



VNiVERSiDAD
D SALAMANCA

CAMPUS DE EXCELENCIA INTERNACIONAL

TRABAJO DE FIN GRADO EN GLOBAL STUDIES

BACHELOR THESIS IN GLOBAL STUDIES

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024

*Are all politicians the same?
Ideology as predictor of the severity of military responses in the
Israel-Palestine conflict*

By

Lucía Fernández González

Academic Tutor

Isabel Inguanzo Ortiz &

Hugo Marcos Marné

INDEX

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	6
A. PHENOMENON: SEVERITY IN MID _s	6
B. FACTORS OF SEVERITY	7
3. METHODS	16
A. SPECIFIC CASE	16
B. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH	18
C. OUTCOME	19
D. CONDITIONS FOR SEVERITY	19
4. RESULTS	28
5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	33
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY	36
7. APPENDIX	46
A. INDICATORS OF SEVERITY	46
B. ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT: CONTEXT	47
C. HAMAS: A BRIEF EXPLANATION	49
D. CLASSIFICATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES	50
E. EXTENDED VERSION OF TABLE 2	51

ABSTRACT

The influence of ideology on the severity of interstate conflict is relatively underexplored, especially if we take into account the interaction between ideological fractionalization, terrorist attacks, and the use of severe force in the conflict of Israel and Palestine. To explore this topic, I carried out a comparative analysis using the indirect method of difference in the different Israeli government periods in the 21st Century (1999-onwards). The overall results show that ideology plays an important role in the use of severe force, being the presence of left parties a necessary condition to prevent severe attacks by Israel. On the other hand, previous significant Palestinian attacks are always countered with severity by Israeli Armed Forces (sufficient condition), but the use of severe force by Israel is not always preceded by significant Palestinian terrorist attacks (not a necessary condition).

Keywords: Ideology, severity, interstate conflict, Israel, Palestine.

La influencia de la ideología sobre la severidad en conflictos interestatales es relativamente inexplorada, especialmente la interacción entre fraccionalización ideológica, ataques terroristas y el uso de fuerza severa en el conflicto de Israel y Palestina. Con el objetivo de explorar este tema, he llevado a cabo un análisis comparativo, usando el método indirecto de diferencia aplicado a los diferentes periodos de gobierno israelíes en el siglo 21 (1999-presente). Los resultados finales muestran que la ideología realmente juega un papel importante en el uso de fuerza severa, siendo la presencia de partidos de izquierda una condición necesaria para prevenir ataques severos por Israel. Por otra parte, los ataques terroristas palestinos significativos siempre son respondidos con severidad por parte de las Fuerzas Armadas Israelíes (condición suficiente), pero el uso de fuerza severa por parte de Israel no siempre ha ido precedido por ataques terroristas palestinos significativos (no es una condición necesaria).

Palabras claves: Ideología, severidad, conflicto interestatal, Israel, Palestina.

1. INTRODUCTION

After the Hamas' attacks on October 7th, 2023, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict made it back to the headlines of media outlets. Although this event caused a disruptive re-awakening of the conflict, the asymmetrical dispute between both states is nothing new. They have been confronted for around 75 years, in which there have been attempts to solve the problem and reach peace, but none of them succeeded due to the lack of understanding between parties. Moreover, the ineffectiveness of the United Nations (UN) has also a role in this issue. In April 2024, 141 UN members recognised the state of Palestine, however, it was in vain as the United States (US) vetoed the full recognition of the Palestinian State. Besides the different arguments and historical reasons argued by both Jewish and Palestinian peoples, nowadays the main concern of the international community is about the humanitarian crisis and brutality that people are facing in areas such as the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In fact, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Israel to implement measures to prevent genocide against Palestinians, in application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel).¹ Overall, there is a widespread concern about the severity of Israel's military response, to the extent that the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant against Netanyahu to investigate crimes of war and crimes against humanity².

Over the years, a vivid academic discussion has emerged to answer why States use different levels of force in Militarised International Disputes (MIDs). Relevant variables such as economic cycles (Cashman, 2014), alliance polarisation (Wallace, 1973; Bueno de Mesquita, 1978; Wayman, 1984), ethnic distribution (Woodwell, 2004), political instability (Reed, 2014), or presence of veterans in the government (Gelpi & Feaver, 2002) have been identified as potential explanations. However, much less attention has been paid to ideology when explaining the severity of MIDs. So, this thesis delves into the interaction between ideological fractionalization, terrorist attacks, and the use of severe force in the Israel-Palestine conflict, while also posing the question: How much influence does the ideological composition of a government have in terms of its military and foreign policy decisions?

¹ <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/192>

² <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-applications-arrest-warrants-situation-state>

By exploring this question, the research contributes to the literature by shedding light on the intricate relationship between internal ideological dynamics within a government and its strategic responses to terrorism and conflict, thus emphasizing the significance of understanding the ideological underpinnings shaping a state's military interventions.

Regarding the state-level factors that have an impact on military-foreign policy, Ben-Yehuda and Levin-Banchik (2014) have investigated the relationship between regime typology and violent responses to international terror crises, concluding that when terrorism appears, security threats are the main priority of democracies over civil freedoms and rights. Power plays a role, determining the severity of the retaliations executed by democratic states. Moreover, Stein (2015) suggests that public opinion is a powerful instrument that clearly interferes in a State's position regarding a conflict. Studying the effect of revenge in democracies and their perspective towards MIDs, the author found that those democracies which have adopted the death penalty as their penal system (as a proxy of revengeful societies), are more likely to initiate a war.

A recent study by Keller & James (2021) about the influence of ideology on US Foreign Policy Crises has proved that there is a clear difference between the behaviour of Democratic (Left-wing party) and Republican (Right-wing party) presidents, concluding that Republican presidents not only were more interventionist, but also use more severe means of violence. According to Oktay (2014), the relationship between government composition and their international behaviour can be explained by two comparative theories: veto players (Tsebelis, 1995), and the clarity of responsibility (Powell and Whitten, 1993). These perspectives are not rivals but complementary. However, for Clare (2010), none of these theories are completely correct, a coalition itself is not able to stimulate the conflict behaviour of a country, and it is ideological fractionalization what really matters. We need to analyse the ideological composition of each coalition, apart from the type of government of the state (Clare, 2010).

The method used to test the different hypotheses is the indirect method of difference, which allows focusing on different variables whose specific presence (coded as 1) or absence (coded as 0) influence

the use of different levels of force in a MID (in this case applied into the Israel-Palestine conflict). The conditions that have been taken into account are ideological government fractionalization, and previous terrorist attacks.

The overall findings suggest that previous significant attacks are a sufficient condition for the Israeli severe use of military force, but these are not a necessary condition. In addition, cohesive right-wing parties are also a sufficient condition. However, results show that right-wing outliers in a non-cohesive left-wing coalition do not influence the intensity of military use of force in the Israeli-Palestine conflict. In contrast, in the case of left-wing parties, the outcomes show that their presence in government in the form of a non-cohesive left-wing coalition, or as outliers in non-cohesive right-wing coalitions, is a necessary condition to avoid a severe response by Israel. This leads to the assumption that the presence of a left cohesive alliance will also follow the same pattern.

This thesis is divided into seven different sections. It begins with the theoretical framework which offers an extensive explanation of the previous literature about the concerned topic, organised into subsections (phenomenon, international factors, dyadic factors, and state-level factors). Then, there is the methodological part, where variables are explained in detail as well as the analysis of the research. In the next section, the results are presented, before the final part is destined for discussing the results and conclusion. Additionally, there are five appendixes.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. PHENOMENON: SEVERITY IN MIDS

When discussing interstate war, it is desirable to establish an operational definition to distinguish between war and other forms of military action, such as border skirmishes. J. David Singer and Melvin Small (lead investigators of the Correlates Of War Project) have operationalized interstate war as a conflict where at least one member of the interstate system is involved on each side,

resulting in a collective sum of battle-connected deaths exceeding 1,000³. This definition has become a commonly accepted standard to conceptualize interstate war (Cashman, 2014). Still, before reaching the level of full-scale war, many states engage in hostile interactions with other members of the interstate system. These hostile interactions are known as Militarised Interstate Disputes (MIDs). According to Gochman and Maoz (1984, p. 587), a MID is “a set of interactions between or among states involving threats to use military force, displays of military force, or actual uses of military force”.

Beyond the mere occurrence of wars or MIDs, some scholars focus on some of their characteristics, considering factors such as its severity, magnitude, or intensity. Small and Singer (1982) introduced basic indicators for each: severity is quantified by the total number of battle-connected deaths incurred by all involved parties; magnitude is indicated by the cumulative duration, in months, that each nation remained engaged in the conflict; and intensity is measured by the number of battle deaths per nation-month (Cashman, 2014). According to Weisiger (2013) conflict severity can also be reflected in its impact in society, in terms of costs of opportunity. In that regard it is useful to take into account its duration and economic costs. Firstly, war duration is important as the presence of war itself causes social costs, and it is evident that the longer a war is, the more destructiveness implies. Secondly, the economic costs can also serve as a relevant variable because the amount of money used for soldiers' salaries and weapons buying, will not be used to pay for food or other basic services. The higher the military-economic costs, the higher the opportunity costs for society's welfare.

