereby apart from the ‘bottom-up’ reasons

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<sup>10</sup> Referring to what officially, in IR terms, belongs to the EU.

that were prevalent in the research field,<sup>11</sup> she has brought to light some of the ‘top-down’ reasons for this development. In this process, states and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), mainly from the west, have become patrons of NGOs and INGOs and have stimulated their growth worldwide by offering them mainly two types of international opportunities crucial for their evolution. The first being *funding opportunities*, meaning ‘resources in the form of grants, contracts, and other kinds of institutional support...’ (Reimann 2006: 48) and the second being *political access* to decision-making bodies and agenda-setting arenas. That way, western democratic states and entities (the UN and EU in particular) have become sponsors of worldwide NGOs and have also become the promoters of a pro-NGO norm in the international arena (Ibid: 58).

This process of the growing role of NGOs in the policies of states\state-like organizations, and the manner in which the EU, in particular, spearheads this trend could be better understood by engaging with the body of literature on *Europeanization*. In Rosa Sanchez Salgado’s recent publication on the Europeanization of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the EU, this particular process has been explored. In her book, Sanchez Salgado has shown exactly how the top-down process, depicted in Reimann’s work, is relevant to the EU context. Focusing on Humanitarian aid policy area, Sanchez Salgado has shown that more than 40 percent of EU investment in this policy area has been channeled through NGOs,<sup>12</sup> and has highlighted the profound partnership between the Directorate-General European Community Humanitarian Office (DG ECHO) and the NGOs working in that field (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 9-10). Salgado has also shown that the EU, namely the European Commission, was very proactive in the process, mainly through introducing the mechanisms also described in Reimann’s work, which are a) Funding opportunities,<sup>13</sup> and b) Access and consultation opportunities,<sup>14</sup> which enabled the EU to strengthen its partnerships with CSOs,<sup>15</sup> to obtain impact on

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<sup>11</sup> Socio-economic factors; the informational revolution; the decline of the state and the integration in world economy; and democratization as processes due to which organizations rise in power (Reimann 2006: 45).

<sup>12</sup> At least 46.62 percent out of a total of 1140 million Euros, dedicated to humanitarian aid in 2011 (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 9).

<sup>13</sup> These are the mechanisms for the acquisition of European funds that usually comes with specific sets of obligations (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 24; Kohler-Koch 2003).

<sup>14</sup> The opportunity to participate and have an impact on European policy formation processes (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 22).

<sup>15</sup> I will, from now on, use the terms civil society organization (CSOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) interchangeably.



organizational capacities, values, and goals, and to generate ‘*changes in the organizational form, the strategies or repertoires of action and the introduction of European practices...*’ (Ibid: 12).<sup>16</sup> This process of ‘*going European*’, meaning the understanding (by organizations) that the ability to impact policymaking would be better obtained at the supranational level, and deciding to use European opportunities, then brings forth the strings attached to those opportunities, and the organization going through the process ‘*confronts institutional dynamics beyond their control*’. This results in a transformation process in the organization itself (Ibid).

Sanchez Salgado concluded, after observing the evolution of relationships between the EU and its civil society (both from a top-down perspective- that European opportunities have been strategically used by EU officials<sup>17</sup> and a bottom-up one- that European opportunities have been strategically used by CSOs<sup>18</sup>), that ‘*the Commission has played the most active role in creating and developing European and domestic CSOs, and has thus contributed to the structuring of the civil society landscape in Europe*’ (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 104). Endeavors made to understand the Commission’s funding behaviors have found that the Commission tended to more profoundly promote European peak associations (Buth & Kohler-Koch 2013);<sup>19</sup> Budget lines set up by the Commission needed to include a European dimension to the activities (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 148); and groups that promoted a European identity (and ones that were based in Western Europe) have gained primary support by the Commission (Beckstrand & Mahoney 2011). This behavior also granted a leverage effect to the Commission to ‘*lead to competition among CSOs for political space and access to resources*’ (Cullen 2010; Sanchez Salgado 2014: 22).

This behavior of the EU served a dual purpose then. First, as part of the western imperative to include CSOs and NGOs into the policy formation processes, the EU has incorporated different organizations into its supranational policymaking areas giving them access to agenda settings, lobbying and influencing the policy process, supplying

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<sup>16</sup> The Europeanization process would occur in a few distinct stages. The first stage is referred to as *Internalization*- where organizations integrate European topics without the direct engagement with the EU. Then, organizations may decide to use European opportunities (embodied in the mechanisms presented above) which is considered to be the *Externalization* stage. From there, the way to *Transnationalization*- where organizations engage in transnational cooperation, is short, and finally, there is the stage of *Supranationalization* where organizations enter an ‘institutionalization process at the EU level (creating a new European actor)’ (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 26).

<sup>17</sup> The approach of *Usages by Europe* in the Europeanization literature (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 94).

<sup>18</sup> The approach of *Usages of Europe* in the Europeanization literature (Ibid: Ibid).

<sup>19</sup> Which are supranational actors with a clear European dimension.

expertise to the EU, and obtaining funds. This served as also the mean of strengthening a European identity inside the European context, therefore becoming an important process to the identity construction processes previously mentioned by Diez as a very important endeavor by the EU.

This paper maintains that the concept of *Europeanization* is a very important aspect that contributes to the development of a theoretical framework that it would like to propose, for understanding NPE through the inclusion of civil society and the social and institutional construction processes that takes place, both within Europe and outside of it. But before outlining exactly this theoretical framework and before we engage with a particular case study to find empirical evidence for it, we need, first and for most, to clarify definitions regarding NPE, namely to define exactly what we mean by normative power. This definition is crucial for any research regarding NPE as the concept of normative power itself has obtained a few different meanings and appropriations throughout the last decade of NPE research. Furthermore, we need to engage with some of the inherent problems that Manners' seminal work has left behind.

### ***Research problem***

*'Everyone has values; the critical issue is why some people are able to make their values into a kind of power. All values are normative, but they are not in themselves normative power'* (Keene 2012: 943).

Edward Keene has recently underlined one of the problems that arose with Manners' concept of normative power and that is the problem of demarcation between normative power and other forms of power. In Manners' seminal work, normative power is presented to embody a distinct type of power that is not economic or military.<sup>20</sup> He defined normative power as the ability to shape conceptions of what is 'normal' in the international arena (Manners 2002: 240) but at the same time Manners urged the need to test the EU not by what it does (or how it acts), but by what it is (Manners 2002: 252) and suggested the NPE concept as a framework that could entail both civilian and military power. Keene has done well in articulating the problem:

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<sup>20</sup> Manners has later based the demarcation on the *Trinity of Power*: the Stick, the Carrot, and the Idea, or the Coercive, the Remunerative and the Normative (Manners 2013: 310).

*‘Although this is presented as if it demarcates a boundary between the two types of power, it really does not: there is no contradiction between them, since one could use civilian instruments to shape conceptions of what is ‘normal’*” (Keene 2013: 941).

And indeed, the EU’s ability to diffuse its values and norms through financial rewards (‘carrots’) or different types of sanctions (‘sticks’)<sup>21</sup> was addressed by Manners himself (Manners 2002: 245) and by others.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, we need to define normative power in order to differentiate it from military and economic power. *‘...the latter two may underpin normative power, although normative power must be irreducible to economic or military power if it is to make sense as a separate category’* (Diez 2005: 616).

In his decennial assessment of 2013, Manners has differentiated between a few meanings of normative power that have taken shape throughout the decade of NPE research. The distinctions of two of them are between a normative ideal type of player (*Puissance*) and a normative form of power that is ideational rather than material or physical (*Pouvoir*) (Galtung 1989: 15; Manners 2013: 309). This distinction helps us in categorizing exactly what we are looking for when we come to test the European behavior and Actorness in world politics and contributes to the operationalization of the research objectives relevant to this paper.

Tobias Lenz’s recent contribution dealing with NPE and Regionalism has embodied the latter approach of referring to normative power and the way it serves as an imperative to mechanisms of diffusion as well.<sup>23</sup> Drawing from diffusion theory, Lenz has conceptualized normative power Europe as *‘the EU’s ability to diffuse EU-type norms, institutions and practices by immaterial means – what is termed here ‘ideational diffusion’*” (Lenz 2013: 212). Regarding normative power, or ideational influence, as a distinct form of power entailed an explained demarcation between this form and the two other forms of power referred to in the study:

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<sup>21</sup> And even then, not always with profound results, at least in the Israeli case (Pardo 2015: 65-69).

<sup>22</sup> Hiski Haukkala, for instance, underlined the leverage effect of Accession processes for EU candidate states that serve as a main mechanism by which states adhere to EU norms (Haukkala 2011).

<sup>23</sup> *Pouvoir Normatif* in action, as Manners referred to it in the decennial (Manners 2013: 309).

**Table 1.** Types of power and forms of diffusion.

|                 | Diffusion mechanisms | Type of EU diffusion | Means/channels of diffusion  |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|--|
| Military power  | Coercion             | Material, active     | Military imposition, threats (negative conditionality)   |
| Civilian power  | Rewards              | Material, active     | Trade and cooperation agreements, technical and financial assistance (positive conditionality) |
|                 | Competition          | Material, passive    | Large, well-integrated domestic market   |
| Normative power | Socialization        | Ideational, active   | Cooperation agreements, political dialogue, technical assistance                               |
|                 | Emulation            | Ideational, passive  | 'Successful' integration; discourse/narrative, symbolic representations                        |

(Lenz 2013: 213)

According to this, the employment of military power is when entities spread their norms and practices through the mechanism of *coercion*. That could be a military imposition or any other material practice, as long as it is coercive.<sup>24</sup> That is to force others into desired behavior. The employment of civilian power is when entities spread their norms and practices mainly through the mechanism of *reward*, or the use of economic resources to offer incentives and seduce others into desired behavior. It is important to mention here that while both types of power usages connote to different mindsets and therefore, were the true basis for the evolution of Duchêne's and Manners' notions of types of actors, they still both connote to material usages of power (whether based on a positive conditionality or a negative one). The type of power which is normative in Lenz's demarcation, are operational through two main mechanisms for ideational diffusion which are *socialization* and *emulation*, that are not linked to any material impetus (negative and positive alike). Here, cognition and identity processes drive the change in behavior and not the 'utility calculations' of material diffusions (Lenz 2013: 212-214).

This distinction of normative power as a type of power (*Pouvoir* in Manners' words) and not as a type of an actor, would serve us, for now, in framing Manners' own regard to what has brought him to conceptualize normative power in the first place:

'...*The power of ideas and norms rather than the power of empirical force...*' (Manners 2002: 238).

<sup>24</sup> In that regard, economic sanctions could also be included (Lenz 2013: 213).

This gives us yet another reason to deviate the attention from the EU itself and its *formal* activities in foreign exchange so to decrease the danger of us confusing between material diffusions and ideational ones.

It is obvious then that another problem, that Manners' seminal work raises, concerns the mechanisms through which ideational diffusion occurs. Despite Manners deeper elaboration (in his decennial assessment) of the diffusion mechanisms by which EU norms diffuse, it is still claimed that these distinctions bore little connection to the broader diffusion literature (Lenz 2013: 213). More, as mentioned above, the aim of this research is to understand the role of civil society in the EU's ideational diffusion. Therefore, the mechanisms through which the 'formal' EU promotes its norms, would not be of service here. Instead, taking a closer look at the ideational diffusion mechanisms that Lenz has referred to would be of better use to us.

Lenz, as mentioned above, has referred to socialization and emulation as the main mechanisms through which norms diffuse (or travel to other places). Socialization is defined as the process of discursive engagement in which an actor actively appeals to another actor's causal or normative understandings of the world to spread her/his norms and practices, entailing both 'positive' strategies of persuasion and teaching as well as 'negative' ones such as naming and shaming (Checkel 2005; Johnston 2008; Lenz 2013: 215). The channels through which socialization occurs usually comes in the form of political dialogues, cooperation agreements with regional organizations, and technical assistance programs that provide the settings for socialization to occur (Lenz 2013: 215). Emulation is the process by which an actor learns from or copies a successful exemplar's or cultural peer's norms and practices, but it usually does not contain an active role by the exemplar (Checkel, 2001; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Lenz 2013: 215).

In a more classical regard, socialization is defined as a process of inducing actors into the norms and rules of a given community (Dawson & Prewitt 1969; Alderson 2001; Checkel 2005: 804). Therefore socialization is a process where two ends are relevant. The one refers to the promoter of norms, the organizational platforms it constructs and the different active practices it conducts that allows norm diffusion to take place. The other end is the 'norm receiver' that is being incorporated into the different mechanisms that the norm sender stimulates. The norm receiver is not passive and has its own

calculations of ‘why to comply’<sup>25</sup> with regard to certain norms. As expected, in the realm of IR, different ontologies and approaches have brought different understandings of why actors comply with norms. Neorealism, for instance, embodied in Kenneth Waltz have acknowledged socialization but saw it as ‘*an almost mechanical process of selection, where states have to emulate the balancing behavior of the most successful actors in the international system if they are to survive in a hostile, anarchical environment*’ (Cited in Gheciu 2005: 77). Therefore seeing compliance as dependent on exogenous factors (Johnston 2001: 488). But it is the Constructivist approach that brought forth the importance of ‘*an analysis of the connection between the shared...traits of states and the social interactions of these states occurring in a historically specific international environment*’ (Gheciu 2005: 78). The calculation of the norm receiver can start off as rationalist calculations of loss and benefit, as embodied in Checkel’s mechanism of Strategic calculation where there is a strive for reward (be social or material) but the constructivist socialization process implies that along the way they can become internalized on the normative level. The internalization of norms, or the norm adoption by a logic of appropriateness and not a logic of consequences, is the final outcome of socialization and represents full socialization (Checkel 2005).

*‘Its outcome is sustained compliance based on the internalization of these new norms. In adopting community rules, socialization implies that an agent switches from following a logic of consequences to a logic of appropriateness;’<sup>26</sup> this adoption is sustained over time and is quite independent from a particular structure of material incentives or sanctions* (Checkel 2005: 804).

This understanding that tried to bring together rationalist and constructivist approaches underline the core constructivist understanding of norm compliance- that norm compliance can be dependent on endogenous factors, internal to the norm receiver and dependent upon the social construction and interaction that occurs between actors.<sup>27</sup> Checkel has therefore depicted internalization of norms by the change in preferences as a phase of *Normative Suasion* (Checkel 2005; Johnston 2001; Gheciu 2005). This also strengthens the importance of the analysis of the interaction between the sides, as

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<sup>25</sup> Referring to the work of Jeffrey Checkel (Checkel 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Meaning the internalization of norms as the right things to live by.

<sup>27</sup> For a broader ontological debate, between realism, contractual institutionalism and constructivism see Johnston 2001.

mentioned above, and scholars of constructivism have explored in recent decades different case studies to understand the micro-mechanisms of socialization.