B. FACTORS OF SEVERITY

International factors

According to Cashman (2014), there are a variety of international factors related to the economy and the structure of the international system. Regarding economic factors, some authors have explored the influence of the economic cycle on the severity of interstate wars. Both long cycles and world systems theories speak about the existence of some economic cycles called K waves or long

³ <https://correlatesofwar.org/>

waves. Its original name, *Kondratieff waves*, comes from its author, the Russian economist Nikolai Kondratieff. In the 1920s, he published his research about a fifty-year wave in prices, production, and consumption in the economic system of the most important capitalist countries. Although Nikolai was not able to transform his speculations about the relationship of K-waves with war, some authors have carried out deep research about it. For example, Thompson and Zuk (1982) analysed the data from 1780 to 1914 in Britain and the US, to find that many of the major wars started in the upswing phase of a K-wave. It was observed that price upswing preceded the most severe wars due to the abundance of resources, whereas the upper turning points were related to the end of such wars. In addition, Bennet and Stam (2009), after using the ruling code designed by Goldstein (1988), concluded that periods of economic growth are correlated with higher probability of the escalation of wars and militarised disputes.

Moreover, the literature on interstate conflict has analysed the effect of world system polarisation. Michael Wallace (1973) found a curvilinear relationship between polarisation and the magnitude and severity of war. This factor is related to alliances, as the creation of the latter usually causes polarisation, producing conflict of greater magnitude, duration, and severity. This pattern is characterised by the increasing perception of threat, the reduction of cross-pressure and mediators' effects, and the promotion of arm racing. Furthermore, once a war takes place, the existence of alliances enhances its expansion among the system of states clusters. In summary, Wallace (1973), Bueno de Mesquita (1978), and Wayman (1984) found a link between alliance polarisation and more severe wars.

Dyadic factors

The term "dyadic" is an adjective that originates from the noun "dyad," referring to the fundamental unit of a militarized conflict, which describes a pair of opposing entities (Harbom et al., 2008). The study of interactions between states, and their common and shared features are key to understanding why some dyads are more violent than others. There are five main determining factors: contiguity, territorial dispute, rivalry, power parity, and the absence of joint democracy.

To begin with, contiguity means geographic proximity, a crucial element in dyadic conflicts. States that share borders are more prone to engage in MIDs due to direct territorial interactions, border disputes, and the ease of projecting military force across shared frontiers (Cashman, 2014, p. 251-252). Secondly, territorial disputes over land ownership and borders are a major source of conflict between states. They often escalate into MIDs the control over contested areas, which can be driven by strategic, economic, or symbolic reasons are at stake (Cashman, 2014, p.238-251). Thirdly, long-standing rivalries significantly increase the probability of conflict, as rival states are more likely to view each other's actions with suspicion and hostility, leading to a higher frequency of militarized disputes. Historical grievances and competitive power dynamics often foster these rivalries (Cashman, 2014, p. 252-257). Fourthly, the relative power of states in a dyad influences conflict dynamics. When states are roughly equal in power (power parity), the risk of conflict can be higher due to the perceived possibility of a favorable outcome. Conversely, significant power asymmetry can either deter conflict (due to the weaker state's reluctance) or provoke it, if the weaker state feels desperate or the stronger state seeks to assert dominance (Cashman, 2014, p. 275-277). And lastly, the democratic peace theory posits that democracies are less likely to engage in conflict with one another. Dyads that lack joint democracy (i.e., where at least one state is not a democracy) have a higher propensity for conflict. Democratic states resolve disputes through negotiation and legal mechanisms, while non-democratic states might resort to military means more readily (Cashman, 2014, p. 264-275). When a dyad contains all these characteristics, the risk of conflict is very high (Cashman, 2014, p. 277).

On the other hand, there are some situations that could reduce or eliminate the danger of some factors, such as the amicable settlement of territorial demands (diplomatic resolutions and treaties that address territorial disputes can mitigate the risk of conflict), existence of democracies (democracies are more likely to engage in peaceful negotiations and adhere to international norms and laws), or the creation of "buffer zones" (a neutral area serving to separate hostile forces or nations) between the two states (Cashman, 2014, p. 277). However, the efficacy and long-term impact of buffer zones are debated. Some scholars argue that buffer zones may only provide

temporary relief and could fail to address underlying tensions, leading to renewed conflicts once the buffer is removed (Beehner & Meibauer, 2016).

One of the most important dyadic factors, that have already been explained, is the existence of territorial disputes within a dyad. The International Crisis Behavior Database (ICB) has proved that territorial issues are present in almost half of the 412 cases of international crises (1918-1994) they analysed. Later, Ben-Yehuda (2004) used more recent ICB data⁴ (1918-2001) to conclude that crises related to territoriality -such as threats to territory, threats to a state's integrity and security, or general conflict over the area- are the kind of crises most prone to trigger violent management techniques and to war escalation. Moreover, "protracted conflicts" -which are those including at least 3 crises between two adversaries during a period of at least 5 years- have a much greater tendency to use extreme violence than "non-protracted conflicts" (Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 2000). According to Huth (2009) and Hensel (2000), territory-based MIDs are more likely to include a militarised attack as a response by the target than any other types of conflicts, more likely to escalate than disputes based on other issues, more difficult to resolve, and more prone to recur.

Shared ethnicity is another dyadic factor that often correlates with the severity of interstate conflicts between neighbours. Woodwell (2004) explains the different relevant categories that can exist and determine the relationships between states and ethnic groups: (1) Majority-Majority: The same ethnic group constitutes the majority in each state (North Korea-South Korea); (2) Minority-Minority: The same ethnic group constitutes a minority in both states (Kurds, Gipsy); and (3) Majority-Minority: the same ethnic group constitutes a majority in one state but a minority in the other state (Muslims in Pakistan and India, Arabs in Israel and Palestine). The author states that the dyad that is more prone to engage in a violent conflict is a minority-majority. The emergence of a classic diaspora exists when an ethnic group is a majority in one state, whereas, at the same time, it is the minority in another one. In these cases, ethnic minorities are able to exert some kind of control over politics in the state they live in, as they can seek external support to exert

⁴ The most recent versions of the primary ICB data sets (Version 15) contain information for all crises occurring during the 1918-2019 period. The datasets include information on 496 international crises and 1,100 crisis actors. There are 35 protracted conflicts (ICB Project).

pressure by maintaining political links to a homeland. Moreover, governments that include trans-order minorities have a reluctant attitude towards policies of neighboring ethnic majority states. They see them as dangers to its national sovereignty and territorial integrity. This situation often leads to diaspora-based nationalism. Woodwell (2004) concludes that ethnic rebellion is the most extreme manifestation of minority discontent- in combination with a minority-majority dyad, increases the probability of international dispute. Despite the fact that these cases do not frequently happen, the author found huge increases in the tendency for disputes within such dyads, rising the likelihood of MIDs to over 500%, and for fatal MIDs increases by almost 1000%.

Finally, Tir and Jasinki (2008) did research about targeted ethnic minorities, based on the domestic-level diversionary theory of war. This war theory defends that the main cause of a war is not a direct conflict of interest between two countries, but rather a complex and difficult domestic situation, such as economic crisis or political unrest. When a state is under those circumstances, political leaders might aim to divert domestic discontent and reinforce their public image, following the model of the “rally around the flag” effect⁵ (Russett, 1990). The authors concluded that internal minoritarian ethnic groups can be victims of government attacks when this latter is in a moment of unpopularity.

State-Level Factors

A state-level analysis is based on Cashman’s (2014, p.12) premise that: “There is something about the nature of particular states that causes them to be more warlike or aggressive than those that lack these attributes”. So, many theories are pointing at state-level factors that can play a significant role in conflict intervention and violent responses at the national level, such as political instability, political culture, ideology of government, and composition of governments. Regarding political instability, Reeds (2014) studied the relationship between internal wars and interstate conflict. Apart from his finding that proves there does exist a correlation between these two variables, he also found that three of the five types of interstate disputes born out of internal wars are associated with

⁵ The propensity for the American public to put aside political differences and support the president during international crises (Baker and Oneal, 2001).

dispute severity. Direct intervention and interstate coercion are related to more severe episodes of interstate conflict. Another potential source of instability is terrorism. Ben-Yehuda and Levin-Banchik (2014) have investigated the relationship between regime typology and violent responses to international terror crises (ITCs). They proposed two hypotheses: (1) democracies and other regimes would counterattack even when the risk of escalation exists; and (2) only the stronger democracies are the ones that would respond with massive violence like other states. While they found evidence to support their first hypothesis, the second hypothesis was not confirmed, as it was found that strong democracies do not only use violence to fight back but are the most violent retaliators (even more than non-democratic states). Hence, these outcomes lead to the conclusion that when terrorism appears, security threats are the main priority of democracies, over civil freedoms and rights. Moreover, power plays a role, in determining the severity of the retaliations executed by democratic states. Therefore, the first two hypotheses of this bachelor's thesis are:

H1: Significant terrorist attacks are a necessary condition for severe use of military force in response.

H2: Significant terrorist attacks are a sufficient condition for severe use of military force in response.

Very much connected to the aftermath of terrorist attacks, another significant state factor is the power and influence that public opinion can exert over decisions regarding foreign affairs. According to Stein (2015), public opinion is a powerful instrument that clearly interferes with a State's position regarding a conflict. The author has studied the concrete case of the effect of revenge in democracies and their association with the initiation of MIDs. He found that those democracies which have adopted the death penalty as their penal system (as a proxy of revengeful societies), are more likely to initiate a war.

Beyond specific values and attitudes, in recent decades more academics have started to study the influence of ideology on different ways of violence, including interstate conflict (Haas, 2005; Owen, 2010). A recent study (Keller & James, 2021) about how US Foreign Policy Crises are addressed depending on the ideology of the governing party, has proved that there is a clear difference between

the behaviour of Democratic (Left-wing party) and Republican (Right-wing party) presidents. Concerning the centrality of violence, they noticed that there was a 54.5% higher change of using violence as a response if the president was Republican (65.1%) than if he was Democrat (10.6%). Moreover, the authors concluded that Republican presidents also use more severe means of violence in their foreign policy. These findings are backed by surveys showing that Republican voters consistently favor more aggressive policies (Eundak 2006; Trager and Vavreck 2011; Gries 2014). Similarly, Haesebrouck and Mello (2020) initially assumed that right-wing parties are more prone to support military operations when the national interest is at risk, whereas left-wing parties support more those operations in which inclusive goals are present (humanitarian or peace-keeping operations). However, they found a curvilinear pattern, in which centre-right parties are more supportive of military missions, whereas parties at both extremes of the political spectrum are less supportive.

Bertoli et al. (2018) distinguish between conservatives and liberals, who hold distinct perspectives on the legitimacy and effectiveness of military force. Cross-national survey data supports this, indicating that liberals prioritise fairness, caregiving responsibilities, and harm prevention, whereas conservatives emphasise maintaining social order, protecting sanctified objects, and showing loyalty to their groups (Graham et al., 2009; Boer & Fischer, 2013). Various studies have demonstrated that these moral foundation differences shape foreign policy views (Schwartz, 1992; Kertzer et al., 2014; Kertzer & Rathbun, 2015). Specifically, liberals tend to be more "prosocial" and favour international compromise, whereas conservatives are more "proself" and engage in more aggressive bargaining (Schwartz et al., 2010). These ideas have been reinforced by many studies, such as the one by Arena and Palmer (2009), who utilised a probit model to examine panel data from twenty stable democracies between 1960 and 1996, discovering that right-wing governments have a higher likelihood of initiating disputes. They argue that right-wing leaders are less likely to be ousted for imprudent use of force compared to left-wing leaders, thus increasing their propensity to start international conflicts to gain domestic support. Additionally, Clare (2010) employed logistic regression on data from twenty parliamentary democracies from 1950 to 1998, finding that these democracies are about twice as likely to initiate disputes when under right-wing party control.

Still, other authors have found that ideology is not as important as the personal background of people in government. Regarding the composition of governments, having members of the military in the executive is a key element in explaining state behaviour in an interstate conflict and its level of severity, as they often are perceived as the experts in the legitimised use of violence. Interestingly, Gelpi and Feaver (2002), found that politicians with a military background were ultimately less interventionist than civilians, especially when dealing with Human Rights issues, where military veterans tend to advocate for a restricted use of force. Still, according to the authors, while military leaders are more reluctant to intervene in non-*realpolitik* issues when they do it, they tend to support a more severe use of force. Additionally, some authors have found that a threat to the military's interests can foster a severe military reaction when the military is contested (Dassel & Reinhardt 1999).

Beyond ideology and the military background of government officials, the government structure is also an important state factor in parliamentary regimes, in which foreign policy-making is decided by the governing cabinet (Auerswald 1999; Clare 2010; Hagan 1993; Ireland and Gartner 2001; Kaarbo and Beasley 2008; Palmer et al. 2004; Prins and Sprecher 1999). According to Oktay (2014), the relationship between government composition and international behaviour can be explained by two comparative theories: veto players (Tsebelis, 1995)⁶, and the clarity of responsibility (Powell and Whitten, 1993). Oktay (2014) explains that both perspectives are not rivals, but they contribute to each other in a certain way. On one hand, based on Tsebelis' (1995) approach, experts on International Relations consider that multi-party coalitions are more constrained than single-party majority governments, as there can be different opinions within the coalition, leading to the implementation of "middle-of-the-road" foreign policies (Elman 2000, p.99). This argument is supported by different authors such as Hagan (1993), Ireland and Gartner (2001), Palmer et al. (2004), or Reiter and Tillman (2002). However, there is no uniformity in results, some studies have concluded that coalitions are less prone to participate in international conflicts than single-party governments, whereas others have not found correlation between both variables.

⁶ The concept of veto players is defined by Tsebelis (1991:591) as: "individual or collective actors whose agreement is necessary for a change of the status quo".

On the other hand, according to the clarity of responsibility perspective, single-party majority governments are less likely to initiate a dispute or implement a more aggressive foreign policy, due to the pressure they have in order to be elected again. As only one party would be responsible for the consequences, the voters could easily blame it. Hence, coalitions are freer to decide whether to enter or not in militarised disputes, as “the voting public may be less able to attach responsibility to any one party for policy failures’ (Prins and Sprecher, 1999: 275). Kaarbo et al. (2004), concluded that coalitions adopt more extreme measures than single-party governments in the international system.

Nevertheless, Clare (2010) states that none of these theories are completely correct: a coalition itself is not able to stimulate the conflict behaviour of a country; ideological fractionalization is what really matters. As a result, he divided coalitions into two groups: cohesive coalitions and non-cohesive/fractionalized coalitions. Firstly, cohesive coalitions are those which are formed by parties of the same or similar ideology. The author explains that this kind of coalition tends to behave as a single-party majority: if there is a left-wing coalition, it would be as non-interventionist as a left single-party majority. And the same happens with the right, a right-wing coalition would be as aggressive as a right single-party majority. Secondly, in non-cohesive coalitions there is a diversity of ideologies among its members, and they tend to behave according to the ideological outlier's pressures. This subordinate relationship is explained by the fact that the outlier can easily leave the coalition, as it does not share a lot of interest with its partner(s), so the core of the coalition needs to preserve the support of the outlier by taking decisions in its favour. Hence, a left-wing coalition with a right-wing outlier would be very aggressive, and a right-wing coalition with a left-wing outlier would be absolutely conciliatory. This leads to the following final hypothesis:

H3: A cohesive right-leaning coalition is sufficient for a severe Israel military response.

H4: A cohesive left-leaning coalition is sufficient for a non-severe Israel military response.

H5: A left-wing outlier in a right-wing coalition is sufficient for a non-severe Israel military response.

H6: A right-wing outlier in a left-wing coalition is sufficient for a severe Israel military response.

3. METHODS

This section explains the main characteristics of the selected case, and the empirical approach chosen to test the hypothesis presented in the theoretical framework. It includes the specific case, the statistical method used in this study, the conditions to be considered, and the results.

A. SPECIFIC CASE

To respond to my research question, I will focus on the Israel-Palestine conflict. The case of Israel-Palestine, according to the literature, is a “Majority-Minority” ethnic dyad, in which a diaspora based on nationalism has taken place, as a consequence of the fact that Israel has been creating a situation in which Palestinians are perceived as threats to state sovereignty and territorial integrity. So, it can be expected that this dyad has a greater tendency to engage in violent conflict. Moreover, Israel is a country in which the death penalty is implemented. So, following Stein’s ideas, it is more prone to initiate war as this characteristic of the penal system indicates that Israeli society is more revengeful.

Due to its history, Israel is a country whose main concern is about security and threats from external actors who could endanger their national sovereignty. Thus, it has been considered as a prime case of realism in foreign policy. From the creation of the state in 1948 until the late 1980s, Israeli leaders followed this approach (Evans, 2017). But during the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a change in the left about it, creating a division between realists, who prioritize self-sufficient security and historical territorial claims; and liberals and constructivists, who support peace talks centered on territorial concessions. This contrast in perspectives on security, territory, and peace negotiations has been the defining feature of the Israeli political landscape since then, as noted by several sources (Inbar 1996; Waxman 2003; Shamir and Arian 1994; Rynhold 2007; Evans 2016).

According to Evans (2017), on the one hand, realist parties (such as Likud, HaBayit HaYehudi, Mafdal, or Yisrael Beitnu) see Palestinians as the ones who want to destroy the state of Israel, promoting threat and mistrust. Hence, their primary objective is to provide security, no partnership with the enemy, secure borders and territory, and bargain from a self-reliant position.

They follow a unilateral strategy in the conflict in order to achieve relative gains. On the other hand, constructivist/liberal parties (such as Meimad, Labour Party, or Meretz), recognize different narratives about the Palestine issue. They seek common interest and trust through changing perceptions. They do aim to seek partnerships, a peace settlement, and problem-solving by cooperating and changing values and perceptions. They prefer bilateral strategies and seek benefits for both sides.

The data collected is from 1999 onwards, covering all the XXIII Century, due to the relevance of those years in the development of the conflict. Events such as the Second Intifada (2000-2005) or the last HAMAS attack (7/10/2023) are included. Moreover, in that period, there is enough variety of data related to government coalitions, whose analysis is interesting for this research.

Control variables

In this research, I have decided to control two key variables: ideological fractionalization and terrorist attacks. The former is crucial in the context of the studied conflict due to the diversity of opinions and intensity of ideological beliefs that can significantly influence the decision-making process in government decisions and in the response to disputes, conditioning the probability and severity of the use of military force. The latter are violent actions that can have an impact on the public perception of security and the response by authorities. These attacks shape the security and defense policies of Israel. Analysing the potential relationship between Palestinian terrorist attacks, and ideological fractionalisation permits understand how internal tensions can escalate in response to perceived external threats and how those could determine the use of severity.

However, I have chosen not to control the number of military veterans in Parliament or government because in the case of Israel all nationals, men and women, must do the military service. So, all Ministers are veterans. According to Gelpi and Feaver (2002), we can therefore expect that all government and parliament members are equally prone to use violence in the presence of a military threat, and to use force without restrictions, based on their past military experience.