Alexandra Gheciu, for instance, has dealt with NATO and its active community building practices after the end of the cold war. In the new international circumstances of the 90s, the organization has adopted a new role of taking part in the construction of liberal democratic cultures in post-Soviet countries. Gheciu, as a constructivist drawing from sociology and social psychology, has brought forth the micro-mechanisms of *Teaching, Persuasion* and *Role-Playing* in the socialization practices of NATO, which have all served as mechanisms that brought a change of preferences in the targeted elites of nation-states (in that case- Romania and the Czech Republic).<sup>28</sup> This is how Gheciu and other constructivists have explored the inner workings of international socialization processes and they require an explanation of their micro-mechanisms and practices through which they take place.

Johnston has elaborated on teaching in international socialization:

*‘Teaching occurs in educational activities where, as part of a process of habitus-building, an agency endowed with pedagogic authority cultivates classificatory schemas (incorporating particular sets of intersubjective understandings), on the basis of which socializees are to perceive the world, think and act. The schemas disseminated...are the expression of a shared “common sense” that contains- what appears to be- the “natural” way of thinking and acting’* (Gheciu 2005: 88). In that regard, Gheciu has shown that NATO representatives have sought to teach the targeted actors’ elites (and future elites) ‘correct’ ideas of liberal democracy and norms related to the security apparatus<sup>29</sup> through ‘seminars, workshops, accession dialogues,<sup>30</sup> and various instances of consultations...(Ibid). Persuasion entails ‘*changing minds, opinions and attitudes about causality and affects...in the absence of overtly material or mental coercion*’ (Ibid: 91). It strengthens the understanding of socialization as an ideational instrument because it implies that there is no coercion and no direct promise of instrumental benefit in the interaction. Rather, it is simply an actors’ engagement with its interlocutor to present him with a right course of action or policy as he sees it.

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<sup>28</sup> Meaning the induction of post-Soviet states to the western norm regime.

<sup>29</sup> For instance, democratic control of the military and improving checks and balances between the civilian and the military (Gheciu 2005: 98).

<sup>30</sup> Though by the logic of this paper, diffusion relating to accession processes should be referred to as material diffusions.

‘Persuasion is central to most of the empirical case studies about normative influence and change’ (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998: 914). Role-playing- is another mechanism being used in international organizational platforms, such as NATO (Gheciu 2005: 95). In that regard, and organizational platform requires an actor to role-play and represent a certain social role, and therefore ‘adopt’ certain behavioral traits in a manner of automaticity. This practice is acknowledged in social psychology as one of the strong mechanisms through which attitudes and perceptions of societal actors change and therefore, scholars of constructivism have underlined this practice as an important one. In fact, according to Jeffrey Checkel, this practice can stand in the midst of the turning point in an actors’ normative suasion phase, where he moves from a logic of consequences to a logic of appropriateness in his adoption of norms (Checkel 2005: 811). It is safe to say that role-playing takes place in multiple frameworks of professional trainings. This also helps explain the phenomena as Professional training does more than simply transfer technical knowledge; it actively socializes people to value certain things above others (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998: 905).

The workings of social influences are also worthy of being mentioned here. As we can see, constructivism draws heavily from sociology and social psychology.<sup>31</sup> Therefore an attention to social costs and benefits (as opposed to material costs and benefits) have also been granted importance. According to Johnstone, social influence ‘refers to a class of micro-processes that elicit pro-norm behavior through the distribution of social rewards and punishments’ (Johnstone 2001: 499). These rewards and punishments, as mentioned above by Lenz and Checkel as well, includes rewards like recognition, praise, normative support and other grants related to status, prestige and honor (and from the side of novice- the desire to maximize them in a social framework), and punishments such as opprobrium, shaming, humiliation and other social sanctions that also lead to loss of prestige and honor (Ibid: 499-500). We can see these as social carrots and sticks, but they are social because only groups can provide them (Ibid: 499).

To sum up our understandings drawn from the world of socialization and norm diffusion- diffusion can be defined as ‘*the process that leads to the pattern of adoption, not the fact that at the end of the period all (or many) countries have adopted the policy. Therefore, diffusion is not equivalent to convergence.*’ (Gilardi 2012: 3). Socialization in that matter is the process and the framework by which norm/ideational diffusion

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<sup>31</sup> Representing the sociological turn in IR (Johnston 2001: 488).



occurs. In the creation of this framework, *‘Two elements seem common in the successful creation of most new norms: norm entrepreneurs and organizational platforms from which entrepreneurs act’* (Finnemore & Sikkink 1998: 896). Norms also need carriers in order to travel to other locales (Lenz 2013: 216), and it is these carriers and the organizational platforms they work by that would have a great magnitude in this work.

Ian Johnston mentioned a few things we should bear in mind when examining socialization and its effects:

*‘First, what are the characteristics of the social environment in which agents are interacting at time  $t$ ? If this environment has agentlike “teaching” properties, what are the norms and associated behaviors that actors in the environment are supposed to adopt and, hopefully, internalize? In other words, what is the predominant ideology in the social environment? Second, what are the characteristics of individual agents involved in the social environment at time  $t$ ? How do these characteristics retard or propel the socialization process? Third, how do these agents then interact with this environment at time  $t + 1$ ? What are the policy processes through which newly socialized agents act upon the broader social environment?’* (Johnston 2001: 506).

With this Johnston also call to go micro and focus on individual and small groups (Johnston 2001: 507).

### ***Introducing a case study and connecting the theoretical concepts together***

Europeanization literature, as mentioned above, has brought to light the ability of the European Commission and other institutions to promote profound changes in the organizational structures, behaviors and even the core values and goals of civil society organizations. But in order to better connect it to the research goal of this paper, or in other words, in order to understand how it could contribute to the field of ideational diffusion and NPE, there is a need to introduce one policy area of the EU and one European NGO, that overall, it is safe to say, have not been given attention both in Europeanization literature and in NPE. This policy area is the education and culture and in particular, the European higher education policy area which has been embodied since the 2000s in the framework of the Bologna Process (BP), or the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The organization that could contribute

empirical insights for this research and help in connecting the theoretical concepts laid above, would be the European Students' Union (ESU). This organization, therefore, its organizational development, its bonding with the Israeli local, and its potential to serve as a ground for European ideational diffusion would stand at the center stage of this research.

ESU is an example of a civil society actor. It is an NGO, and therefore it does not belong to the official makeup of the EU. As it seems, at first sight, this organization have taken some strategic turns in its contemporary history that could be seen as a Europeanization process. It was born in 1982 as the west European students' information bureau (WESIB) and have lived through an era of change where governance and policy formation in terms of higher education has moved to the EU level, mainly in what was mentioned above as the creation of a unified European higher education area that removes constraints on higher education movement between European countries through the harmonization of structures and principles that would complement the free movement inside Europe. The European students' union, recognizing the change in the higher education landscape in Europe, has sought to improve its position and initiated a process of change to achieve a few goals that profoundly corresponds with what the literature of Europeanization has stressed:

- a. Overcoming other organizations and gaining recognition from the European Commission, and other EU institutions, as the sole representative of the students' voice in Europe.
- b. Exploiting the Commission's funding opportunities that took form in that era.
- c. Receiving consultative status in the political structure of the process and therefore becoming a stakeholder in the European higher education policy formation.

These goals as would be presented in more details in following chapters have in fact been materialized for the student organization. The organization has gained access and recognition from the European agencies as a stakeholder in the policy formation of higher education and it has become a political organization and an interest group with lobbying powers in this policy area (and in particular in the constitution of the BPs' guiding principles); the organization has become part of the E4 group that constitute the quality assurance association of the EHEA; and The organization was also successful in establishing a channel for administrative funding from the Commission

and have been able to utilize projects funding that serves as the major source of income for the student organization. These developments do not profoundly break new ground in the literature on Europeanization.<sup>32</sup> But from this perspective of Europeanization, it is interesting to try to see how this process of change connotes to NPE and might show us how Europeanization literature and NPE could inform each other and come together. That is possible by understanding the current nature of the European Students' Union and what it has become- an umbrella organization of not only European students' unions (as was previously the case) but of 47 national students' unions from 38 different countries. That includes east European countries and countries outside of the EU such as Serbia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, and Israel, among others. The organization holds a mechanism through which students' organizations can apply for membership. They would become a candidate union for at least one year during which a study visit by the side of ESU would be conducted to measure whether the applying union stands for the membership criteria of ESU. For a union to succeed in applying for membership in ESU it would need to answer to a few democratic prerequisites,<sup>33</sup> and only after the study visit concludes findings, a vote would take place at ESU's board meeting (BM) to decide upon acceptance of the applicant union. The board meeting would vote for three options:

- a. Acceptance of the applicant union as a full member of the European students' union.
- b. Decline of the applicant union for not standing for the membership criteria
- c. Resuming the period of candidacy until certain organizational reforms would be made by the applicant union.

In that manner, all of the national students' unions mentioned above have applied for membership, with different levels of success. More, after membership is granted, the overarching organization also conducts reassessments of organizations in cases that doubts have risen on the code of conduct of certain organizations. With the mechanism of reassessment, some organizations have been expelled from ESU, as in the example of the Georgian students' union.

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<sup>32</sup> As examples of Europeanization, although in other policy areas, are abundant in the literature and in particular in Sanchez Salgado's book that was presented above.

<sup>33</sup> a) being a truly representative organization with democratic elections b) being independent and separated from state ownership c) represent all students in a country regardless of ethnic, religious, sexual or social differences d) being an organization that is controlled and run by students (ESU: 2016).

This membership mechanism, as natural and standard as it may seem, does raise much interest if we look at it from the perspective of Europeanization and NPE as it implies that somewhere along the way this civil society organization has presented its own kind of a “neighborhood policy”, or at least, a mechanism of accession, one that resembles the accession mechanism of the EU itself, only that it does not offer any visible material benefits for applying organizations.<sup>34</sup>

Besides that, the home organization is in charge and dedicates its time to dealing with understanding and affecting the European higher education policy area and to solidify the European students’ values and policies in this framework. To a great deal, this is done by managing and organizing countless of conferences, seminars, workshops, annual conventions, experts’ pools and other activities aimed at dealing with the hot potatoes of European higher education developments. All of these activities also includes incorporating agents from ESU’s natural partners in the higher education policy area,<sup>35</sup> and policy shapers from the European Commission and other EU institutions and agencies. All of which are gathered to provide inputs, discuss and deal with higher education issues.

This organizational conduct should heavily hint us that the ESU could serve a great deal in this research as an arena for international socialization and ideational diffusion.

### *Deepening the case study*

The National Union of Israeli Students (NUIS) has become a full member of ESU in 2008 after an application for membership has been filed and a study visit was conducted. Bearing in mind that Israel was never part of the BP and thus- was not incorporated into the European higher education area,<sup>36</sup> this development could be seen as taking part in the EHEA on the local level, with the bonding of two local actors that have a considerable impact on issues of higher education, each in its own political framework. Embracing the constructivist/sociologist way of seeing these small groups

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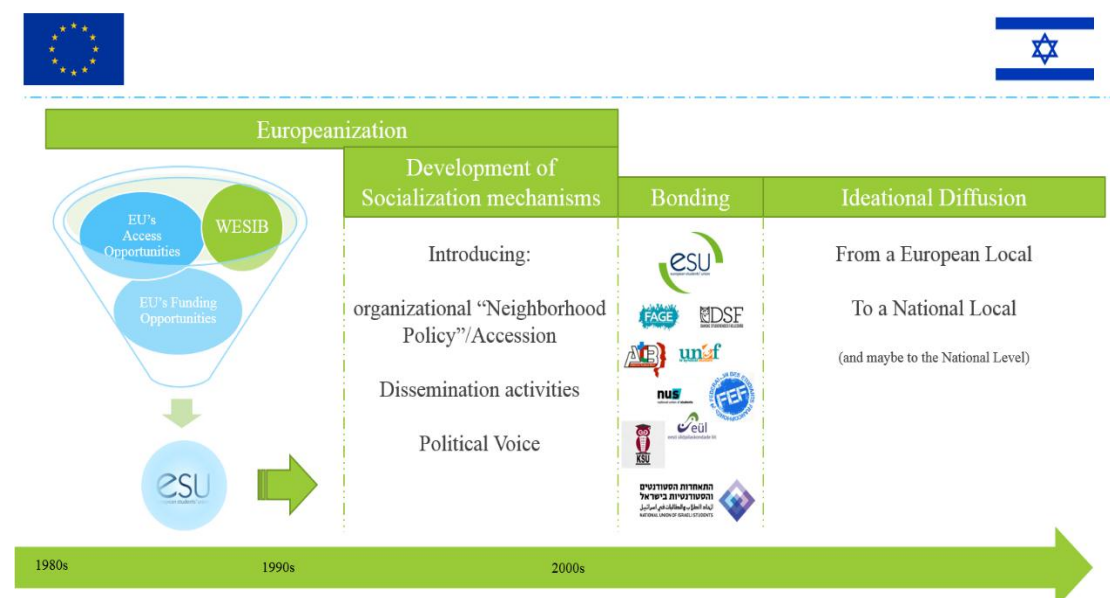
<sup>34</sup> On the contrary, national students’ unions need to pay a membership fee for being a member of ESU.

<sup>35</sup> The Bologna Follow-up Group, EURASHE, EUA, Education International and other supranational and international organizations that also function as stakeholders in the higher education area.

<sup>36</sup> Even though in 2007 and 2008 diplomatic efforts were made by Israel to become a member in the process.

as elite units (or at least future elites)<sup>37</sup> and understanding that in a certain point of their contemporary history they have bonded in an institutional relationship and have incorporated themselves into a socialization framework, leaves us to this day with roughly 8 years of socialization potential and possible ideational diffusion between the two local actors. More, as an elite group, NUIS is also in a position to, and might have, influence the national level in terms of higher education policies and norms. If that would be the case, a completion of an NPE model, that incorporates local actors, would be presented. We would have what I would like to phrase the *NPE Chain* where the EU generates a process of Europeanization which results not only in local actors ‘going European’ but also in the local actor becoming an instrument of normative/ideational influence with its development of socialization and diffusion mechanisms. Then the local actor bonds with local actors outside of the European context and lay the organizational platform vital for ideational diffusion. The local actor in the ‘target country’ could then, after internalizing certain norms as an outcome of socialization, become a norm carrier and influence agents on the national level to comply with certain principles.

Diagram 1: The ‘NPE Chain’



<sup>37</sup> National Student unions have a tradition of being the training ground for future political leaders (Klemenčič 2014: 397).