So, the homogeneity in this feature makes redundant its control in the analysis. The same happens with the literature provided by Stein (2015), which supports that countries that have death penalty included in their penal system are more revengful and therefore more aggressive in foreign policy, as Israel is one of those, it is a constant nor a possible variable in this thesis.

Neither proximity nor territorial disputes are considered as variables in the following analysis although they are features of the Israel-Palestine conflict, as it is focused only on a single conflict. There is no comparison between different disputes, and the geographical conflict constant between the conflict parties do not vary in the context of this research, so it does not provide variability that can be analysed in a significant way. Moreover, I have not found relevant to take into account international factors, such as economic or polarisation ones, as this study is focused on the effect of ideology on Israeli military strategies in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This kind of facts could influence on a broader context, but they are not directly relevant for the objective of this thesis.

B. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

For this research, I will use the comparative political approach, which offers a pathway to move beyond mere descriptions of specific events or phenomena toward a deeper comprehension of the overarching connections between them. Through a meticulous selection of pertinent cases, comparison aims to unveil the underlying causal links among diverse phenomena (Llamazares, 1996). Llamazares (1996) outlines several mechanisms for operationalizing this methodology: the examination of similarities, the scrutiny of differences, and the indirect method of difference. In the study of similarities, the focus lies on discerning parallels between cases that yield similar outcomes. However, this method encounters challenges as identical outcomes can stem from various underlying causes. Similarly, the study of differences involves analysing a phenomenon across different cases with and without the said phenomenon to uncover distinguishing factors.

Acknowledging the constraints inherent in the previous methods, the indirect method of difference emerges as a more nuanced analytical tool. It enables researchers to juxtapose cases where the

phenomenon occurs with those where it does not, thereby identifying shared characteristics associated with its presence. This methodology considers commonalities between cases with and without the phenomenon, shedding light on the circumstances under which it emerges. By transcending the limitations of similarity and difference studies, it facilitates the identification of precise conditions necessary for the occurrence of a phenomenon, while also discerning elements that, though influential, are not essential causes (Llamazares; 1996). Given the aforementioned considerations, the indirect method of difference is adopted as the methodology for this study. Consequently, the tabulated results follow a specific structure: assigning a code of 1 when the outcome (dependent variable) is present and 0 when it is not, with analogous coding applied to the conditions (independent variables).

C. OUTCOME (or dependent Variable)

In this study, the outcome is measured based on the occurrence of the severe use of military force by the Israel government against Palestine. As seen in the theoretical framework, the most common way to measure severity is counting the number of deaths derived from the conflict. In this case, I use the standard criteria of 1000 (or more) deaths, which is used to classify what is considered a war (Small & Singer, 1982). Cases with 1000 or more Palestinian deaths in hands of the Israeli Armed Forces are coded as 1 (0 otherwise). To build this variable, data from B'tselem Database has been used. B'tselem is The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories which is an independent, non-partisan organisation. In fact, the OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) has used this database to elaborate their reports about the conflict.

D. CONDITIONS FOR SEVERITY

- Types of coalitions:

Based on the classification that Clare (2010) created about types of coalitions, I was able to determine the ideology of all government coalitions. Previously, I had to research about each political party, to know where they were located in the left-right scale. I found this information in the Jewish Library Database. Once every party was sorted, the table that appears below was

elaborated in order to represent the composition of the coalitions and establish the classification. The possible options were two main ones: cohesive coalition (all the participating parties are politically similar), and non-cohesive coalition (not all the former parties are politically similar, they are different). Moreover, each option has a specification, depending on the predominant and minoritarian ideology of the coalition (left/right/mix).

Following Clare's criteria (2010), I first created a first table in which I coded the presence of cohesive right-wing coalitions as 1 (0 otherwise). To check additional ways in which ideology affects policy and strategies regarding an inter-state conflict I made another table, coding the presence of a left party as 1, and its absence as 0. In a last table, I assigned the value 1 to the presence of either the right-wing or mixed coalition.

Table 1: Governments over the years, composition and typology of coalitions⁷

Prime Minister	Period	Coalition composition⁸	Type of coalition
Ehud Barak	06/07/1999	One Israel	Non cohesive: left-wing with two right outliers
	- 7/03/2001	(HaAvoda+Gesher+Meimad)+Shas+Meretz+Yisrael BaAliyah+Mafdal	
Ariel Sharon	07/03/2001	Likud+Shas+Yisrael	Cohesive coalition: right wing
	- 28/02/2003	b'aliyah+Mafdal+HaMercaz+Yahadut HaTorah Hameukhedet	
Ariel Sharon/ Ehud Olmert	28/02/2003	Kadima+HaAvoda+Degel	Non cohesive: right-wing with a left outlier
	- 04/01/2006	Hatorah+Agudat Israel+Halhud HaLeumi+Mafdal+Likud	

⁷ <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/>

⁸ The name of political parties are the original ones, written in romanised hebrew. In the appendix (D), they are translated.

Ehud Olmert	04/01/2006 - 31/03/2009	Kadima+HaAvoda+ Yahadut HaTorah Hameukhedet	Non cohesive: mix
Benjamin Netanyahu	31/03/2009 - 22/01/2013	Likud+Yisrael Beiteinu+Shas+Habayit Hayehudi+United Torah Judaism+HaAvoda	Non cohesive: right-wing with a left outlier
Benjamin Netanyahu	22/01/2013 - 02/12/2014	Likud+Yesh Atid+Habayit Hayehudi+Ha'Tnuah+Yisrael Beiteinu+HaAvoda	Non Cohesive: right-wing with two left outliers
Benjamin Netanyahu	18/03//2015 - 17/05/2020	Likud+Shas+ Habayit Hayehudi+Kulanu+ Yahadut HaTorah Hameukhedet	Cohesive right-wing coalition
Benjamin Netanyahu/ Benny Gantz	17/05/2020 - 13/06/2021	Likud+Kahol Lavan +Shas+Yahadut HaTorah Hameukhedet +HaYamin HaMeuhad+HaAvoda-Gesher-Meretz	Non Cohesive: right-wing with a left outlier
Naftali Bennett/ Yair Lapid	13/06/2021 - 29/12/2022	Yamina+Yesh Atid+Tikva Hadasha+Kahol Lavan+HaAvoda+Yisrael Beitenu+Meretz	Non cohesive: right-wing with two left outliers.
Benjamin Netanyahu	29/12/2022 - nowadays	Likud+Yahadut HaTorah Hameukhedet+Shas+Tkuma+Otzma Yehudit	Cohesive coalition:right wing (with far right wing parties)

An important factor to take into consideration, is the pattern that Israeli governments has followed over the years: surplus majority governments (Stinnet, 2007). This means that they tend to form coalitions bigger than what it would be enough to govern, with extra parties that are not essential to achieve an effective majority. This kind of coalition is almost unique in the international system. Between the years 1945 and 1987, only 21% of twelve European parliamentary democracies formed a surplus majority coalition, whereas in Israel the percentage was 84% (Laver & Schofield, 1990). This means that some parties are not strictly necessary in certain coalitions, which could limit their influence in decision-making.

In other words, it is essential to check all coalition in order to know the actual role of the outliers. Hence, I decided to elaborate a table that shows the composition of the non-cohesive coalitions included in this research, based on the Minimal/Surplus criteria. In the case of the Israeli Parliament, there are 120 seats in total, meaning that the simple majority that they need to form a government is 61. So, governments with approx. 61 seats are considered to be minimal coalitions, whereas governments with 70 or more seats are coded as oversized coalitions (column 4). Only non-cohesive coalitions are analysed as cohesive coalitions do not have outliers (the extended version of this table in the Appendix includes for offering more information of the exact composition of each coalition).

Table 2: Analysis of coalition compositions- Extra/necessary outliers⁹

Prime Minister	Period	Type of coalition*	Seats	Extra/necessary outliers
Ehud Barak	06/07/1999 - 7/03/2001	NC-LEFT MINIMAL	74	Necessary

⁹ <https://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/106/>

Ariel Sharon/ Ehud Olmert	28/02/2003 - 04/01/2006	NC-RIGHT OVERSIZED	75	Neccesary
Ehud Olmert	04/01/2006 - 31/03/2009	NC-CENTRIST MINIMAL	67	Neccesary
Benjamin Netanyahu	31/03/2009 -22/01/2013	NC-RIGHT OVERSIZED	74	Neccesary
Benjamin Netanyahu	22/01/2013 -02/12/2014	NC-RIGHT OVERSIZED	82	Extra
Netanyahu/ Benny Gantz	17/05/2020 - 13/06/2021	NC-RIGHT	74	Extra
Yair Lapid /Naftali Bennett	13/06/2021 - 29/12/2022	NC- RIGHT MINIMAL	62	Neccesary

*(NC: Non-cohesive; C:Cohesive)

In the table, the outliers are classified as extra, in the cases their seats are not needed to reach the simple majority (61), or necessary in the cases their seats do are needed (column 7)¹⁰. Taking this into consideration, it makes sense that only non-cohesive coalitions are included in this table, as ideological outliers only exist in cases this kind of coalitions (in cohesive coalitions there are not outliers as they are composed by parties of similar or same ideology). As it can be seen, there are only two cases (2013-2014, 2020-2021) in which outliers are extra, meaning that they were not strictly necessary to form government. The rests of cases have necessary outliers, so they may have potentially influence in those coalitions.