### ***Research outline***

The research would be outlined in 11 sub-chapters in which an artificial demarcation between a few processes would be drawn. Based on primary sources, secondary sources and interviews, the first two sub-chapter would outline the Europeanization process of higher education in Europe and its culmination in the BP. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> sub-chapters would outline the evolution of the ESU amidst the Europeanization process of higher education. The 5<sup>th</sup> sub-chapter would deal with the question of defining the BP principles in preparation for the examination of ideational diffusion. The 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> sub-chapters would outline the external dimension of the BP and Israel's engagement with it. The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> sub-chapters would outline the external dimension of the ESU and its development of platforms for ideational diffusion. The 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> subchapters would incorporate interview work with NUIS' representatives and documentary analysis that has been done, to outline the institutionalization of the relationship between NUIS and ESU and the Israeli perceptions accompanying it, together with processes of ideational diffusion of EHEA principles to the Israeli organization.

### ***Research expected contribution***

The research outlined above would hopefully contribute to the research field in two manners:

- a. The research would provide an empirical contribution of a new case study for the literature of NPE, exploring ideational diffusion between the EU and Israel in the field of higher education.
- b. The research would provide a theoretical contribution by bringing together Europeanization, socialization, and NPE to introduce a model for NPE that would facilitate a better understanding of the buildup of civil society in Europe's normative power potential.

### ***Research questions***

- a. Does the EU perform ideational diffusion of higher education principles and interests onto the Israeli context by the workings of the ESU?

- b. Does the EU have a role in shaping civil society organizations in a manner that contribute to their ‘recruitment’ for the EU’s normative power mechanisms?

### ***Research hypotheses***

- a. The European Students’ Union is an organization with a clear European dimension that dedicates most of its work to dealing with EHEA issues. its 8-year relationship with NUIS has facilitated ideational diffusion regarding EHEA principles.

## ***Part two – Research***

### ***The Europeanization of higher education and the Bologna Process***

Cooperation in higher education did preoccupy the European community long before the ‘Bologna era’. As a matter of fact, an idea of the importance of education in building the cultural foundations and identity of a European community was being addressed not long after the end of WW2. These ideas brought to light some initiatives at the beginning of the 50s, such as the College of Europe in Bruges and the European Cultural Center in Geneva (Nyborg 2014: 5). The European Cultural Foundation (ECF) that was founded in 1954, was an organization that put much emphasis on education issues. It has founded a grant program and brought up conventions and forums to deal with Youth training and the future of education in Europe (Autissier 2004: 8). During this decade the conference of European rectors (CRE) was born (Nyborg 2014: 6)<sup>38</sup>. But the debate between the new European community’s member states regarding cooperation in education, whether as a supranational process or simply as an intergovernmental cooperation, received marginal attention by the ministers of what was at the beginning, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Education has been addressed mainly under the aegis of the Council of Europe (CoE) and the abovementioned bottom-up initiatives (Corbett 2003).

The 70s are agreed by scholars to reflect a deeper phase in the Europeanization of higher education in Europe, following the Hague Summit of 1969, where the heads of states

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<sup>38</sup> Following the creation of the International University Association (IUA) under UNESCO (Nyborg 2014: 6).

agreed to take a step forward towards a political integration from what was then an integration process based on economic means. Following this development,<sup>39</sup> a first formal meeting between the education ministers of the community took place in 1971 where the ministers agreed to cooperate on educational issues. In that year, a historical agreement on the inception of a European University Institute that would be founded in Florence, was made.<sup>40</sup> The European Commission that was now, after the Merger Treaty, the united Commission of the European Communities,<sup>41</sup> has initiated a process of building working groups for Education and Culture. These new bodies, were created out of the need to bring follow up and coordination capacities to cooperation in education. They were to coordinate cooperation and exchange of information as well as to conduct research and inform the Commission with recommendations in those fields (Corbett 2003: 320). Two resolutions were made by the Council and by the ministers of education between 1973 and 1976 and an action plan for cooperation in education was published. The enlargement of 1973 has brought further developments in the Commission regarding education, with the initiation of a new and united Directorate General (DG) for Research, Science and Education (Corbett 2003: 322). This has brought to light the first Communication of the new DG regarding education- the *Education in the European Community*. The publication stated that ‘*The Commission believes that the promotion of educational cooperation within the framework of the European Community is of equal importance as an integral part of the overall development of the Community*’ (COM (74) 253), and it concentrated in explaining the need for the education realm to promote mobility and free movement as part of the general integration process. These recommendations were accepted by the Council and the workings that have brought to light the first Joint Study Programmes and the Short Study Visit schemes at the beginning of the 80s, were initiated, with an enthusiastic support by the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), and by the European Assembly,<sup>42</sup> both providing funding for the endeavor (Corbett 2003: 323). These schemes were in fact the pilots of what was to become known as the ERASMUS programme<sup>43</sup> for the mobility of students and staff between European countries.

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<sup>39</sup> Accompanied by a general new atmosphere more supportive of integration in that period.

<sup>40</sup> This was a proposition made in 1955 which did not materialize until then (Corbett 2003: 316-319).

<sup>41</sup> Incorporating the executive bodies of the ECSC and the Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) into the European Economic Community (EEC).

<sup>42</sup> Future to become the European Parliament (EP).

<sup>43</sup> European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students.



As a matter of fact, the Assembly's financial support was also a product of a major development in EU history which was the Treaty of Brussels. The treaty gave the European Assembly the power to approve the European budget and to decide on non-obligatory expenses. Proposals for non-obligatory expenses that were suggested by the Commission were now decided upon in the Assembly alone, and the Assembly could also 'push' budget lines it considered important, to the Commission (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 73). This, according to Sanchez Salgado was a true cornerstone in the inclusion of civil society to the European make-up and has enabled an enormous expansion of funding opportunities for CSOs by the side of the 'CSOs friendly' Commission and Parliament (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 73-75).

Other developments in the 80s wave of integration were the signing on the Single European Act in 1986, approving the creation of a unified European Market, and the European Court of Justice's (ECJ) ruling in 1985 on the Gravier case. these were all part of the enthusiasm and the general support now given to not only the ERASMUS programme, but to a few more educational programmes that became operationalized at the end of the 80s (Bache 2006: 237).<sup>44</sup>

Apart from the developments regarding the European Commission and Parliament back at the time, there were other processes, not strictly related to higher education, which nonetheless were to have future magnitude. These were a few different projects aiming to form youth platforms in Europe. As a matter of fact, probably the first endeavor in that realm was what turned out to be an American CIA backed project named the European Youth Campaign (EYC), which aimed at facilitating a united post-war European consciousness amongst the young generation in Europe. This endeavor was paid attention to by both European integrationists and American policy makers as Communist efforts to win the hearts and minds of young Europeans were also made extensively (Norwig 2014: 251-255). European endeavors regarding youth have continued in different forms and by different institutions in the 60s, 70s and 80s. The European Cultural Foundation has initiated the Youth Forums that have taken place between 1961 and 1966 (Autissier 2004) and the Council of European National Youth

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<sup>44</sup> Among them: Commet (Community Programme for Education and Training in Technology), Lingua (the programme for the promotion of foreign languages skills) and also Tempus (A trans-mobility for students' exchange programme with an 'external dimension') and Jean-Monnet (Promoting the teaching on the European integration process) programmes that are still operational today with a strong 'external dimension'.

Committees (CENYC) was founded in 1963.<sup>45</sup> The CoE has initiated its own platforms- the European Youth Centre (1972) and the European Youth Foundation (1973), marking the beginning of a formal Community policy towards youth. Subsidized by the European Commission, the Youth Forum of the European Communities (YFEC) was founded in 1978<sup>46</sup>. Together with the ECB<sup>47</sup>, these bodies were merged in 1996 into a one entity called the European Youth Forum (EYF).<sup>48</sup> Students' organizations per se were also becoming apparent during this period. Two main examples were the AEGEE,<sup>49</sup> and the ERASMUS Student Network (ESN), Another Commission devised organization founded in 1989 in order to facilitate peer support and knowledge sharing amongst the new generation of European 'exchange students' (ESN 2016).

Generally speaking, this was the atmosphere inside the European Community to which the West European Students' Information Bureau (WESIB) was born into. But the global perspective of the cold war is also needed here for understanding its coming to birth and function. During the 70s and 80s, the International Union of Students (IUS) was the overarching organization for worldwide national students' organizations to meet. This organization, however, was 'super-powered' by the Student Council of the Soviet Union and allegedly served as a communist front with mainly propagandist activities (Interview WESIB1; Sundström 2012: 5). An idea was raised, among some of the western students' unions in 1981, aiming at establishing a more democratic organization that would serve as an information bank for European NUSs for disseminating news in the realm of higher education (Sundström 2012: 8). At the end

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<sup>45</sup> A voluntary association of some European youth committees at the World Assembly of Youth (WAY), of the UN. 'The principal tasks of CENYC are to serve as a forum for the exchange of information, to collect and study material concerning youth problems, to co-operate and obtain assistance from organisations and institutions active in the field of youth work and education and to support national youth committees in activities aiming at European unification. Every year several conferences and seminars are held aimed at tackling specific policy issues and to train youth leaders in international youth work. Special emphasis is given to enabling participants to share their international experience and allow them to disseminate such ideas in their own national situations. The organisation aims to promote democratic participation by young people within youth organisations and assist them to develop a European consciousness based on 'mutual respect and understanding through the creation of the awareness of the different traditions of the common European cultures' (EUI 2006: 4-5).

<sup>46</sup> Its 'vocation was to act as the political platform of national youth councils and international youth organisations towards the institutions of the European Union. It is a political co-ordination platform of national and international youth organisations in the European Communities (EUI 2006b).

<sup>47</sup> The European Coordination Bureau of International Youth Organizations.

<sup>48</sup> Representing both National Youth Councils and International Non-Governmental Youth Organizations with the aim of organizing and promoting the youth interest at the supranational level and in front of intergovernmental organizations (EUI 2014).

<sup>49</sup> 'The aim of the founders was to create a platform for young Europeans to discuss European matters and present their ideas to both the European and national institutions' (AEGEE 2017).

of 1982,<sup>50</sup> WESIB was founded by seven NUSs,<sup>51</sup> with the aim of constituting a body of knowledge and not playing global politics (Interview ESIB1).<sup>52</sup> It initiated its code of conduct of organizing seminars to deal with higher education issues that entailed research and information gathering from the different NUSs, it started disseminating its newsletters<sup>53</sup> (managing to reach out to greater and greater audiences outside the spectrum of its member NUSs), it introduced itself to the European Community, the CoE and the OECD, and made its first contacts with the abovementioned different youth organizations (Sundström 2012: 9).

The understandings inside WESIB of the importance that the European Community institutions had if one was to impact higher education policy, were not unanimous at that time. Those years saw a strain between NUSs that wished to develop a policy towards the European Community's institutions and those that did not see the importance of developing such relationships. This was to be changed throughout the late 80s and early 90s along with other geostrategic changes (Grogan 2012: 13-15; Interview WESIB2).<sup>54</sup>

At the end of the 80s a tension was becoming apparent in terms of who represents the 'student voice' in the European Community (Interview WESIB2). In October 1988 the YFEC has embarked on an agenda setting for the formation of a European Student Forum, by support and funding from the Commission (Interview WESIB1).<sup>55</sup> Other INGOs, such as the AIESEC,<sup>56</sup> have started gaining some recognition and funding from the Commission and have drawn the attention in WESIB (Grogan 2012: 15). This has marked the beginning of a growing tension between youth/students organizations, shaped by the growing understanding of the importance that the EU institutions had on agenda setting and funding in the realm of higher education (Ibid; Interview WESIB2). An organizational capacity building process was initiated so that WESIB would not remain smaller and much less capable than the other youth organizations making their

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<sup>50</sup> After securing the Swedish government's financial support for its' first years.

<sup>51</sup> The founding NUSs were SFS (Sweden), NSU (Norway), SHI (Iceland), NUS-UK (U.K), UNEF-ID (France), ÖH (Austria), and DSF (Denmark) (Sundström 2012: 8).

<sup>52</sup> Interaction between east and west on the global students' arena continued under what was termed back then the European Meetings (EM) (Interview WESIB1).

<sup>53</sup> With news and developments from the realm of higher education and students (Sundström 2012: 9).

<sup>54</sup> In general terms, the contestation demarcated between NUSs from within the European Community and NUSs from external national contexts (Interview WESIB2).

<sup>55</sup> For the policy paper see: European Student Forum Documents from 1989 to 1994 - YFEC-21 - Youth Forum of the European Communities (EUI 2014b).

<sup>56</sup> International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences.

way in obtaining consultative and funding opportunities vis-à-vis the European Community (Grogan 2012: 15). Parallel to this, the organization has turned to solidify relationships with other organizations and have had its member NUSs strengthening its position in other platforms such as the Youth Forum (Interview WESIB2).

The fall of the Berlin wall marked another true historic transformation in world politics and in WESIB as well. The West European Student Information Bureau has ‘now dropped the ‘W’ and became the European Student Information Bureau (ESIB)’, reaching out to eastern student organizations and proactively calling for their accession (ESU 2016).<sup>57</sup> This accession process was preceded by much debate and contestation between the different NUSs in WESIB on the criteria and manner of accession and those were the days were the criteria of membership were better solidified.<sup>58</sup> But nonetheless, WESIB, or by its new name- ESIB, was very active and supportive of Eastern accession. The organization moved its headquarters from London to Vienna, in order to be closer to the new happenings and it produced two summer universities in Vienna during 1990 and 1991 especially for the eastern NUSs (Interview IUS1). Eventually until 1992, ESIB has grown to have 32 NUSs as its member unions. This major development was accompanied by the evolution of the abovementioned exchange programmes that have facilitated enormous amounts of EU funding into mobility cooperation, now being widely used by eastern and southern institutions (Zgaga 2013).

Parallel to this change, in November 1991 at the 21<sup>st</sup> BM, the members have decided to construct policymaking powers, changing the organization from merely an information hub to a political organization in the realm of the emerging European higher education policy area. This development was future to have significant magnitude.

The Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1992, put education on the front stage (Zgaga 2013). It was the first time that education and training received a legal basis (Corbett 2003: 326), as the member states agreed on deepening cooperation and mandating the support of the European Community in the realm of education.<sup>59</sup> This new mandate enabled the

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<sup>57</sup> This strategic development was accepted in WESIB’s 17<sup>th</sup> board meeting of February 1990 (Interview WESIB1).

<sup>58</sup> Joining organizations needed to be: a) Higher education oriented b) Representative bodies and not partisan 3) Representative of post-school students (Interview WESIB1).

<sup>59</sup> The involvement of the Commission was on the basis of subsidiarity and focused on: developing the European dimension in education; encouraging recognition of diplomas and through this encourage mobility of students and teachers; promoting cooperation between academic institutions; encouraging

Commission with widening its construction of educational cooperation programmes and further linking the European endeavor with non-EU countries and institutions, in frameworks like TEMPUS and Asia-Link (Keeling 2006: 204). As a matter of fact, exchange programmes were the main instrument through which the EU was actually having impact on the ground as institutional and national actors were already performing changes, to some extents, in their HE systems in order to facilitate exchange and receive funding for it. This is why, even before the Bologna initiative, ESIB has already recognized the European Commission as an important actor to solidify relationships with (Interview ESIB2).