- **Significant Palestinian terrorist attacks**

A previous attack is an important factor to take into account when we want to measure the severity of a violent response. As seen in the literature, Ben-Yehuda & and Levin-Banchik (2014) explain that when terrorist actions are present, security is the top concern, surpassing the protection of civil freedoms and rights. I have collected the number of civilian deaths caused by Palestinian attacks in Israel from B'tselem Database. These attacks were made by different Palestinian armed groups which are considered by Israel, the EU and other countries, such as HAMAS (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya - Islamic Resistance Movement) or the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine). The Global Terrorism Database (GDT), considered the most comprehensive dataset on terrorist incidents, also recognise them as terrorist actors. In addition, the Jewish Library also offers data collection of the deaths, but it can be considered a more biased source as it is an initiative from AICE (The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise). However, after a comparison, the numbers are very close, with little difference between the two sources.

¹⁰ However, there are two coalitions that can be confusing. Firstly, the government 1999-2001 was formed by a non-cohesive left-wing coalition, oversized but at the same time with former right outliers. This is explained by the fact that as it can be consulted in the appendix, left parties had 36 seats, so they only need 25 seats more to achieve the required majority. So, that 25 seats came from right wing parties, being the other 13 seats extra those who oversized the coalition. Something similar happens with the 2003-2006 non-cohesive right-wing coalition. Although they were near by the simple majority, they still needed 5 seats more. The solution was a coalition with the left, which had 19 seats, being only 5 strictly essential, and oversizing the coalition. Hence, both cases represent the reality of politics and parliamentary coalition, where numbers are not always exactly achieved.

Regarding the criteria to determine when an attack is significant, I implemented my own criteria because there is no established threshold in the literature. I have established a 50 casualties' threshold, as it implements a high severity standard that guarantee a study that address the events that actually can disrupt the course of the conflict and have a noteworthy impact on the political and military decisions. Moreover, these events have a bigger impact on the public opinion and in the government's response than others of lower scales. They are able to create a social shock that becomes exerting pressure on political leaders to act in a certain way. So, if the number of deaths in Israel resulting from Palestinian terrorist attacks is equal or higher than 50, I code it as a significant attack.

It is crucial to keep in mind the huge complexity of defining terrorism, as even among the academics in that area of expertise have not been able to agree on what criteria is the best to define terrorism. De la Calle and Sánchez Cuenca (2011) capture all the questions that can arise in this debate, explaining the different approaches that exist to analyse and categorise terrorism. Some scholars argued that terrorism is based on violence exerted exclusively over civilians, opening the window to the possibility of conceiving states as potential terrorist actors. On the other hand, some prefer to focus on the communicative nature of the terrorist action, whereas others emphasise in the extreme asymmetry between the state and the armed group. According to the academic community, all this ambiguity come from the coexistence of two different senses within the concept: the action senses, which consider terrorism as a tactic; and the actor sense, which understand terrorism as a type of insurgency. The key is the meeting of both criteria, there is when terrorism truly exists. This means that to be consider a a group as terrorist, it should be of an underground nature, without territorial control, and its tactics should be based on coercive violence but without military power. The authors also concretise that some groups are forced to use terrorist tactics when they lack a territorial base. This idea is reflected in the following table 4 from the article "What We Talk About When We Talk About Terrorism" (De la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2011):

Table 3: The intersection of the Two Senses of Terrorism

Table 1. The Intersection of the Two Senses of Terrorism

		Actor sense	
		Underground	Territorial control
Action sense	Coercive violence: improvised explosive devices, hijackings, bank robberies	Pure terrorism	Guerrilla operating clandestinely in state-controlled areas
	Military power: battles, ambushes	Proto-guerrilla	Pure guerrilla

Source: De la Calle & Sánchez Cuenca (2011, p.454)

So, considering all of this, the main armed group in Palestine, Hamas, is a very difficult case to categorize because it emerged initially as a political party, which won the 2006 elections. So, it cannot be considered terrorist as they have or has had military power, having around 20,000 or 30,000 recruited people (BBC, 2023). Regarding the criteria of territorial control it is not clear as they has had control over certain territories (e.g., Gaza), but this situation is changing progressively due to the constant attacks and destruction of cities in Palestine. Hence, this group does not properly fit with the actor criteria. Although it can be confusing if Palestinian armed groups are terrorist, from the action sense approach, what it is clear is that many attacks they carried out are terrorist. Hence, for this reason the attacks considered in this research are catalogued as terrorist on individual basis, and not due to the characterization of the group causing the casualties. In order to be more precise and accurate with this categorisation, I have decided to only count Israeli civilians' deaths.

Table 4: Scrutiny of the number of deaths to measure severity (B'tselem)

PERIOD	TOTAL PALESTINIAN KILLED BY ISRAELI FORCES	TOTAL DEATHS IN ISRAEL FROM TERRORIST ATTACKS
06/07/1999- 07/03/2001	323	36
07/03/2001 - 28/02/2003	1,564	425
28/02/2003 - 14/04/2006	1,468	222
04/01/2006 - 31/03/2009	2,927	48
31/03/2009-22/01/2013	495	24
22/01/2013- 02/12/2014	2,302	21
18/03/2015-17/05/2020	752	51
17/05/2020-13/06/21	287	9
13/06/2021 - 29/12/2022	222	19
29/12/2022-nowadays*	31,774	1139

Taking into account the collected data in this table, I decided to do another one considering two cases in a different way. As it can be seen, there is no total uniformity about the length of all periods of governments, as it is possible to find earlier elections due to several reasons. This fact could affect to the results as they are subjected to the same criteria. So, in order to be more precise with the analysis, I consider it important to group two periods twice. The first case is the fusion of governments between 2009-2013 and 2013- 2014, and the second one is the fusion of governments between 2015-2020 and 2020-21. In both cases, the same happens: 1) 2013-2014 and 2020-2021

are very brief span times, about only 1 year of governance; 2) The Prime Minister was the same is the same as in the previous period, Benjamin Netanyahu (Likud); 3) The ideology of the coalition is the same as in the previous period, right wing coalition; and 4) Both 2013-2014 and 2020-2021 coalitions have extra outliers (this means that the difference that could be between outliers of the different periods is neutralised as in those ones they are not powerful) . Hence, the following table shows the data with this variation:

Table 5: Scrutiny of the number of deaths to measure severity (B'tselem)-Accurate version

PERIOD	TOTAL PALESTINIAN KILLED BY ISRAELI FORCES	TOTAL DEATHS IN ISRAEL FROM TERRORIST ATTACKS
06/07/1999- 07/03/2001*	323	36
07/03/2001 - 28/02/2003	1,564	425
28/02/2003 - 14/04/2006	1,468	222
04/01/2006 - 31/03/2009	2,927	48
31/03/2009-06/05/2015	2,810	76
06/05/2015-13/06/21	1,033	60
13/06/2021 - 29/12/2022	222	19
29/12/2022-nowadays**	>40,000	1,139

**Available data from the source since 29/09/2000.*

***Updated data from 30/04/2024.*

4. RESULTS

I begin my analysis focusing on significant terrorist attacks and cohesive right-wing coalitions as the main relevant conditions for severe violent responses. The first step involves checking for the presence of necessary conditions, which are those present every time the outcome occurs. At first glance, there is one necessary condition for Israel's use of severe military force: significant terrorist attacks accounting for more than 50 deaths. The second step is to look for sufficient conditions, which are conditions that are present every time the outcome occurs.

Table 6: Cohesive Right-wing coalitions as the central variable

Government period	Outcome (Severe use of force)	Cohesive Right-wing Coalition	Significant Palestinian terrorist attacks
06/07/1999- 07/03/2001	0	0	0
07/03/2001 - 28/02/2003	1	1	1
28/02/2003 - 14/04/2006	1	0	1
04/01/2006 - 31/03/2009	1	0	0
31/03/2009-06/05/2015	1	0	1
06/05/2015-13/06/21	1	1	1
13/06/2021 -28/12/2022	0	0	0
29/12/2022- nowadays	1	1	1

According to the table, there are two sufficient conditions for a severe use of force from Israel. The first one is the presence of a cohesive right-wing coalition in government. These findings offer support for hypothesis 3 (“A cohesive right-leaning coalition is sufficient for a severe Israel military response”). The second one is the presence of significant Palestinian terrorist attacks, This supports hypothesis 2 (“H2: Significant terrorist attacks are sufficient for severe use of military force in response”), but not hypothesis 1 (“Significant terrorist attacks are necessary for severe use of military force in response”) as sometimes Israel has attacked without the existence of previous Palestinians terrorist attacks. So, as Ben-Yehuda and Levin-Banchik (2014) explained, terrorism might lead democracies to perceive security threats as the main issue of the agenda, leaving out civil freedoms and human rights.

The following table focuses on both significant terrorist attacks and “Necessary left parties in government” (presence =1; absence=0). This means that value 1 are designated to cases in which there is a left coalition (cohesive o non-cohesive) or there is a former left outlier(s) in right-wing/centrist coalitions (each one is specified for the sake of clarity).

Table 7: Left coalition (cohesive/non-cohesive) as the central variable.

Government period	Outcome (Severe use of force)	Necessary left parties in government	Significant Palestinian terrorist attacks
06/07/1999- 07/03/2001	0	1- non-cohesive left coalition	0
07/03/2001 - 28/02/2003	1	0	1

28/02/2003 - 14/04/2006	1	1- necessary left outlier	1
04/01/2006 - 31/03/2009	1	0	0
31/03/2009-06/05/2015 ¹¹	1	0	1
06/05/2015-13/06/21	1	0	1
13/06/2021 -28/12/2022	0	1- necessary left outlier	0
29/12/2022- nowadays	1	0	1

As depicted in the above table, there is only one case of a left-leaning coalition (term 06/07/1999-07/03/2001). At the time, neither the government used a severe military force, nor significant Palestinian terrorist attacks took place. This means that the necessary right outliers did not have too much influence in that government's military foreign policy, contrary to what Clare supposes. This leads to the rejection of hypothesis 6 ("A cohesive left-leaning coalition is sufficient for a non-severe Israel military response"). Furthermore, there is only one case more in which the Israeli Army did not use severe force, in the 2021-22 Coalition, a non-cohesive right coalition in which the left outliers are necessary parties of the government. In this case, Clare (2010) would agree as a left outlier(s) had power to influence the decisions of that government. So, it can be said that the presence of left parties, either in a left-wing or right-wing coalition (always there are former outliers), operates as a necessary condition for the absence of high severity in Israeli attacks.

¹¹ This case is not codified as 1, because although it has a necessary left outlier, it also has a necessary right outlier.

However, it is not a sufficient condition as the presence of a left outlier(s) in the 2003-2006 could not prevent the use of severity, rejecting hypothesis 5. But it is important to highlight that in this case, it was previous significant Palestinian terrorist attacks. So, there is a causal configuration that always lead to an absence of Israel's severe use of force: the combination of the absence of important Palestinian attacks and the presence of left parties in the government. Finally, although this table does not show empirical evidence for hypothesis 4, as there is not any case of presence of a cohesive left coalition, the mentioned finding indirectly supports it and nuances previous theory. As Clare (2010), in cohesive coalitions there is no conflict of interests between necessary parties, in this case, a cohesive left coalition is expected to intervene less or at least without high severity (Hypothesis 4).

Table 8: Non-cohesive right coalition as the central variable

Government period	Outcome (Severe use of force)	Non-Cohesive Right-wing coalition	Significant Palestinian terrorist attacks
06/07/1999- 07/03/2001	0	0	0
07/03/2001 - 28/02/2003	1	0	1
28/02/2003 - 14/04/2006	1	1	1
04/01/2006 - 31/03/2009	1	0 Non-cohesive centrist coalition	0
31/03/2009-06/05/2015	1	1	1
06/05/2015-13/06/21	1	0	1

13/06/2021 -28/12/2022	0	1	0
29/12/2022- nowadays	1	0	1

In this last table it can be highlighted that when a Centrist coalition governed, even though there had not been previous significant terrorist attacks, Israel attacked with a severe use of force. It was the only case of a centrist government, which was formed by Kadima, the centrist leader party, and both left and right outliers (it can be seen in the Appendix). So, despite the fact that here is only a case with this characteristic, it can be said that the presence of a centrist coalition is a sufficient condition for the severe use of force by part of Israel. This finding supports the literature developed by Haesebrouck and Mello (2020), who firstly had supposed that that right-wing parties are more prone to support military operations when the national interest is at risk. However, they found a curvilinear pattern, in which centre-right parties are more supportive of military missions.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Due to the lack of literature on ideology in the correlation between governments ideology and conflict severity, this paper has aimed to highlight the relevance of such relationship, through the case of the widely known Israel-Palestine conflict during the studied period. It is important to keep in mind that the results of this study may not be generalisable to other conflicts of the world since the context and characteristics of each one of them is very different.

The comparative analysis carried out in this thesis shows that significant terrorist attacks are not necessary for the severe use of military force in response (hypothesis 1), but they are a sufficient condition for it (hypothesis 2). Furthermore, results confirm the presence of a cohesive right-leaning coalition is sufficient for a severe Israel military response (hypothesis 3); and show also clear signs that point that the presence of a cohesive right-leaning coalition in government as a sufficient condition for a non-severe Israel military response (hypothesis 4). These results offer support to the

previous literature about the ideological divisions regarding foreign policy strategies in Israel (Evans, 2017). However, Clare's (2010) literature about ideological fractionalisation is not accurate in this case, since the analysis shows that a left-wing outlier in a right-wing coalition is not sufficient to guarantee a non-severe Israel military response (hypothesis 5). Neither a right-wing outlier in a left-wing coalition is a sufficient condition for a severe Israel military response (hypothesis 6). Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the outliers' power to influence does not exist at all in government coalitions in Israel, as the results show that the presence of left parties in the governing coalition is a necessary condition to avoid the use of severe force. So, right-wing outliers do not exert influence on the case of a non-cohesive left-wing coalition as we have seen, but in the contrary case, a left outlier does influence the decision about using high severity or not. Finally, the literature provided by Haesebrouck and Mello (2020) was supported by the results, since the unique centrist governing coalition can be considered as the more aggressive in terms of reciprocity, as no significant terrorist attacks had happened in that period. In order to understand why this could happen and why this coalition had tendencies towards a more interventionist approach in the conflict, which is typical from right ideology, it should keep in mind the fact that Kadima is a party formed by moderates from Likud (the right-wing party most important in the country). So, being the centrist party more aligned with the right outliers, the role of the left outlier could be overcome although it is a necessary party of the coalition.

Looking at the provided data, it can be seen that during this century, only the first government led by the left was present, since 2001 all governments in Israel have been of right ideology, with the only exception of the centrist coalition (as it mentioned above maybe it is not so centrist in the practice). This fact is significant, taking into account that the first 30 years of the history of Israel the left had practically an absolute domain. However the situation change drastically since 1997 when the right-wing party Likud won the elections. Since then, in the last 44 years the left only has led the executive in eight of them. In fact, the last one is the already mentioned Ehud Barak's government (1999-2001). So, this pattern has to do with the persistent use of severe force during the years a right-wing government has been in government. The presence of a left-wing outlier only could prevent it when there weren't previous terrorist attacks, because in the other case in which a

right-wing coalition had a former left outlier, it was useless as Israeli Armed Forces did not doubt in severely counterattack. So, the presence of a left outlier seems to be only effective when there is an absence of significant previous Palestinian attacks. However, it should be mentioned that case (2021-2022 coalition) was the briefest one, as the coalition only was in power a little more than a year (the others are at least around 3 years). So, this means that maybe neither terrorist attacks were significant nor the use of force was severe, due to the brevity of that government.

Observing only the table 5, I consider that there are some important conclusions that can be drawn although they are not new findings. Firstly, it can be seen that the period of the left-wing coalition (1999-2001) is the one which present less deaths both Palestinian and Israeli (it does not make sense taking into account the 2021-2022 as it is a very short period of time). Secondly, it can be perceived that in every government period, Israel uses a disproportionate use of force, comparing the numbers of deaths from both sides. But this is not the only issue. If we look at the present period of government, during which there is a cohesive right- wing coalition, we see the highest number of deaths, both from Palestine and Israel. Moreover, the disproportionality in this case is also the biggest one of all the periods, being the number of Palestinian deaths about 30 times higher than the Israeli deaths. This last fact can be easily explained by the detailed composition of the 2022 Likud-led far-right coalition. Netanyahu, the most relevant figure of Likud, was who won the 2022 elections and decided to create a coalition formed by far-right parties, “including one whose leader was sent to prison for an anti-Arab racist crime “(BBC, 2022). Regarding its impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, these parties are totally opposed to the two-state solution, which is the most extended and supported proposition of peace by the international community. In fact, the Religious Zionism party, after the coalition agreement, a member of the coalition expressed its desires of an annexation of the West Bank to Israel (BBC, 2022), and the 2nd of June 2024, “two far-right Israeli ministers have threatened to resign and bring down the governing coalition of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu if he accepts a peace proposal laid out by US President Joe Biden” (CNN, 2024).

Overall, this thesis has two main findings. The first one is the importance of ideology to explain the use of severe force (the presence of left parties is a necessary condition to prevent severe attacks by Israel). On the other hand, previous significant Palestinian attacks are always countered with severity by Israeli Armed Forces, which means that it is a sufficient condition. However, it is not a necessary condition, as the Israel's use of severe force is not always preceded by significant Palestinian terrorist attacks. Furthermore, the power of outliers are not the same taking into account ideology, the results show that left outliers in non-cohesive right-wing coalitions are influential always there is an absence of previous significant Palestinian attacks, whereas right outliers in left-wing outliers are not capable of change left's military strategies.

Lastly, during my research, I found some difficulties in determining the best database for the analysis as some of them did not have data from all the studied periods, and others could be considered biased. Nevertheless, I tried to provide the most exact data, comparing different sources and investigating the precedence and reliability of each one. Additionally, time and resource limitations have not permitted me to further develop my study. More research should be developed to achieve a deeper understanding of the role of ideology in governments when they are in an interstate conflict. A possible future line of research could be the role of Benjamin Netanyahu in Israeli foreign policy in relation to the Israel-Palestine conflict, or all Arab countries which were implicated in this long dispute.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

ACLED Conflict Severity Index. (n.d.). acled. <https://acleddata.com/wp-content/data-viz/index/>

(n.d.). Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel). <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/192>

Arena, P., & Palmer, G. (2009). Politics or the Economy? Domestic Correlates of Dispute Involvement in Developed Democracies. *International Studies Quarterly*, 53(4), 955-975. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2009.00564.x>

Arístegui, G. d. (2004). *El islamismo contra el islam: las claves para entender el terrorismo yihadista*. Ediciones B.