This was the last agreement that took place before the Bologna initiative came along and became the ‘brand’ and the ‘agora’ (Zgaga 2003) of the Europeanization process of higher education. This initiative was marked as a new, distinctive and intensive phase of Europeanization of HE (Zgaga 2013; Chou 2014), as everything that preceded, and depicted above, is considered to be more a collection of initiatives than a concise policy (Ravinet 2008), or in regard to the emergence and the entrance of civil society organizations- an ‘ad-hoc’ policymaking rooted in the activist approach of Commission and Parliament (Sanchez Salgado 2014). Nonetheless, this short history and the example of the students’ union, enables us in understanding the manner in which the European Community has started to become an arena supportive of civil society participation, where big initiatives and opportunities have started to sprout.<sup>60</sup>

### ***The Bologna Era***

Even though the BP, as mentioned above, has become to be known as the ‘brand’ of the European initiative for constructing the EHEA, it is actually only one policy direction out of two that emerged at the same time, eventually converging into each other.

The BP was not initiated by the EU. It was an initiative among a few countries to reform national HE systems and create the European higher education area (EHEA) by 2010

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the cooperation of third countries and international (and intergovernmental) organizations competent in the realm of education; and more (Treaty of Maastricht 1992).

<sup>60</sup> The Commission’s activism and enthusiasm’s impact regarding HE, especially with the new Commission of 1985 has been underlined by other scholars as well (Bach 2006: 236).

on a voluntary intergovernmental basis.<sup>61</sup> The starting point was the Sorbonne declaration where the ministers of France, Germany, Italy and the UK agreed to jointly work on reforming their HE systems' structure into a harmonized two-cycle structure with a credit system. This was to facilitate better mobility and employability and provide greater international access and attractiveness to the European countries' HE institutions (Bache 2006: 238; Corbett 2003: 326). Other European countries were quickly appealed by the endeavor, bringing all of the EU countries and 15 non-EU countries to sign the Bologna declaration in 1999. This meeting also included the European Commission as an observant member in the emerging process. The ministers agreed on a governance structure and a follow-up process<sup>62</sup> that brought fruition to some changes in the process, but eventually the BP has brought under its auspices 48 signatories, all signatories to the European Cultural Convention as well, under the aegis of the CoE,<sup>63</sup> and one member which is not a state that goes by the name of the European Commission.

Parallel to the Bologna initiative, the policy belonging more strictly to the EU, and the workings of the European Commission, have also grown in prominence. The cornerstone of this direction was the Lisbon agenda, agreed in the European Council of 2000 (Martens et al 2004: 6), which set a new strategic goal of making the EU '*the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion*' (Lisbon European Council 2000: 2). This endeavor, which was also planned to reach its strategic goals in 2010, produced the modernization agenda for European HE, and the Commission's proposition to creating the European Research Area (ERA).<sup>64</sup>

This has been the culmination of the EU's policy towards HE as a realm that was now understood to be the most important factor in elevating the competitiveness of the European economy (Martens et al. 2004: 7).

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<sup>61</sup> It was an initiative to come up with a European solution to national problems in a voluntary multilateral agreement (Martens et al. 2004: 6).

<sup>62</sup> During which the Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005), London (2007), Leuven (2009), and Budapest (2010) Ministerial meetings and Communiqués were upheld, later to be followed after 2010 by the Bucharest (2012) and Yerevan (2015) meetings (EHEA 2016).

<sup>63</sup> Being a signatory of the CoE's European Cultural Convention was a prerequisite for joining the BP.

<sup>64</sup> The ERA was to become an area facilitating a joint fund for research and innovation and an area where scientists and scientific knowledge is fully mobile between member states.

Even though these developments were two distinct policy directions at the beginning of 2000, they have gradually become ‘closely intertwined’ (Klemenčič 2012b: 632; Martens et al. 2004: 9; Balzer & Martens 2004; Wolf 2007: 12). In fact, most scholars acknowledged that the Commission obtained greater and greater influence in the BP, during its formative years of the 2000s. Some scholars even maintained that the Commission was able to ‘Lisbonize’ the BP (Capano & Piattoni 2011) and bring an ‘economic turn’ to the process’s ideational foundations (Wolf 2007).

This growth in prominence could be explained with regard to a few developments in the BP. During the first follow-up meeting of the Bologna ministers in Prague 2001, the Commission was invited to become a full member of the BP. This was due to a firm support by the side of the Swedish presidency, accepted by the members due to the acknowledgement that a follow-up coordinating work was much needed in the process and that the Commission had the competence and the proper experience to take such role (Martens et al. 2004: 7).<sup>65</sup> The Commission was given a leading role in forming the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG)<sup>66</sup> and the Preparatory Group.<sup>67</sup> The Commission’s presence in both groups enabled it to obtain greater influence on the agenda setting and policy directions of the process (Martens et al. 2004: 7). The funds that were available at the Commission’s disposal were also important as the Commission supported much of the activity preceding and following the Prague meeting (Ibid: 10).

Another important change relating to the Prague ministerial meeting was the emergence of a new mode of governance structure to the BP where the role of the governments was further limited and responsibilities were given to new actors such as institutions themselves, rating agencies and quality assurance (QA) agencies (Wolf 2007: 14). The issues of recognition and QA (like other fields as well) were addressed before the BP under the 1994 pilot project for *Evaluating Quality in Higher Education* (ENQA 2010), the Council of the EU’s recommendation On QA of 1998 (CoEU 1998) and later also under the aegis of the CoE in the Lisbon Recognition Convention of 1997. The Lisbon

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<sup>65</sup> It was acknowledged that the Commission’s mobility activities of earlier years were ‘very much concordant with the goals of the Bologna Process’ (Martens et al. 2004: 7).

<sup>66</sup> The BFUG was composed of representatives of all member countries together with the Commission, and it is chaired by the rotating EU presidency. It was entitled with arranging seminars, exploring the best Bologna directions and preparing working programmes (CoE 2003).

<sup>67</sup> A smaller group, chaired by the representative from the country hosting the next ministerial meeting, which was entitled with arranging the ministerial conferences (CoE 2003).

convention was set for the recognition of qualifications in the European region. A provision on QA at the time was rejected because a debate was still live on whether the countries needed national QA systems or not, but a provision was agreed by the members to only provide information on their education systems. In the Bologna declaration the ministers agreed to develop cooperation in regard to QA.<sup>68</sup> Shortly after, and in continuation to the abovementioned developments, ENQA<sup>69</sup> was formed in order to facilitate this type of cooperation (ENQA 2010). By the Prague meeting, the ministers recognized the vital role of QA and called for the strengthening of QA associations for disseminating knowledge and intensifying cooperation. By 2003 the discussion was no longer on whether or not the countries needed QA systems but on what kind of a system was needed. The principle on forming joint standards and guidelines was accepted and the ESG<sup>70</sup> were agreed upon in the 2005 Bergen ministerial meeting (ENQA 2010; Interview CoE1). EQAR<sup>71</sup> was then formed as the overarching body for the register of European QA agencies that were to demonstrate compliance with the European principles for QA (EQAR 2010).

This particular focus on QA is considered by some scholars to be much affiliated with the Lisbon agenda. Attributing major importance to the role of HE institutions themselves in the modernization agenda for HE, the Lisbon agenda<sup>72</sup> sought the promotion of a QA culture in all levels of governance (the European, the national, and the institutional) and this in particular facilitated the structural change and the opening of the HE policy area to new non-governmental actors (Capano & Piattoni 2011).

This particular and resounding development of the Prague ministerial meeting helps us in understanding why a considerable group of scholars have understood the developments regarding QA and the entrance of new actors into the ‘game’ as the first sign of a Commission ‘take over’ and a mark line where the initially intergovernmental cooperation have now been lost by opening the process for the influence of NGOs, but it is important to underline here that the will to move beyond the strictly intergovernmental cooperation was also understood and pushed for by the education

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<sup>68</sup> The ‘*promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies*’ (Bologna Declaration 1999).

<sup>69</sup> The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

<sup>70</sup> The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA.

<sup>71</sup> European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education.

<sup>72</sup> Especially after its relaunch in 2005 (embodied in the *New Start for the Lisbon Strategy* and the *Mobilizing the Brainpower of Europe: Enabling Universities to Make their Full Contribution to the Lisbon Strategy* communications) (Capano & Piattoni 2011: 586)



ministers themselves. According to Prof. Pavel Zgaga, then the education minister of Slovenia, it was decided somewhere between the Bologna declaration and the Prague meeting that the CoE (which was the most experienced in HE policymaking in the previous decades) would become an observer and the European Commission would become a full member in the process.<sup>73</sup> But at the same time, it was also decided by the ministers that another ‘house of partners’ would be needed to include all those stakeholders and actors without whom it would be very difficult to deal with HE issues. This pool of partners would not have a voting right as the full members had, but they would receive a consultative status for the dialogues preceding the votes. The understanding was that because the debate surrounded modernizing higher education, no meaningful understandings could have been formed without the participation of HE institutions. These included the EUA<sup>74</sup> and EURASHE<sup>75</sup> as the formal representatives of HE institutions. At this stage, as would be more extensively elaborated below, it was also decided that the voice of European students was needed to be heard (Interview BOLOGNA1).

### ***The students’ story in the Bologna era***

The relationships between ESIB and the EU institutions at the beginning of 2000 were not profound nor unique. There was no connection with the Council and interactions with the European Parliament were ‘sporadic’. In contrast, a relationship did already exist with the European Commission, or more specifically- DG Education and Culture (DG EAC), with ESIB being invited to some consultations in the DG and enjoying funding by the DG for some of its projects. It is noticeable in ESIB/ESU’s materials that at the beginning of the 2000s, the Commission was already perceived as the most important body to strengthen ties with. A former chairperson of this period has underlined that back then, the Commission was already having an impact in national HE arenas through the extensive abovementioned exchange programmes and related projects, and the will of having a say and an impact on some issues related to exchanges was becoming stronger (Interview ESIB2). But the Commission itself has established

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<sup>73</sup> And therefore receiving a voting right.

<sup>74</sup> The European University Association was a successor organization of the CRE.

<sup>75</sup> The European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (that are more oriented towards professional higher education institutions).

this type of relationships with other organizations at the time, and have not recognized ESIB as having any unique function. Rather, besides ESIB, the Commission also gave a consultation floor to AEGEE and ESN, both basically devised by and more affiliated to the Commission (Klemenčič 2012: 19; Interview ESIB2).<sup>76</sup>

In reaction to the initial Sorbonne development, February 1999 was the first time that ESIB has engaged in its first lobby mission to Brussels (Klemenčič 2012: 17). By then, a decision was also made to move ESIB's headquarters to Brussels (Interview ESU1). The aim of securing ESIB's 'seat' in this emerging policy framework and strengthening ties with the European institutions were now the most important tasks. ESIB and other Student organizations were not invited to take part in the Sorbonne meeting (which was strictly political in nature) and no discussion what so ever was held among the stakeholders on whether or not student participation was actually needed in the policy framework (Interview BOLOGNA1). The ministerial meeting in Bologna, however, was based on a partly political partly academic nature. It was to entail political agreements between the national stakeholders, but because the process included debating on the future of HE institutions and structures, other stakeholders such as the CRE<sup>77</sup> (as the representation of European rectors/universities) took part in the meeting. The preparation for the ministerial meeting of Bologna might have been the first lobbying success by ESIB, as pressure by the Italian students' union (UDU) have resulted in an informal invitation of ESIB to the meeting (Klemenčič 2012: 19; Interview ESIB2). This 'almost without knocking' entrance of ESIB's representatives to the meeting, accompanied by a loud protest by their side, outside of the hall where the stakeholders met, facilitated the understanding among many of the national ministers, that they have forgotten about one major stakeholder in the realm of HE which were the students. An understanding among the stakeholders emerged that the future will have to entail some sort of cooperation with the students (Interview BOLOGNA1).

The organization was then setting up a consolidated policy direction towards the BP. The Bologna Students' Declaration was then prepared and provided its first public notion of the process, endorsing it in general and reflecting its views and comments on

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<sup>76</sup> The Commission even sought the coming together of ESIB, AEGEE and ESN in an informal grouping just for better serving as a joint consultative body in front of the Commission ((Klemenčič 2012: 19).

<sup>77</sup> Which would later on become the European University Association (EUA).

its emerging principles. In ESIB's Board meeting of Vilnius 2000, the students decided that an experts committee focusing specifically on the BP should be established. This 'Committee on Prague' was formed in order to attend all Bologna preparatory seminars, conduct its own research, and devise ESIB's policy towards the next Bologna ministerial meeting. This committee remained in function after the Prague meeting and became ESIB's Committee for the Bologna Process which reflected the need for continuation in the focus on the BP. From then on, the organization kept on a follow up work to prepare policy papers and statements on all of Bologna action lines and developments and published their insights and views on the different related aspects (Interview ESIB2).<sup>78</sup>

Two months before the Prague ministerial meeting, the students issued the students Göteborg declaration endorsing the BP as '*a crucial step towards Europe without boundaries for its citizens*' and provided its point of view on how best would the improvement of HE in Europe be reached (ESIB Göteborg Declaration).<sup>79</sup> This was the refined and overarching policy statement of ESIB on the BP (Interview ESIB2).

This organizational capacity developments, both in the form of becoming a policymaking organization, as was decided upon in the early 90s, and the decision to put the BP high in the organizational agenda (with developing the proper instruments for it), turned out to be very important decisions that the student organization took. It turned out to be one of the main advantages of ESIB over other 'top-down' organizations affiliated to the European Commission that have not obtained policymaking capacities and have not entrenched in paying a strategic attention to the BP in particular. According to the head of education department in the CoE, ESIB's organizational 'seriousness' in attending all of the Bologna preparatory seminars was very much paid attention to, and ESIB's representatives managed to be perceived as having an important and meaningful policy insights on the debated issues. As it was perceived in the realm of the BP, organizations like the ESN and AEGEE were virtually not on the map, as only ESIB demonstrated a will and a capacity to take a constructive part in the process (Interview CoE1).

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<sup>78</sup> This capacity buildup in the form of development of committees were not restricted to the BP and other committees were also formed (Interview ESIB1).

<sup>79</sup> [http://www.aic.lv/ace/bologna/bol\\_prgr/studdec.html](http://www.aic.lv/ace/bologna/bol_prgr/studdec.html).