Auerswald, D. P. (1999). Inward Bound: Domestic Institutions and Military Conflicts. *International Organization*, 53(3), 469-504. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081899550968>

Azcoiti, J. B. (2021, June 9). ¿Qué fue de la izquierda en Israel? *El Diario*. https://www.eldiario.es/internacional/izquierda-israel_1_8016966.html

Baker, W. D., & Oneal, J. R. (2001). Patriotism or Opinion Leadership?: The Nature and Origins of the “Rally ‘Round the Flag” Effect. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 45(5), 661–687. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3176318>

Beehner, L., & Meibauer, G. (2016). The Futility of Buffer Zones in International Politics. *Orbis*, 60(2), 248-265. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2016.01.004>

Bennett, D. S., & Stam III, A. C. (2009). *The Behavioral Origins of War*. University of Michigan Press. <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/166/monograph/book/6268>

Ben-Yehuda, H. (2004). Territoriality and War in International Crises: Theory and Findings, 1918-2001. *International Studies Review*, 6(4), 85-106. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1521-9488.2004.00451.x>

Ben-Yehuda, H., & Levin-Banchik, L. (2014). Regime and Power in International Terror Crises: Strong Democracies Fight Back Hard. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 26(3), 504-522. 10.1080/09546553.2012.736891

Bertoli, A., Dafoe, A., & Trager, R. F. (2019). Is There a War Party? Party Change, the Left–Right Divide, and International Conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 63(4), 950-975. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002718772352>

Boer, D., & Fischer, R. (2013). How and When Do Personal Values Guide Our Attitudes and Sociality? Explaining Cross-cultural Variability in Attitude-value Linkages. *Psychological Bulletin*, 139(5), 1113-1147. 10.1037/a0031347

Brecher, M., & Wilkenfeld, J. (2022). *A Study of Crisis*. University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.14982>

Cashman, G. (2014). *What Causes War? An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Clare, J. (2010). Ideological Fractionalization and the International Conflict Behavior of Parliamentary Democracies. *International Studies Quarterly*, 54(4), 965-987. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2010.00622.x>

Clauset, A. (2018). Trends and fluctuations in the severity of interstate wars. *Science Advances*, 4(2).
<https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aao3580>

(n.d.). Correlates of War – The Correlates of War Project. <https://correlatesofwar.org/>

Country Profile: Israel. (n.d.). IFES Election Guide.
<https://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/106/>

Crisis en Gaza e Israel. (2024). Amnistía Internacional España.
<https://www.es.amnesty.org/en-que-estamos/campanas/crisis-en-gaza-e-israel/>

De la Calle, L., & Sánchez-Cuenca, I. (2011). What we talk about when we talk about terrorism. *Politics & Society*, 39(3), 451-472. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329211415506>

De Mesquita, B. B. (1978). Systemic Polarization and the Occurrence and Duration of War. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 22(2), 241-267. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/173799>

Diskin, A., & Hazan, R. (n.d.). The 2001 Prime Ministerial election in Israel. *Electoral Studies*, 21(4), 659-664. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0261-3794\(02\)00003-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0261-3794(02)00003-3)

Doran, C. F. (n.d.). War and Power Dynamics: Economic Underpinnings. *International Studies Quarterly*, 27(4), 419-441. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600555>

Dwiastuti, I. (2021). The Roots of Israel-Palestine Conflict: A Political Culture Analysis. *Aegis : Journal Of International Relations*, 4(2), 19-33. <https://doi.org/10.33021/aegis.v4i2.796>

Elections: Israeli Knesset 2021 General. (n.d.). IFES Election Guide.
<https://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/3654/>

Elman, M. F. (2000). Unpacking democracy: presidentialism, parliamentarism, and theories of democratic peace. *Security Studies*, 9(4), 91-126.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09636410008429414>

Evans, M. (2016). Framing policy paradigms: population dispersal and the Gaza withdrawal. *Israel Affairs*, 22(2), 379-400. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2016.1140353>

Evans, M. (2017). Parties' foreign policy approach and the outcome of coalition allocation negotiations: the case of Israel. *International Politics*, 55(5), 655-677.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-017-0102-4>

Gochman, C. S., & Maoz, Z. (1984). Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816-1976: Procedures, Patterns, and Insights. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 28(4), 585-616.

Gourevitch, P. (n.d.). The second image reversed: the international sources of domestic politics. *International Organization*, 32(4), 881-912. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s002081830003201x>

Graham, J., Haidt, J., & Nosek, B. A. (2009). Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 96(5), 1029-1046.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015141>

Gutiérrez Sanín, F., & Jean Wood, E. (2014). Ideology in civil war: Instrumental adoption and beyond. *Journal of Peace Research*, 51(2), 213-226.

- Haas, M. L. (2005). *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics, 1789-1989* (Vol. Cornell Studies in Security Affairs). Cornell University Press.
- Haesebrouck, T., & Mello, P. A. (2020). Patterns of Political Ideology and Security Policy. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 16(4), 565-586. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/oraa006>
- Hagan, J. D. (1994). *Political Opposition and Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781685855451>
- Harbom, L., Melander, E., & Wallensteen, P. (2008). Dyadic Dimensions of Armed Conflict, 1946—2007. *Journal Of Peace Research*, 45(5), 697-710. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343308094331>
- Hensel, P. R. (2000). *Territory: Theory and Evidence on Geography and Conflict*.
- Huth, P. K., & Huth, P. (2009). *Standing Your Ground: Territorial Disputes and International Conflict*. University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.14335>
- ICB Data Viewer | International Crisis Behavior Project. (n.d.). ICB Project. <http://www.icb.umd.edu/dataviewer/>
- Inbar, E. (n.d.). Contours of Israel's New Strategic Thinking. *Political Science Quarterly*, 111(1), 41-64. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2151927>
- Ireland, M. J., & Gartner, S. S. (2001). Time to fight: government type and conflict initiation in parliamentary systems. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 45(5), 547-568. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002701045005001>
- (n.d.). Jewish Virtual Library. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/>

- Kaarbo, J., & Beasley, R. (2008). Taking it to the extreme : the effect of coalition cabinets on foreign policy. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 4(1), 67-81.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2007.00058.x>
- Keller, J. J., Yang, Y., & James, P. (2021). Decision-Making in U.S. Foreign Policy Crises: Presidential Leadership and Outcomes. *Political Research Quarterly*, 75(3), 562-575.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129211013893>
- Kertzer, J. D., Powers, K. E., Rathbun, B. C., & Iyer, R. (2014). Moral Support: How Moral Values Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(3), 825-840.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381614000073>
- Kertzer, J. D., & Rathbun, B. C. (2015). Fair Is Fair: Social Preferences and Reciprocity in International Politics. *World Politics*, 67(4), 613-655.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887115000180>
- Kilani, F. (2023, 15 diciembre). *Israel - Hamás: cuántos grupos armados palestinos hay en la Franja de Gaza y quiénes son.* BBC News Mundo.
<https://www.bbc.com/mundo/articles/c9w3z7jzn23o>
- Laver, M., & Schofield, N. (1990). Multiparty government: The politics of coalition in Europe. *Electoral Studies*, 10(4), 363-364. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-3794\(91\)90033-o](https://doi.org/10.1016/0261-3794(91)90033-o)
- Masterson, M. (2022). Humiliation and International Conflict Preferences. *The Journal Of Politics*, 84(2), 874-888. <https://doi.org/10.1086/715591>
- Maynard, J. L. (2019). Ideology and armed conflict. *Journal Of Peace Research*, 56(5), 635-649.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319826629>

- Noivo, D. (2008). Hamas: encuadramiento en el conflicto interno palestino. *Boletín de Información*, 304, 113-138.
- Nye, J. S. (2007). *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History*. Pearson Longman. <https://lib.ugent.be/en/catalog/rug01:001050222>
- Oktay, S. (n.d.). Constraining or enabling? The effects of government composition on international commitments. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(6), 860-884. 10.1080/13501763.2014.910870
- Owen, J. M. (2010). *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics: Transnational Networks, States, and Regime Change, 1510-2010* (Vol. 123). Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt7s6gtv>
- Palmer, G., London, T. R., & Regan, P. M. (2004). What's stopping you? The sources of political constraints on international conflict behavior in parliamentary democracies. *International Interactions*, 30(1), 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/725289044>
- Plapinger, S. (2023, January 19). *Israel's New Government is the Most Far-Right in its History*. CNA. <https://www.cna.org/our-media/indepth/2023/01/israels-new-government-is-the-most-far-right-in-its-history>
- Powell, G. B., & Whitten, G. D. (1993). A cross-national analysis of economic voting: taking account of the political context. *American Journal of Political Science*, 37(2), 391-414. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111378>

- Prins, B. C., & Sprecher, C. (1999). Institutional constraints, political opposition, and interstate dispute escalation: evidence from parliamentary systems, 1946–89. *Journal of Peace Research*, 36(3), 271-287. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/424693>
- Reeder, B. W. (2014). Civil war and the severity of militarized interstate disputes. *Research & Politics*, 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168014556403>
- Reiter, D., & Tillman, E. R. (2002). Public, legislative, and executive constraints on the democratic initiation of conflict. *Journal of Politics*, 64(3), 810-826. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-3816.00147>
- Rynhold, J. (2007). Cultural Shift and Foreign Policy Change: Israel and the Making of the Oslo Accords. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 42(4), 419-440. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45084499>
- Schwartz, S. H. (1992). Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 25(1), 1-65. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)60281-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60281-6)
- Schwartz, S. H., Caprara, G. V., & Vecchione, M. (2010). Basic Personal Values, Core Political Values, and Voting: A Longitudinal Analysis. *Political Psychology*, 31(3), 421-452. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2010.00764.x>
- Shamir, M., & Arian, A. (1994). Competing Values and Policy Choices: Israeli Public Opinion on Foreign and Security Affairs. *British Journal Of Political Science*, 24(2), 249-271. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123400009807>
- Small, M., & Singer, J. D. (1982). *Resort to arms : international and civil wars, 1816-1980*. SAGE Publications. <https://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA00701993>