With this emerging impression by the BP members ESIB received in 2001 a formal invitation to the Prague ministerial meeting (Interview BOLOGNA1) which included not only ESIB's participation but also a formal speech by its representative (Interview ESIB2). The ministers, that have decided upon the installation of a consultative 'house of partners', have decided that besides EUA and EURASHE, ESIB would also be included as the representative body of the European students. The ministers have shown in this meeting, and in almost every meeting since then, an 'unprecedented' support for the students' involvement in the policy formation of the EHEA (Klemenčič 2012b: 632).

ESIB, together with the CoE, EUA and EURASHE were now, after the Prague meeting, observers in the new BFUG and Preparatory Group. The BFUG developed a work programme devising international seminars to explore the main aspects of the process (CoE 2003).<sup>80</sup> In a later stage, ENQA, Education International (EI), UNESCO and BUSINESSEUROPE have joined the Bologna structure on a consultative basis.

It is important to underline here that this entrance of NGOs and INGOs as consultative organs and providers of expertise, was not restricted to HE policy area. More, it was part of an overarching pro-NGO norm that developed not only in the western world (as mentioned), but in the EU of the end of the 90s in particular. This development in the European context was related to the crisis of legitimacy that have culminated in corruption allegations and a resignation of an entire Commission in 1999.<sup>81</sup> This has brought the urgent need of enhancing the European citizens' sense of belonging to the EU. '*Promoting new forms of European governance*'<sup>82</sup> was set to be the key strategic objective in this endeavor, of the new Commission of 2000. The treaty of Nice (2001) was the first EU treaty to use the term civil society and it called for its involvement in the EU establishment,<sup>83</sup> and the White Paper on European Governance was then published in June 2001 calling for the enhancement of involvement by civil society in greater active participation (COM (2001) 428) '*Participatory governance was seen as one viable solution to the Commission's legitimacy problems and CSOs were perceived*

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<sup>80</sup> These included: '*cooperation concerning accreditation and quality assurance, recognition issues and the use of credits in the Bologna process, the development of joint degrees, the social dimension, with specific attention to obstacles to mobility, and the enlargement of the Bologna process, lifelong learning and student involvement*' (Prague Communiqué 2001).

<sup>81</sup> The Santer Commission.

<sup>82</sup> Prodi, Romano: *Shaping the New Europe*, Speech to the European Parliament, 15 February 2000.

<sup>83</sup> Mainly through the establishment of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

*as the most obvious participatory agents. Emphasis was no longer on using CSOs for their expertise and ability to implement, but as a source of democratic legitimacy through participation’* (Greenwood & Halpin 2007; Sanchez Salgado 2014: 88).<sup>84</sup>

These developments were consciously taken in mind in ESIB’s interactions with the European Commission, when actively promoting the acceptance of ESIB as the sole representor of students in the European framework. According to a former ESIB chairperson, the strongest argument of ESIB relating to its advantages over other student platforms like the ESN and others was that ESIB was a genuine embodiment of a representative ‘bottom-up’ organization, which also conditioned its access for membership on representativeness, contrary to the other ‘top-down’ organizations (Interview ESIB2). Presumably, this argumentation (together with the strategic structural developments taken by the organization as in the example of its development of policymaking capacities in reaction to the BP) bore fruit in the relations of ESIB with the DG EAC. In 2002 the DG announced that they are willing to fund European stakeholder organizations in the area of HE for a three years institutional funding.<sup>85</sup> The DG announced that organizations like EUA, EURASHE, and OBESSU were called to apply and informally ‘hinted’ that ESIB should apply as well (Interview ESIB2). This opened a budget line for administrative funds that the organization uses to this day, which further enabled it to greater measures of capacity building (Klemenčič 2012: 22). By 2003, organizations like AEGEE and ESN were no longer posing an organizational threat to ESIB, and the partnership with the Commission was better solidified (Interview ESIB2).

### ***Consequences of solidifying the organizational position within the European context***

The developments laid above provided ESIB with a platform to influence and take part in the policymaking of HE on the European level. It opened the door for the organization to enter an arena of joint dialogue with governments and the Commission regarding the evolution of HE on the continent. This opportunity was obtained partly

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<sup>84</sup> The principles of improved openness and involvement of citizens were again highlighted in the Commission’s communique in 2002 which adopted certain principles for the consultation of interested parties (Sanchez Salgado 2014: 88).

<sup>85</sup> Until then funding from the Commission would come in the form of project grants, and the rest of funding came from membership fees (Interview ESIB2).

because this was the first time that such a platform existed and partly because the organization in particular have made good use of it (Interview CoE1). The organization formalized relationships with the other NGOs, namely EUA, EURASHE and ENQA and together with them formalized the E4 Group to which the members of the BP decided to give a participatory role in the policymaking. This group, as shortly mentioned above, was granted the ministers' authority to formalize the EQAR in 2008, which was the first legal entity created in the framework of the BP, to focus on QA (EQAR 2017). The organization also became a member of steering committees of different European projects, such as ENQA's project on the enhancement of QA.

Forming alliances with the other stakeholders and pushing its own point of view and interests, *'the organization has been able to 'upload' some of its most salient issues onto the Bologna agenda. that HE should be considered a public good and is a public responsibility; that the social dimension of the Bologna process has to be considered; and that students should participate in and influence the organization and content of education at universities and other HEIs...'* (Klemenčič 2011: 22). According to a former student representative, the inclusion of Student Centered Learning (SCL) into the ESG were also a product of the organization's pushing its valued principles in the policymaking arena (Interview ESU5).

This is how the aim of the organization have changed from merely a provider of information to *'representing and promoting the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at the European level towards all relevant bodies'* (EQAR 2017). With that in mind, *'When ESIB changed its name to ESU, this change was overdue. ESIB has long ceased to be a mere provider of information; ESIB members were student representatives who in a professional way raised their constituency's concerns at a European level. They have unvaryingly and with the same commitment done so to the present day'* (Dondelinger 2012: 15).

It is important to note here, that as a consequence of these developments, the BP has significantly influenced the policy orientations of ESU and its member unions since 1999 (Klemenčič 2011: 22). The pillar conduct became the BP and the dialogue over defining its principles and philosophies. The Bologna with Students' Eyes (BWSE) is today the canonical document of the organization (Interview ESU3), outlining the notions of the different NUSs on Bologna implementation in their national contexts

across Europe.<sup>86</sup> ESU has also become profoundly subsidized by the European Commission, or more precisely- the DG EAC/EACEA. This is due to the abovementioned administrative budget line that has been granted since 2003 and due to the enlarging practice of the EACEA call for proposals in ERASMUS\TEMPUS projects, which serves as a platform for phenomenal funding to organizations and institutions in Europe and in the European Neighbourhood. These project funding framework has provided the Commission with a leverage affect,<sup>87</sup> but on the contrary it provided the organization with the ability of formalizing many important research and peer-learning projects that deals with the hot topics of HE, some by coordination and some by mere participation.<sup>88</sup>

### ***Is there a clear set of Bologna principles?***

One should be wary when trying to define exactly what are the Bologna principles and values as a defined and ‘official list’ was never formalized. ‘*The “Bologna/EHEA principles”, “objectives”, “standards”, “rules”, “regulations” and even “action lines” often overlap in the various Bologna dialects*’ (Zgaga 2012: 17) and therefore, we need to try and not confuse fundamental principles, policy commitments, tools and objectives. More so, ‘*principles are slippery concepts and it is part of their nature that they resist and defy definitions of “once-and-for-all” style. They are concepts in progress: on one hand, they are emerging and being constantly reinterpreted in an ongoing discussion*’ (Ibid: 29). The same principles themselves can sometimes be undefined, ambiguous or a substance for different interpretations by different actors in the process at the same time (Klemenčič 2012b: 638). This is exactly why scholars of political science have entered the realm of HE policy area in an attempt to understand the influencing factors, the changes in terminologies, discourses and ideational foundations, and the manner in which certain power houses have been able to ‘steer the wheel’ in their own direction.<sup>89</sup> It is instead better to go back and define the BP and its

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<sup>86</sup> This is a research document, published annually since 2003 (ESU 2015).

<sup>87</sup> Where the EACEA underlines what is important for the agency to see being accomplished with its money, on which many actors are trying to get a hold. This was underlined in many of the interviews conducted for this research.

<sup>88</sup> For example, *FINST: Financing the Students’ Future*, *QUEST: Quest for Quality for Students*, *SAGE: Students advancement of Graduates Employability*, *PL4SD: Peer-Learning for the Social Dimension*, and more (ESU Projects 2017).

<sup>89</sup> As in the abovementioned debate on the *Lisbonization* of the BP.

principles as an agora, or an arena of socialization in itself. Obviously, every aspect in the Bologna set of principles stands for different goals, and serve different ideological fundaments for different actors in the arena at the same time (Chou 2014).

For this reason, a memorization of Lenz's interpretation of ideational impact would be resurrected as '*the manner in which the European experience travel to other places in the world*'. For examining this, the 'Bologna Doctrine' or action lines, would be taken as a whole, consisting a few basic principles together with some policy commitments and action-lines.

It is safe to say that some of the basic principles are academic freedom, institutional autonomy, students' participation in governance (in the institutional, national and supra-national level), mobility of students and staff, higher education as a public responsibility and a public good. Certainly there are the topics of the EHEA, where different working groups have been formalized in order to define. These topics can be seen as action lines or policy commitments of the process: the structure of three-cycle system and ECTS, introduction of Diploma Supplement, Employability, Lifelong Learning, the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the commitment to form National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs), the commitment to develop Quality Assurance measures and adherence to the ESG, the Social Dimension and Student Centered Learning (SCL) and the development of Learning Outcomes (LO).

### ***The BP external dimension***

As mentioned above, the Bologna initiative, formally publicized in the Sorbonne meeting of four European ministers resulted in an immediate and resounding reaction from all over the CoE area. Besides the fifteen EU countries that have joined the process in 1999, until 2001 there were thirteen signatory countries (that were also members of the CoE) that were only future to become EU members a few years later.<sup>90</sup> The debate on membership was becoming more complicated as interest rose from countries that were not 'comfortably' perceived as from the European area, like when Russia, ex-Soviet countries and ex-Yugoslavian countries have shown their interest. The issue of what position should be taken in front of certain countries demonstrating their interest

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<sup>90</sup> Those were Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Croatia.



in the process was becoming a delicate political issue. The discussion that preoccupied the ministers was on where does Europe ends (Interview BOLOGNA1). In the Berlin meeting of 2003 the ministers gave the answer and decided that all countries party to the European Cultural Convention would be eligible for membership (Bologna Process 2003).<sup>91</sup> This was also where Russia, and a few south European countries were accepted into the BP,<sup>92</sup> future to be followed by seven countries of which five were party to the CoE<sup>93</sup> and two countries that were only signatories to the European Cultural Convention.<sup>94</sup>

But a new discussion started with the BP enlargement of 2003. Interest in the BP started arriving from longer distances. It is assumed that Kazakhstan, for instance, applied for access to the European Cultural Convention in large part because it wished to join the BP in 2010. A previous attempt had been turned down because Kazakhstan at the time was not a party to the Cultural Convention (Interview CoE1).<sup>95</sup> Reaction to the BP was gaining prominence in many countries and regions such as south-east Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, and more (Interview BOLOGNA1), and the ministers welcomed, at the Berlin ministerial meeting, the interest rising in other regions of the world. The ministers there agreed that the attractiveness and the openness of the EHEA should be reinforced, and they encouraged ‘*the co-operation with regions in other parts of the world by opening Bologna seminars and conferences to representatives of these regions*’ (Berlin Communiqué, 2003).<sup>96</sup>

The ministers reiterated in the Bergen Communiqué of 2005 that the EHEA ‘*should be open and attractive to other parts of the world*’. The BFUG was then called to develop a strategy for the ‘External Dimension’ of the BP. This working group was approved by the BFUG in November 2005 (EHEA 2007). The conduct of the working group resulted in the *Looking Out: the Bologna Process in a Global Setting*, the working group document presented in the London ministerial conference of 2007. It has

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<sup>91</sup> This has become one of the two prerequisites for joining the BP (Nyborg 2005).

<sup>92</sup> In 2003 Albania, Andorra, Bosnia, Serbia (including Montenegro at the time), Macedonia, Russia and the Holy See (that was only observer to the CoE) were accepted and signed the BP.

<sup>93</sup> Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

<sup>94</sup> Kazakhstan and Belarus (the latest enlargement of the BP from 2010 and 2015 respectively).

<sup>95</sup> Belarus was also an example of a country that have applied around 2005 and rejected a few times due to democratic and academic freedom violations (Interview BOLOGNA1). Belarus was only to be accepted in 2015.

<sup>96</sup> In this ministerial meeting, representatives from the follow-up committee of EULAC (EU, Latin America and Caribbean Common Space for Higher Education) were present. This was an initiative based on the EU-Latin America strategic partnership founded in 1999 (EEAS 2017).

presented recommendations based on the core strategic directions of Competitiveness, Partnership and Cooperation, Dialogue and Information. It stressed the core normative values of the European system (such as academic freedom and institutional autonomy) as the major pillar for the EHEA's attractiveness in the world and recommended the promotion and greater funding for attraction of international students, organizing HE fairs and media campaigns, the creation of European study centers, intensify cooperation in the realm of HE (as Competition and cooperation does not stand in contrast), the creation of a forum for the participation of external actors and countries in the Bologna events, and promoting an internet site for the visibility of the EHEA (EHEA 2006).<sup>97</sup>

The London communique was more extensively regarding the European '*responding to challenges in a globalized world*' (London Communique 2007) and declared that the EHEA should be open to the world. The ministers underlined the EHEA in a global context as one of the priorities for the coming years and asked the working group on the external dimension to continue its mandate for 2007-2009 with the aim of '*improving information on, and promoting the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA*' and '*improving recognition*'<sup>98</sup> (Bologna Process 2017). In February 2009 the working group with the approval of the BFUG, published its recommendations<sup>99</sup> concerning '*Improving information on the EHEA*' and '*Promoting European Higher Education to enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness*'. This preoccupation was present in the Leuven ministerial meeting that have firstly marked openness and the need to foster HEIs' internationalization of activities (Leuven Communique 2009). A continuation in this direction was held under the aegis of the International Openness working group that have resulted in the organization of the Bologna Policy Forum, which facilitated a dialogue between Bologna countries and non-Bologna countries. These forums took place in 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2015, and brought a wide international fora to the BP activities.<sup>100</sup> These developments were

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<sup>97</sup> For more information on the recommendation of the 2005-2007 working group see in "Bergen to London 2007 Report on the Bologna Work Programme 2005-2007" (Department of education and skills 2007).

<sup>98</sup> The Working Group asked the ENIC/NARIC networks to foster recognition dialogues with other regions (EHEA 2016).

<sup>99</sup> *The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in a Global Context: Report on Overall Developments at the European, National and Institutional Levels 2009.*

<sup>100</sup> The first meeting of 2009 in Leuven included the participation of Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Morocco, New-Zealand, Tunisia, the U.S.A and last but not least, Israel (Bologna Process 2009).

accompanied with the opening of the ERASMUS (Mundus) and TEMPUS programmes to different regions in the world as well.<sup>101</sup>

2010 was the launching year of the EHEA. The construction phase has been formalized- there were no new directions to put on the agenda and it was then the time to focus on issues of implementation.<sup>102</sup> However, a new discussion was then been risen. 2009 was also the year of greater and greater discussion on the global trends of HE, and the European position in the global academic world rankings that in less than a decade, enormously grown in importance and brought profound transformations to HE systems and institutions. This has started in 2003 with the Shanghai Jiao Tong University's unique project on *Academic Ranking of World Universities* (ARWU) and in what has been termed as a 'butterfly affect' was continued by multiple initiatives, that in ten years' time have become the international measures of global academic quality (Hazelkorn 2015). This have lead the European Commission to initiate its own ranking project which was formalized in 2014 into the *U-Multirank* (and *U-Map*), an alternative ranking that was developed as a crowd-sourcing instrument in opposition to the other global rankings (Van Vught & Ziegele 2011). This period was also accompanied by the consequences of the economic crisis that brought wide austerity measures and became a crisis in university tuition fees and university budgets all over the continent. These developments were linked to the Bologna Process, bringing mass demonstrations of students in many countries, protesting against the commodification of higher education. Nonetheless, after the formalization of the BP doctrine, there was now room for dealing with implementation issues and debating on the philosophies behind the BP action lines, by the side of all the stakeholders.

In an overall perspective, the BP '*transformed HE policy making 'from an almost exclusively national affair with some international influences to one where national policy is systematically considered within a Europe-wide framework'* (Westerheijden et al. 2010: 38; Klemenčič 2012b: 632). More, as was becoming profoundly apparent, this process, together with the wide EU particular investments in its own particular

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<sup>101</sup> With some programmes devised explicitly for the enhancement of the EHEA attractiveness: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus\\_mundus/results\\_compendia/selected\\_projects\\_promote\\_ehe\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/results_compendia/selected_projects_promote_ehe_en.php).

<sup>102</sup> This was also the time where the EU has finalized devising the successors to the ERASMUS programme and the Lisbon agenda- ERASMUS+ (with a dramatically increased budget) and Europe2020.

programs like the ERASMUS and the ERA- the EHEA as a whole was becoming an international agora for the exchange of knowledge.

The growing magnitude of the will to promote the BP on the global scale together with the wide global reactions to the process by the side of countries and regions that were not part of the BP,<sup>103</sup> are what have brought scholars of international relations to understand the BP as a foreign relations instrument, facilitated as a tool for enhancing Europe's position in the world, and consolidating it as a HE block. Yoav Friedman has examined the BP as an 'international norm regime' through which the EU stimulates ideational diffusion and policy convergence, and exerts its normative power, influencing global trends (Friedman 2015).

To date, many other countries and regions in the world show interest and motivation to bring their HE systems to compatibility with the 'Bologna standard' (Ibid) and this process is considered to take place in a top-down (as in the national efforts to take measures towards the process) and a bottom up (as in measures from within different national HE system towards the process) dimensions.

### ***Israel and the Bologna Process***

Israeli affiliation to Europe and mainly to the U.S was apparent before the BP and the internationalization in HE took shape, but it was mainly in the form of interpersonal initiatives and relationships.

Internationalization trends have brought some measures by the side of Israel on the national level. In 1997 Israel has joined the Lisbon Recognition Convention that was developed by the CoE and UNESCO. As mentioned, this convention was a multilateral legal agreement between the signatory countries to first of all share information of their HE systems and qualifications, and also to recognize the foreign academic qualifications of the other member states (Deardorff et al 2012: 87).<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Such as Australia (Dest 2006), Canada (Vassiliou 2012), Latin America and Africa (Deardorff et al. 2012)

<sup>104</sup> This was actually the first call for the development of Diploma Supplement in the members' HE systems.

Israel has also belonged to the European region's center for HE in the framework of UNESCO.<sup>105</sup> In this framework, Israeli academics have taken part in the scientific committee of Europe and North America forum of HE, Research and Knowledge. One of the themes that evolved in the conduct of this committee in the 2000's was following the developments of the Bologna process. This was probably the first Israeli measures of 'monitoring' the BP on a very limited and individual basis. But this have not led to an actual attention in the Israeli HE system nor in the sphere of political decision makers to the BP. At least until 2007, no reaction or discussion regarding the BP was apparent (Guri-Rosenblit 2012). According to Prof. Yuli Tamir that served in the Education, Culture and Sports Committee of the Israeli Knesset during those years- no discussion at all (or at least not a meaningful one) was given in particular to the BP developments in Europe (Interview ISRAEL1).

On the contrary, Israel has shown great interest in the EU framework program for science and innovation and since 1996, joined the EU framework program (FPs) for research and innovation, making Israel the first non-European country to become a member of the European Research Area (ERA)<sup>106</sup> (ISERD 2017). This development was facilitated by a general atmosphere of greater interest both in Israel and in the EU to develop their relationship.<sup>107</sup>

2007 was the first national reaction to the BP. Prof. Yuli Tamir, then the education minister of Israel, has applied for Israeli accession to the BP in 2007 and in the following year. However, despite multiple diplomatic efforts (Edlira-Kahani 2012), Israel was not eligible for accession as the prerequisite of being part to the European Cultural Convention was not fulfilled.<sup>108</sup> But a much greater national attention was then starting to be given to the European developments in HE (naturally to the intertwining Commission and Bologna developments), and the Israeli ministry of education was now

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<sup>105</sup> In which Israel has been a member since its birth.

<sup>106</sup> This membership continued to this day in the Israeli participation in successive programs- the FP7 and the current Horizon2020 (ISERD 2017).

<sup>107</sup> In 2000 the EU-Israel Association agreement was actioned and served as the legal basis for developing cooperation in fields like education and culture. This preceded the initiation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the 2005 Action Plan to gradually integrate Israel into European policies.

<sup>108</sup> Legal issues relating to indigenous minority rights (with their relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) together with a U.S opposition to the convention, have virtually tabooed Israeli participation in it (Interview ISRAEL1).

working on HE partnership with Europe, without taking formal part in the BP (Interview ISRAEL1).

In regard to the BP, a better attention was then possible mainly through the abovementioned Bologna Policy Forums that have facilitated a platform for Bologna and non-Bologna education ministers to develop links and exchange information (Lanir 2012). But parallel to this, the relations with the EU have further developed on a bilateral and a multilateral basis. In 2007, the ERASMUS programme was opened to non-European countries.<sup>109</sup> This have lead the Israeli education minister that sought to join the BP, to now seek the establishment of Israel's position in the new European exchange opportunities (Interview ISRAEL1). In 2008, a joint declaration was signed between Israel and the European Commission to '*reinforce cooperation and dialogue in education and training*' (European Commission 2008). This initiated a framework of dialogue meetings on exchange of education and training and established the National Tempus Office (NTO) in the Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE), which officially welcomed Israel to participation in the TEMPUS programme.<sup>110</sup> This have opened great funding opportunities for Israeli HEIs that have granted the opportunity to take part in modernization projects that are a source for great financial income.

The Israeli NTO<sup>111</sup> took a proactive role in disseminating knowledge and information regarding the European opportunities that were now opened for Israeli institutions. Naturally, this included the dissemination of information regarding the Bologna developments and principles, and promoted Israeli assimilation in certain aspects of the BP. The Bologna Experts' Forum was established in the NTO and brought together senior academics, professionals and students working to enhance voluntary progress towards the BP in light of national needs. Their work included organizing seminars and workshops on different Bologna aspects, advising HEIs, and serve as '*Ambassadors of Bologna in Israel*' (Lanir 2012).<sup>112</sup> Another example of the CHE's reaction to BP developments is the introduction of Learning Outcomes (LO) (as established by the

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<sup>109</sup> Enabling the exchange of students and staff between European and European-neighbourhood countries' institutions on an international basis, in the framework of the ERASMUS Mundus programme's External Cooperation Window (EM ECW).

<sup>110</sup> The TEMPUS programme finances multilateral partnerships between institutions in the EU and partner countries designed to enhance modernization processes in HEIs (NEO 2014).

<sup>111</sup> Later to become the National ERASMUS+ Office (NEO)

<sup>112</sup> This group of experts is part of the action program of the EACEA, in which every participating country in the TEMPUS programme builds such a group (EACEA 2015).

Bologna working group on qualifications), to ‘*The Self-Evaluation Process: Recommendations and Guidelines*’ of the Quality Assessment and Assurance Division (CHE 2012).

The way in which internationalization trends have intertwined with the ERASMUS and TEMPUS programmes opening up to Israeli participation, together making impact in Israel could be illuminated by a sequence of events in the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU).

In 2007 BGU established the international relations office, the first of its kind in Israel. This was followed by the development on the national level of the abovementioned Israeli inclusion in the EU’s HE programmes, opening vast funding opportunities for modernization and exchange partnerships. As the university was establishing cooperation with European institutions, naturally many inquiries regarding accreditation rose, and a new term that was virtually nonexistent in Israeli HE vocabulary - the ECTS - was brought up. A proposal for a TEMPUS project was then sent and received an EACEA grant, and the TEMPUS–CORINTHIAM project (bringing together Israeli, Palestinian and European HEIs institutions in a project aiming at the establishment of international relations offices; the piloting of ECTS and Diploma Supplement compatibility; and the provision of better institutional infrastructures for internationalization, mobility and quality) was launched (Tempus Corinthiam 2017).

One of the consequences of this project was the understanding that the knowledge in Israel regarding the BP/EHEA and its guiding principles were missing. This have led Moshe Amir,<sup>113</sup> to the establishment of the Bologna Training Center (BTC) in the Ben-Gurion University (Amir 2012).

With this, the establishment of the first *local actor*- (a bottom-up center devised in the realm of Israeli academia) that carries the European experience in Israel, was set up. Its aim was, and still is, to disseminate knowledge of the BP and bring the facilitation of an informed discussion on Israel’s place in it.

The BTC is today the major local entity in Israel to support Israeli HEIs in coordination and assimilation to the EHEA standards and institutional endeavors for internal

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<sup>113</sup> The official that lead both the establishment of the international office at the BGU and the TEMPUS – CORINTHIAM project.

modernization and internationalization. It has also built profound proficiency in devising TEMPUS projects applications. Based on a code of conduct of seminars, international conferences and workshops, the center facilitates peer-learning and knowledge exchange on EHEA principles in the realm of Israeli academia (including workings on the development of Learning Outcomes, ECTS, Internationalization processes, development of Diploma Supplement, and more.

### *Interim conclusions*

Internationalization, modernization and the follow of EU funds for those purposes have become a major part of the academic life in Israel. HEIs were able to join partnerships, receive enormous amounts of money, and bring profound changes to their organizations with them.<sup>114</sup> Knowledge and ideational diffusion from the EHEA to the Israeli national context comes from both the national level and the local level. In the national level this is seen in the governmental aspirations of joining the EHEA either by signing the BP or by establishing the EU-Israeli partnership. The role of the NTO of the CHE as a promoter and disseminator of knowledge regarding the EHEA and the institutional opportunities that it holds, also exemplify socialization coming from the Israeli national level. On the contrary, developments like the establishment of the BTC, and the major development in which Israeli HEIs seek funding and partnerships opportunities for the sake of institutional upgrading also exemplify change as a bottom-up process. Nonetheless, all of these developments, the top-down and the bottom-up, were facilitated mainly by the opening of EU opportunities to the national contexts. This development, it is safe to say, had the most meaningful impact, setting the stage for the specific developments in the national context, therefore, not precisely answering the question on the EU being a major civilian power (using economic instruments to generate assimilation) or a normative power, facilitating ideational diffusion based on a mere change in the logic of appropriateness.

Before entering the endeavor of understanding the students' role in this process, it is important to bear in mind this picture regarding the presence of the EHEA in Israel in general.

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<sup>114</sup> As in the example of the Shenkar institute for engineering, design and art- a small institution that have enjoyed to this day EU funding that amounts to ten million NIS in partnership projects- a phenomenal amount used for great achievements by the institution (Interview ISRAEL1).



### *The external dimension of the European Students' Union*

Since the birth of WESIB, the organization had its own accession/membership agenda that lived only in parallel to the accession agenda of the EU. The organization developed its abovementioned criteria of membership at a very early stage of its existence without a direct EU involvement (Interview WESIB1). More, naturally, it was easier for the organization to accept new members and it have “preceded” both the EU and the BP in terms of promoting and accepting memberships from national contexts that were not coming from a strictly west-European framework (as in the example of the eastern enlargement). In that regard, this well-known European inclusive approach can be seen as a bottom-up approach since a very early organizational phase, and not as a top-down prerogative of the EU.<sup>115</sup>

Since its incorporation in the BP, the students were always more in favor of incorporating new countries to the BP itself (Interview BOLOGNA1).<sup>116</sup> The students were also always in favor of expanding the EU mobility and cooperation schemes further into the European neighborhood and the world. This trait was exemplified in many cases starting from the organization’s support of the Polish EU presidency to expand the ERASMUS programme to non-EU countries (ESU AR 2011: 14),<sup>117</sup> its support for the ACCESS-ASEAN project with south-east Asia (ESU 2009b), its facilitation of conferences with the participation of students’ movements from Latin America and Asia (ESU 2009c), and its facilitation of projects to tackle the issue of European-African cooperation in higher education (ESU 2009c).<sup>118</sup>

But this supportive approach of the organization to the EU/BP enlargement initiatives was also accompanied by a constant internal debate in ESU on the self-organizational

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<sup>115</sup> Students were also traditionally more proactive in facilitating east-west dialogues, even in the cold-war era, as in the example of the European Meetings (EM) of student bodies (Interview IUS1).

<sup>116</sup> Except a great resistance by their side over the membership discussions of Belarus, for reasons of undemocratic conduct towards HEIs and the student body by the state.

<sup>117</sup> The Polish presidency sought the widening of the Erasmus-scheme not only to the Eastern neighbors but also to the southern neighborhood (‘Go East Erasmus’). The Polish minister stated that the best diplomats for countries are students and scientists. This perception was strongly supported by ESU: *‘Where would Europe be without Erasmus? We are confident that the current Erasmus generation will create more integration and understanding in Europe as this group has, in an early stage in their lives, had the chance to study and be friends with fellow Europeans and experience another culture’* (Päll, Cited in ESU AR 2011: 14).

<sup>118</sup> Project ‘Access to Success: Fostering Trust and Exchange between Europe and Africa’ and different collaboration in this regard with the EUA (ESU 2009c).

enlargement and membership issue. To some extent, one might look at this as the same process that the stakeholders of the BP itself were facing when standing In front of growing interest by different countries on joining the BP. The debate in ESU was the same as in the BP- on where the borders of Europe ends. This was considered by a former ESU chairperson as an actual ‘identity search’ period inside the organization (Interview ESU7). These years saw the approach by more southern and eastern NUSs to ESIB’s membership (such as ex-Yugoslavian and Caucasian organizations), which constantly rose the debate about borders and constantly rose the struggle between the members that wished to postpone new memberships in order to better concentrate on internal issues, and members that promoted enlargement (Interview ESU7; Interview ESU8).<sup>119</sup>

In 2008 ESU established its Student Union Development Committee (SUDC)<sup>120</sup> (ESU 2008). This development was part of a structural change that reflected the need of ESU’s new members that needed constructive support and was also due to the growing interest especially in eastern and southern Europe to join the organization (Interview ESU6). The task of the SUDC was to support student movements in countries where they were rather weak and support them with becoming stronger and more independent organizations. However, this function was admitted also as a capacity building type of activity and was not strictly related to ESU enlargement activities per se. that is to say, supporting the development of student movements out of a mission and not as a way of ‘shopping for new members’ (Interview ESU6). But it was nonetheless the beginning of a proactive approach towards development support of NUSs that were not (or not yet) affiliated to ESU. As mentioned, this directive received greater magnitude with the entrance of new members to ESU during this period and reflected a certain reorientation of the organization (as part of this new ‘identity search’). It also opened the organization for new cooperation possibilities with the OSCE<sup>121</sup> and the CoE (in addition to TEMPUS capacity building framework that was also enlarging), for activities more related to development and democracy building (Interview ESU6). Such activities

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<sup>119</sup> This was also accompanied by debates on the structure of ESIB.

<sup>120</sup> Which also received the mandate to manage membership processes (i.e manage the application processes of NUSs, the study visits Etc.).

<sup>121</sup> The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

included development support to student organizations in Kosovo (and the Balkans in general),<sup>122</sup> in Armenia, and even in Kurdistan of northern Iraq (ESU 2011).<sup>123</sup>

In 2011 ESU also responded to the happenings in the ‘Arab spring’ and after the proposal of five MEPs to create a Euro-Mediterranean ERASMUS program, the organization has actively supported this endeavor underlining a strong connection between HE exchange programmes and capacity building in terms of democracy and mutual trust (ESU 2011b).

The constant debates on new membership issues have continued throughout the end of the first decade of the 2000’s and into their second decade and in order to alleviate this, an annex to the organizational standing orders on the issue of eligibility for applying for membership was introduced (Interview ESU8). The annex drew the geopolitical border-lines of countries from within which organizations would be able to apply for membership. These borders included the members of the EU; candidate and accession countries to the EU; EFTA countries; members of the CoE; Regions or provinces within European countries with special administration or autonomy; and ‘*other countries that are not members of any above-mentioned European structure: Belarus, Israel, the Holy See*’ (ESU 2012). Nonetheless, this ‘identity search’ continued with some attempts by ‘conservative’ members to put a halt on enlargement and focus on internal issues, with eventually the organization democratically deciding not to (Interview ESU3; Interview ESU8).

With the laid above development of reaction to world happenings ESU also took a role in establishing a global student dialogue. In 2008 it established its International Cooperation Working Group (ICWG) to facilitate the European students’ communication with other student bodies on the global arena (ESU 2012). This was becoming more significant with the broader internationalization of HE conduct exemplified in the World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) +10 that took form under the auspices of UNESCO to facilitate a debate on higher education and research

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<sup>122</sup> A member of the SUDC spent several days with students at both the University of Mitrovica and the University of Pristina training students on a number of the key higher education issues at European level. This included a special focus on the Bologna Process, academic mobility in general and the specifics of the ‘Let’s Go’ campaign in particular. The training session was the first in a series of trainings with an emphasis on barriers to academic mobility, solutions to these problems and campaign techniques that can be used (ESU 2009d).

<sup>123</sup> When a delegation of the SUDC visited the Kurdish Students’ Union (KSU) in order to engage the region’s problem of shortages in places within the HE system (ESU 2011).

issues on a global scale (ESU 2012). This has put ESU as one of the motors for student dialogue and cooperation on a global scale for the first time since the days of the IUS (Interview ESU6).

In 2012, the International Cooperation Working Group (ICWG) of ESU and NUS-UK have managed the Global Student Leadership Summit in London, in order to foster cooperation and dialogue between student platforms on the global arena. The aim of these forums were also to bring global students' agreements and perspectives to the Bologna Policy Forum,<sup>124</sup> and also to promote understanding of student engagement in decision making processes (ESU 2012). ESU's involvement in promoting cooperation and dialogue among students on the global scale was also exemplified recently in the Bergen Declaration, which was the initiative to compose, together with students from across the globe, a document which demonstrates a statement of values for a global student voice (ESU 2016).

In terms of membership- as mentioned above, the organization developed its criteria of membership parallel and not as a directive of the EU. At the beginning of the 2000's the criteria generally revolved around the borders of the European Cultural Convention (Interview ESIB1). Later on, as mentioned, these understandings were embedded in the organizational standing orders in order to better solidify them. But all of these measures, naturally, have always left room for different interpretations and also for organizational politics between member NUSs, in the constant identity search and organizational development.

ESU is to date comprised of 47 national student unions and an artificial demarcation between three groups could be made. One group is comprised of 32 NUSs that belong to national contexts that are part of the EU.<sup>125</sup> The second group is comprised of ten NUSs that belong to national contexts that are part of the CoE and not the EU. A third group, comprised of only three NUSs and could be regarded as the unique and more external than the other organizations. This group includes the two Belarusian NUSs (at least they were considered external until Belarus' accession to the BP, as Belarus have only signed the European Cultural Convention but is not part of the CoE nor the EU), and the Israeli NUS (NUIS) which is the unique organization in ESU as for the fact that

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<sup>124</sup> Considering that the Bologna Policy Forum included the participation of ministers from as much as 30 non-EU countries by then (ESU 2012b).

<sup>125</sup> This is the overwhelming majority in the organization.

Israel is not party to the European Cultural Convention, is only an observer country to the CoE, and is not party to the BP.<sup>126</sup>

### *Interim conclusions*

Direct links or impact by the side of the EU/Commission on the external dimension of ESU were not found. Rather it does seem that the organization developed its external approach parallel and as a mirror image to the EU/ Commission approach. Nonetheless, the organizational development in general, and specifically its construction of international cooperation agenda has been much facilitated by the overall organizational and financial expansion of the organization during its process of Europeanization and entrance to the European policymaking structures. Probably also because of general internationalization trends, the organization has developed a strong global approach, exemplified in its ‘temptation to go global’ and its developments of platforms for global student dialogue. This exemplifies the organizational process of not only Europeanization, as was underlined above, but also in its becoming of a strong global actor in the realm of student representation as a reflection of the EU’s own process.

### ***ESU as an organizational platform for ideational diffusion***

Since the beginning, WESIB was based on a code of conduct of Board Meetings (BMs) which takes place twice a year. The BM is the major decision making and policy adoption tool of the organization. The NUSs’ delegations arrive at the BM in order to participate in the different discussions and vote for agendas, and usually every BM is preceded with a few days of seminar on different issues regarding the BP and to HE in general.

The European Student Convention (ESC) is another bi-annual conference that takes place in the capitals of the EU presidency. These conferences includes participation by the side of European policy makers (governments representatives, commissioners, Etc.),<sup>127</sup> and HE experts from the Bologna context (usually this includes representatives

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<sup>126</sup> At the moment, there is one NUS, the Students’ Alliance of Moldova (ASM) that is currently a candidate NUS (it was granted candidacy status in December 2014) (ESU AR 2014: 32).

<sup>127</sup> This is part of ESU’s broad dedication at expressing the students’ views and interests in front of the European institutions and stakeholders.

of ESU's natural partners such as EI, OBESSU, EURASHE, EUA, the BFUG, and more). The conferences themselves include debating on past and future EHEA developments and they incorporate training sessions, workshops and seminars on various issues aimed at enabling NUSs with improving their internal and external work. This conduct is accompanied with ESU's newsletters, activity reports, handbooks and other publications (including the Bologna with Students' Eyes publication) that are being sent to ESU's NUSs and other audiences around the world.

Another platform which theoretically implies teaching and diffusion capabilities is ESU's Experts' Pool on QA. This platform was created in 2009 with the support of the CoE (ESU 2009e) and can be seen as an apparent outcome of ESU's incorporation to the BP structure and its endorsement as an EHEA stakeholder in HE governance at all levels (European, national and institutional). In 2009 ESU was already taking part in European external QA assessment delivered by ENQA and in cooperation with the rest of the informal E4 group. This have led to the understanding in ESU that the students that would participate in QA activities needed a platform that would enable them to receive adequate training and exposure to knowledge. This is when a decision was made to form the student experts' pool on QA (Interview ESU4). The new body was to promote student training and involvement in the European QA activities and facilitate a better student participation in review panels (ESU AR 2011: 9). It includes a trainers' pool of QA professionals (usually ESU alumni, that assist in facilitating better learning activities) and the pool of QA students itself that is based on a call for proposals where students apply for membership and when accepted- are open to attendance in both QA trainings (Such as ENQA/EUA training sessions) and review delegations. Speaking of the external dimension of the BP, these review activities includes not only reviews of institutions and QA agencies inside the EHEA (Such as in Europe, Kazakhstan and Turkey) but also outside of it, in places such as Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, and even Japan (Interview ESU5), all in accordance with the ESG for QA. *'The pool is renewed once a year where an independent Steering Committee is responsible for launching calls for members and selecting the applicants based on public criteria. ESU has actively promoted and developed student participation in quality assurance all over Europe this way in the past years. At the end of 2012, there were 76 students registered in the pool from 29 different countries in Europe'* (ESU 2013: 26). This strategic activity development also includes private and Commission funded (TEMPUS) capacity building projects such as *QUEST for Quality for Students* (QUEST 2013) or the

*ESPAQ- Enhancing Students' Participation in Quality Assurance in Armenia* (ESPAQ 2017).

### ***NUIS and ESU – perceptions and the institutionalization of relationship***

The National Union of Israeli Students (NUIS) has applied for membership to ESU in November 2006<sup>128</sup> and after a candidacy status granted and a study visit conducted, it was accepted as full member in November 2007. But actually the first sign of understanding ESU as a platform for international socialization that could also produce 'social pressure' could be seen in an era of Israeli membership that preceded this period. The organization was a full member of ESIB somewhere around the beginning of the 2000s but was forced out around 2002 for being un-active and un-responsive in the activities of the overarching body (Interview ESIB2). One of the standing orders of ESU is that NUSs that do not attend a certain amount of BMs could be revoked of their membership (ESU 2012), and this was supposedly the issue in that case.

The decision back then to accept an application from NUIS was yet again organizationally independent- the fact that the Israeli students could not, for political reasons, take part in a Middle-Eastern student platform, was what granted them with the option to apply to ESIB (Interview ESIB2). When NUIS applied again at the end of 2006, the application was considered in ESU as a rejoining rather than a first time application process. Nonetheless a full application process took place, as required, by NUIS' leadership of 2006. The process was finalized and the BM55 in Sofia was the first BM in the new established relationship where an Israeli student representative voted on policy issues in the name of Israeli students (Interview NUIS8).

From the Israeli side, the accession campaign to ESU that was led by Itai Shonshine (NUIS' Chairperson 2006-2008) had took shape due to developments in the national arena. NUIS<sup>129</sup> was struggling against the Shochat Committee and the expected national austerity measures in tuition fees and other reforms which were seen by the students and large parts of the academia as the commodification process of Israeli HE.<sup>130</sup> One

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<sup>128</sup> BM51 in Paris.

<sup>129</sup> And the Israeli Students Organization (the representative body for most of the college students in Israel) that in 2009 have merged with NUIS.

<sup>130</sup> Similar public struggles led by students took place in European countries at the time (like Greece and France) and more of such were to take place in many countries throughout the decade.

of the directives of the new reform was the introduction of the ‘Australian model’ as the new model for tuition fees in Israel that included raising tuition fees. The leadership of NUIS decided that in order to properly engage the issue and contribute to the public debate, there was a pressing need to see what was happening in the world regarding this issue. NUIS initiated a process of formulating a comparative research on tuition fees, and that was when first contacts with ESU, as it was understood as the ‘international community’ of students, were made.<sup>131</sup> NUIS’ foreign affairs representatives have for that purpose traveled to ESU’s events and this was what have set the basis for both the more informed buildup of the student narrative in the national public struggle, and the accession process itself to ESU (Interview NUIS12). The study visit concluded that an appropriate code of conduct characterized the Israeli organization and no organizational reforms were needed in order to accept it as a member. These conclusions were presented in BM53 in Vilnius 2007 but a loud quarrel nonetheless erupted on the acceptance of NUIS with much controversy between some of the members, while the Israeli delegation, led by its chairperson, was waiting outside the meeting hall.<sup>132</sup> This have led to another preoccupation in NUIS concerning the engagement with the European students, and that was the will to introduce by live example and personal contacts- the normative, humane Israel which some of the members in the hall did not know.

The interviews made with 15 Israeli student representatives (including former chairpersons, academic affairs, research, foreign relations representatives and student representatives that held positions in ESU) have shown that these few perceptions (that characterized NUIS’ representatives in the process of first engagements with ESU) have been carried by most successor representatives, although major differences between representatives regarding the emphasis of importance were apparent and therefore exposed big differences in the level of participation between periods of times. First, *‘when you know from primary sources what is happening in other countries (both positive and negative happenings), you are better equipped with dealing with problems in your own context’* (Interview NUIS8). Second, that taking part in ESU was being

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<sup>131</sup> NUIS had engaged in international activity by then in membership of the World Union of Jewish Students (WUJES) and was one of the founding members of the Mediterranean Network of Student Representatives (MedNet) that a few of its members are also members in ESU.

<sup>132</sup> This issue was only one issue which caused contestation during this particular event, as matters like ESIB’s structural reforms, and changing the organizations’ name to ESU were also causing contestation (Interview ESU6).



considered as being part of the ‘international community’ (this notion was stronger under the leadership of Boaz Toporovsky which saw a growing engagement with world-wide students’ platforms such as ESU and WUJES, and also with an attempt to strengthen the Israeli student engagement with the UN) (Interview NUIS11). Third, that the representatives in ESU were the future leaders of Europe and NUIS has an interest in introducing them to the ‘other’, normative and un-demonized Israel.

### *Ideational diffusion?*

ESU’s platform provided NUIS with opportunity to receive primary source experience regarding different issues that they were engaging in the national context. These included communications through the foreign relations officer of NUIS and also communications based on a person to person connection. These information exchange included knowledge on tuition fees (Interview NUIS9; Interview NUIS12), on student participation in governance (Interview NUIS9; Interview NUIS13), on Mobility and accreditation (Interview NUIS16), and on the BP in general (Interview NUIS8). On the other hand, NUIS (that is considered to be a large and capable organization) also contributed from its own experience to NUSs that were searching for valuable expertise. In many cases it included information regarding the establishment of proper infrastructure for public demonstrations.

ESU’s platform was also the first real encounter of Israeli students with the BP. The need was then apparent to ‘do home works’ regarding BP issues that were the cornerstone of most activities. Another ‘pressure’ that arose was the need to inform the overarching organization’s BWSE research with the Israeli perspective, and that produced another need for further research (Interview NUIS8). This understanding of the gap in knowledge together with the realization that Israel, on the national level, was at the same time making efforts to become a member in the process, led to the first research conducted in NUIS which outlined the BP, the national Israeli approach to the process, the obstacles in its way, its main guiding principles and its advantages (Adiv 2010).

But contrary to the importance that NUIS’ representatives saw in this membership, the interviews with most representatives also exposed perceptions that hampered exchange

of knowledge and the potential of diffusion. This was a philosophical gap that revolved around the roles that a student union should have. Most of NUIS' representatives understood their role as providers of the proper infrastructure for students and not with internal institutional issues regarding teaching and learning. So great importance was given to accessibility, student support issues and governance, but no real interest in NUIS was dedicated in particular to QA, the ESG and teaching and learning aspects. In fact, ESU's unique role as a platform that represents students on the supra-national level, as a stakeholder and a partner in the EU policy arena have been in many cases seen by Israeli eyes as being too much incorporated in the system and following its guidelines. The fact that no Israeli delegate has participated in the ESU's QA experts' pool, and no meaningful discussion on SCL issues took place in NUIS, might be attributed to this gap in conceptions.

But parallel to the relationship with ESU, NUIS has also taken part in other developments more relating to the national context. First, NUIS was invited annually to the NTO's TEMPUS workshop that also disseminated information (Interview NUIS8). A few of NUIS' representatives (mainly from the academic and research departments) joined the Bologna Experts' pool of the NTO, that was a platform for multiple seminars and workshops in a year. According to two student representatives that have taken part in this platform, it has provided them with exposure to valuable knowledge sharing and have helped facilitate a project on inspirational lecturers in 2016 (Interview NUIS6; Interview NUIS14).

Another major development was NUIS' new participations in a few TEMPUS projects. This have started with TEMPUS-IRIS<sup>133</sup> and TEMPUS-ECOSTAR,<sup>134</sup> during 2013, and continued with TEMPUS-ESPRIT<sup>135</sup> (starting in January 2014).

These developments *seem* to have had more influence on NUIS as more dedication could be seen in the organizational documentary towards elements of the BP (and the EU's modernization agenda for HE). In 2014, a policy paper on the quality of teaching in Israel was produced in NUIS (NUIS 2014). The policy paper entailed a comparative outlook on the quality in teaching conducts of the U.S, the U.K, Estonia, Spain and

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<sup>133</sup> A TEMPUS project that facilitated expertise in internationalization processes in HEIs.

<sup>134</sup> A TEMPUS project that facilitated expertise regarding English language learning and assessment in HEIs.

<sup>135</sup> A TEMPUS project that facilitated expertise in social benchmarking tools and the the enhancement of the social responsibilities in HEIs.

Ireland and based on the report of the European Commission's High Level Group on the Modernization of Higher Education,<sup>136</sup> have called for a top-down promotion of quality in teaching mechanisms by the Israeli CHE (NUIS 2014). Another NUIS publication of June 2014 have dealt with employability issues in Israel and called for the institutionalization of greater measures of mobility and recognition, and for the promotion of a harmonized accreditation system, '*similar to the conduct of the European ECTS scheme*' (NUIS 2014b). In 2015, a policy paper was issued by NUIS to tackle internationalization in Israel. The policy paper outlined the need in improving internationalization, and introduced multiple recommendations to enhance internationalization in the Israeli HE system. Among other recommendations, the document yet again called for the enhancement of a harmonized accreditation system ('*such as the ECTS in the BP*') and improving recognition aspects ('*such as the Diploma Supplement (DS) of the BP*'). The document also called for the establishment of a national committee to form a strategy towards internationalization (NUIS 2015c).

At the same period of time, some BP aspects were proven to take root due to pure socialization processes and to receive a 'more permanent place' in NUIS' organizational memory. This took place with the new workings and introduction of the organizational vision document of NUIS, named 'Education 2020' (NUIS 2015). The vision was a joint effort, starting in 2014, by two of NUIS' future chairpersons (at the time), to introduce a long term constitutional document that would guide policy orientations and balance the 'reactionary' conduct in the organization that was more prone to changes (Interview NUIS6). One of the aims in the document was to grant professional validations to the document's wider social aspirations and goals,<sup>137</sup> and an organizational project combining the work of the academic and research department, have been initiated for preparing the vision. This work, mainly conducted by the academic department representatives, have incorporated some aspects that were already part of the organizational conceptual framework, like quality in teaching, but also new terms such as the principle of Life Long Learning (LLL),<sup>138</sup> and Student Centered

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<sup>136</sup>The Document is available online on:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/library/reports/modernisation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/reports/modernisation_en.pdf). Accessed 15 FEB 2017.

<sup>137</sup> That concentrated on three broad aspects: before participation in HE, during the degree, and after graduation (NUIS 2015).

<sup>138</sup> Incorporated to give answer to employability and recognition issues.

Learning (SCL).<sup>139</sup> According to one of the academic department representatives that prepared the document, these aspects, among others, were the result of prior learning and engagement with the Bologna Training Center (BTC) team members, in the framework of the TEMPUS-ESPRIT project (Interview NUIS3). The idea of the TEMPUS-ESPRIT project was devised by the BTC and presented to NUIS in search for its participation in the project.<sup>140</sup> The project was kicked-off at the beginning of 2014 with both NUIS and ESU as partners,<sup>141</sup> and the engagement in this framework was the basis for incorporating the laid above aspects in the 'vision 2020' document.

The 'education 2020' document also set the stage for further research and activities in preparation for the 2016's multi-annual reform plan of the Israeli HE for the years 2017-2022. This document of recommendation, '*The National Union of Israeli Students' Recommendations for the Multi-Annual Plan of the Council for Higher Education and the Planning and Budgeting Committee*' (NUIS 2016), have incorporated the aspects of 'Vision 2020' and some of the prior research that has been done in the organization. This time, as in prior cases, recommendation were made for the enhancement of quality in teaching, incorporation of Life Long Learning aspects, Internationalization (including the development of Diploma Supplement and recognition and this time also called for the introduction of Learning Outcomes to the HE system as a means of improving teaching.

### ***Final conclusions***

The main attempt of this research was to grant new empirical and theoretical insights to the Normative Power Approach (NPA). First, with addressing normative power as *pouvoir normatif*, a clearer demarcation between military, civilian and normative powers was introduced. Second, an attempt was made to better establish the role of civil society in NPA and in the foreign relations of the EU. The research outlined a theoretical model, the *NPE Chain*- which starts with the Europeanization processes of

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<sup>139</sup> The SCL principle were present in the first preparations but was missing in the final published document.

<sup>140</sup> NUIS was for several years looking for partnership and funding for the construction of social responsibility ranks and mechanisms in the Israeli HE systems (Interview NUIS10), to no avail. An attempt to put this endeavor on ESU's agenda were also made by a former student representative occupying a position in ESU (Interview NUIS9).

<sup>141</sup> For more information see <https://www.tempus-esprit.org/>.

civil society organizations, their growth in prominence and their evolution as a socialization platform that better enables the travel of norms and ideational diffusion. Hence- contributing to the EU's normative impact potential.

Based on a historical research and in-depth interviews with figures in the EHEA, the ESU (past and present), and the NUIS (past and present), this research establishes some theoretical and empirical insights for the literature.

First, the Europeanization processes of higher education have transformed the landscape of (youth and HE oriented) civil society on the continent. As in other policy areas, the EU has stimulated organizational growth in both numbers and prominence, providing both *funding opportunities* and *access opportunities* to multiple organizations and have even establishing organizations and platforms by itself.

The ESU was individually born as a local organization of west-European national students' unions for the purpose of knowledge dissemination and it has become a policy oriented political organization with a clear European dimension and a clear financial dependence on the European Commission, that have become a partner and an interest group in the EHEA policy area. The organization has been able to have an impact on the European HE policy. It has acquired ownership on the incorporation of the Social Dimension to the BP; the incorporation of the Student Centered Learning (SCL) approach to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance (QA), and the principle of all levels- student participation in governance. Secondly, the organizational growth in prominence have enabled it with both becoming more visible and attractive on the 'international arena of students'. This was seen in the organization's continuing enlargement that took form as a 'mirror picture' to the enlargement of the BP itself. This process has also been accompanied by 'identity search' and contestation periods, in which the organization have always decided not to stop enlargement. The organization has always supported the expansion of EU initiatives, such as ERASMUS and TEMPUS, to other parts of the world, and the organization has shown greater appeal to development support in the east and in the south. With this the organization better solidified itself as a platform for international socialization and ideational diffusion.

In terms of examining the organization as an arena for international socialization, a few insights could be drawn from the Israeli case study. First, the organization did stimulate

greater involvement and knowledge circulation on the BP. the organization also facilitated exchange of knowledge that informed the Israeli organization in its own initiatives at home, such as the struggle against the ‘Australian model’ of tuition fees in 2006 and the struggle to incorporate a student representative to the Planning and Budgeting Committee (basing the argument on the British model). Nonetheless, at the same time, no engagement seem to have taken root regarding pure academic issues of teaching and learning, QA, or SCL.

On the contrary, Israeli engagement with the Bologna Training Center (BTC), the TEMPUS projects, and the Bologna Experts’ Pool of the National Tempus Office (NTO) have all seemed to have impacted NUIS more than the engagements with the ESU. NUIS has with the increase of these engagements, showed much greater dedication to some renowned EHEA aspects- such as the Life Long Learning aspects, the quality in teaching aspects, and ECTS and internationalization. This have culminated with ‘*The National Union of Israeli Students’ Recommendations for the Multi-Annual Plan of the Council for Higher Education and the Planning and Budgeting Committee*’ that have incorporated Life Long Learning, enhancement of quality of teaching, the diploma supplement and the Learning Outcomes and internationalization into its recommendation to the national level.

Because these developments could not be attributed to socialization processes in the framework of ESU, an operationalization of the *NPE chain* was not established here. Nevertheless, the research does underline the role of the *local* in ideational diffusion processes. It has proven that the European experience has traveled to other locals, taking root by changing conceptions following a logic of appropriateness rather than consequences. It has done so not by direct involvement by the EU, but rather by engagement of civil society. Civil society that can in its turn ‘upload’ the European experience to its national level.

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## תקציר

עבודה זו מבקשת לספק הארות אמפיריות ותיאורטיות לגישת העוצמה הנורמטיבית (NPA) בתחום יחסי החוץ של האיחוד האירופי. ראשית, על-ידי התייחסות אל העוצמה הנורמטיבית כאל סוג של עוצמה (על פני סוג אפיון של שחקן בזירה הבינלאומית) מוצגת בעבודה זו הבחנה ברורה יותר בין עוצמה צבאית, עוצמה אזרחית ועוצמה נורמטיבית. שנית, עבודה זו מבקשת להאיר את תפקידה של החברה האזרחית בגישת העוצמה הנורמטיבית ויחסי החוץ של האיחוד האירופי. עבודה זו מבקשת לשרטט מודל תיאורטי המתחיל בתהליכי אירופיזציה (Europeanization) של ארגוני חברה אזרחית, ממשיך בפיתוחן של פלטפורמות חִבְרוֹת המאפשרות את 'שינוען' של נורמות, ומסתיים בדיפוזיציה רעיונית (ובכך תורמת לפוטנציאל ההשפעה הנורמטיבית של האיחוד האירופי).

מבחינה אמפירית, מחקר זה מתמקד בתחום ההשכלה הגבוהה ובהתאחדות הסטודנטים האירופית (ESU) כמקרה בוחן. הוא מנטר את התפתחותו ההיסטורית של אזור ההשכלה הגבוהה האירופי (EHEA), את 'מימדו החיצוני', ואת מקומה של מדינת ישראל בתהליך זה. בהמשך לכך, מנטר המחקר את התפתחותה ההיסטורית של התאחדות הסטודנטים האירופית- את תהליך האירופיזציה שהיא עברה, את 'מימדה החיצוני' ואת הצמחתה של פלטפורמת חִבְרוֹת בינלאומית. העמקה של מקרה הבוחן נעשית על-ידי ניטור יחסיה של התאחדות הסטודנטים האירופית עם ארגון חבר בה- התאחדות הסטודנטים הישראלית. בחינה אמפירית המבוססת על ראיונות עומק וניתוח מסמכים מוחלת על מנת לבחון השפעה נורמטיבית המבוססת על תהליכי חִבְרוֹת.

מחקר זה מוצא כי תהליכי האירופיזציה השאירו חותם משמעותי על התאחדות הסטודנטים האירופית. המדיניות האירופית הפכה למרכז עולמו והארגון אף פיתח מכניזמים לחִבְרוֹת בינלאומית, מה שאפשר לו לשמש כ'נשא' של נורמות וכזרוע ב'מימדו החיצוני' של אזור ההשכלה הגבוהה האירופי. הארגון הצליח להביא למידה מסוימת של השפעה על הארגון הישראלי, בעיקר דרך שיתוף של מידע ודרך 'דחיפה חברתית' לעסוק בנושאי מרחב ההשכלה הגבוהה האירופי. למרות זאת, לנשאי נורמות מקומיים ולמנגנון פרויקטי טמפוס (TEMPUS) הייתה מידה גבוהה יותר של השפעה על הארגון הישראלי והם הביאו לדיפוזיציה רעיונית ברת מעקב.

דרך התיווך של ארגוני החברה האזרחית ונשאי נורמות מקומיים, האיחוד האירופי מסוגל להנחיל השפעה רעיונית על אליטה עתידית ולהביא לשינויים ראשית בזירה הלוקאלית-אזרחית אשר לאחר מכן יכולים להיות 'מורמים' אל הזירה הלאומית, כפי שמקרה הבוחן במחקר זה מעלה.



אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב

הפקולטה למדעי הרוח והחברה

המחלקה לפוליטיקה וממשל

בנייתן של עוצמות נורמטיביות בינלאומיות ברמה הלוקאלית :

מקרה הבוחן של התאחדות הסטודנטים האירופית

חיבור זה מהווה חלק מהדרישות לקבלת התואר "מוסמך למדעי הרוח והחברה"

(M.A)

מאת : נתנאל גובהרי

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