Statement of ICC Prosecutor Karim A.A. Khan KC: Applications for arrest warrants in the situation in the State of Palestine. (n.d.). | International Criminal Court.
<https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-icc-prosecutor-karim-aa-khan-kc-applications-arrest-warrants-situation-state>

Stinnett, D. M. (2007). International Uncertainty, Foreign Policy Flexibility, and Surplus Majority Coalitions in Israel. *Journal Of Conflict Resolution*, 51(3), 470-495.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002707300183>

Tanno, S. (2024, June 2). Two far-right Israeli ministers threaten to topple the government if it accepts Biden peace plan. *CNN*.
<https://edition.cnn.com/2024/06/02/middleeast/israeli-ministers-biden-ceasefire-plan-intl/index.html>

Thompson, W. R., & Zuk, L. G. (1982). War, Inflation, and the Kondratieff Long Wave. *Journal Of Conflict Resolution*, 26(4), 621-644. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002782026004003>

Tir, J., & Jasinski, M. (2008). Domestic-Level Diversionary Theory of War: Targeting Ethnic Minorities. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 52(5), 641-664.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002708318565>

Tsebelis, G. (1995). Decision making in political systems: veto players in presidentialism, parliamentarism, multicameralism and multipartyism. *British Journal of Political Science*, 25(3), 289-325. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123400007225>

Vasquez, J. A., & Valeriano, B. (2010). Classification of Interstate Wars. *The Journal Of Politics*, 72(2), 292-309. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022381609990740>

Wallace, M. C. (1973). Alliance Polarization, Cross-Cutting, and International War, 1815-1964. *Journal Of Conflict Resolution*, 17(4), 575-604.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/002200277301700401>

Waxman, D. (2003). Between Isolation and Integration: The Jewish Dimension in Israeli Foreign Policy. *Israel Studies Forum*, 19(1), 34-56. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41805175>

Wayman, F. W. (1984). Bipolarity and War: The Role of Capability Concentration and Alliance Patterns among Major Powers, 1816-1965. *Journal Of Peace Research*, 21(1), 61-78.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/002234338402100105>

Weeks, J. L. P. (2012). Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict. *American Political Science Review*, 106(2), 326-347.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055412000111>

Weisiger, A. (2013). *Logics of War: Explanations for Limited and Unlimited Conflicts*. Cornell University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7591/cornell/9780801451867.001.0001>

7. APPENDIX

A. INDICATORS OF SEVERITY FROM ACLED CONFLICT SEVERITY INDEX

Apart from the criteria based on conflict fatalities, there are other alternatives to measure the severity of MIDs. ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Events Data), which is an independent international non-profit organisation that collects data on violent disputes and demonstrations all around the world, proposes the following ones:

1. Deadliness - Fatalities from Political Violence

The fatality rate is a vital measure of the human impact of conflicts. While it is related to the number of conflict events, it also provides additional insights into the conflict's intensity, indicating how severe and deadly the situation is.

2. Danger-Violence Targeting Civilians

Most armed, organized groups inflict direct harm on civilians. The rate at which these groups attack civilians can vary throughout a conflict, influenced by:

- Control over territory.
- The progression of armed competition with other groups.
- The activity levels of multiple armed factions.

3. Diffusion - Spread of Violence

Conflicts can be concentrated in specific locations or spread over wider areas. The spread of violence impacts the security of larger civilian populations. Geographic variations in the distribution of violence present unique operational challenges for governments, armed groups, and threatened communities. More widespread conflicts generally pose greater risks to civilians and complicate security efforts.

4. Fragmentation - Number of Armed, Organized Non-State Actors

The fragmentation of a conflict is indicated by the number of distinct armed groups and their differing agendas. This fragmentation signifies:

- Multiple threats to communities and state institutions.
- A variety of political motives and opportunities for forming armed groups.

B. ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT: CONTEXT

Before the following analysis, a brief explanation of the roots of the Israel-Palestine conflict is essential. The task of summarising the main causes of this war is not easy at all. There has been a great controversy about how and why it all started. The Israeli-Palestine conflict has produced more than six wars between two groups of people who claim different national identities, but are fighting for the same land. The Israeli argument is based on times before Christ, when the area was under the Jewish power before the Roman Empire invaded it in the first century B.C.

In the modern and contemporanean period, they tried to justify the existence of the state of Israel. During the First World War, the Balfour Declaration was signed by the British, who promised to the Jews a homeland in Palestine. And after World War II, and the horror of the Holocaust, this claim became more powerful. (Nye, 2007). In 1948, the United Nations established a Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), which approved a new division of the territory, based on the creation of two states: a Jewish State (55% of the territory, of which 48% was populated by Arabs), and an Arab State (45%, in which only 2% of the population was Jewish). Moreover, the sacred city of Jerusalem would be internationalised, under UN management. However, Palestinians did not agree neither with the Balfour Declaration (at that time 90% of the people living in the area of Palestine were Arabs) nor the Partition Plan. As a consequence of the proclamation of the state of Israel on May 14, 1948, armies of the neighbouring Arab countries tried to prevent its consolidation. This was the beginning of the Independence War and the *Nakba*¹², which ended with the victory of Israel, which

¹² "The Nakba, which means "catastrophe" in Arabic, refers to the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Before the Nakba, Palestine was a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society" (United Nations Website).

did not doubt occupying territories which were previously settled to be part of Palestine. This war was followed by several conflicts over the years: the 1967 War, which supposes the Palestinian loss of the West Bank and Gaza; the First Intifada (1987-1993), a spontaneous popular uprising against Israel which led to the creation of alternative authoritarian bodies to govern Palestinian Society (neighbourhood and popular committees); and the Second Intifada (2000-2006), which was much more violent than the first one, being the beginning of a right-wing dominance through Likud in Israel Politics. In this last event, Israel withdrew Gaza, at the same time HAMAS took control of the zone.

Besides this, there were many attempts to find a solution for the conflict during those periods: Madrid Conference (1991), Oslo I (1993), Oslo II “The Taba Agreements”(1995), Camp David Accords (2000). However, none of these agreements has provided a successful and effective remedy to this long ethnic-religious conflict. Since the Second Intifada, Hamas has been in war with Israel several times: 2009, 2012, 2014, 2018 and 2023. The last one was initiated in the morning of 7 of October of 2023, when Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in the occupied Gaza Strip, initiated a surprise attack against Israel. They threw missiles that crossed the borders, attacking different localities, in which they also carried out executions and kidnapped more than 200 people. According to the Israeli Health Ministry, at least 1,200 people lost their lives and almost 3,500 were injured. The response by Israeli forces did not wait, after the Primer Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, had officially declared war. The 9 of October, Israel imposed a complete siege over Gaza, forbidding the supply of electricity, fuel, and food, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis for more than 2,2 million of people trapped in their territory. Since then, due to the effective Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip, including to hospitals, refugee camps, and markets, more than 30,000 Palestinians died, including more than 7,000 children, and another 66,000 were injured (Amnesty International, 2024).

C. HAMAS: A BRIEF EXPLANATION

Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (Islamic Resistance Movement) or whose widely known abbreviation Hamas, was created in 1987 as a branch of the Egyptian Islamic organisation Muslim

Brothers. Later, one of the founders of Hamas, the sheikh Ahmed Yassin created in 1973 a Islamic centre, which has been the base of the group (Arístegui, 2004). Although other Palestinian armed groups exist, and carry out terrorist attacks, Hamas has been gaining a lot of power over the years due to its use of different strategies. They do not limit their activities to military, but also organise political and social plans in order to achieve more support from the civil society. Moreover, it is clearly a key factor in the current Israel-Palestine War, so I consider it interesting to know their main objectives. Hamas has defined its main goal: the elimination of the State of Israel and replacing it with a Islamic State that would include Gaza and the West Bank. This idea is included in the Article 11 of the Foundational Letter of Hamas¹³, in which they defend that Palestine is an indivisible territory and cannot be given to anyone in any circumstances. And consequently, they also aim to occupy the power in Palestine. Moreover, in the Article 15 and 33, they also state their compromise with the Yihad (Holy war). Its strategy is based on three fundamental pillars, in which it is based the organisation of the group: the development of social assistance, and use of propaganda to achieve popular support; the establishment of a political activity to present them as an alternative to secular parties, such as the Palestine Liberation Organization or the Palestine Authority; and the execution of guerrilla actions and terrorist attacks against Israelis, both military and civilians (Noivo, 2008).

D. CLASSIFICATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES FROM THE JEWISH LIBRARY

Left-wing parties	● Ha'Tnuah (lit. "The Movement") ● HaAvoda (lit. "Labour Party") ● Meretz (lit. "Vigour") ● Ha'Atzma'ut (lit. "Independence": Mapai+Ahdut HaAvoda+Rafi) ● Meimad (lit. "Jewish State, Democratic State")
--------------------------	--

¹³

https://embassies.gov.il/madrid/AboutIsrael/AboutIsraelInfo/Documents/Terrorismo_Carta_Fundacional_de_Hamas.pdf

Centrist parties	● Yesh Atid (lit. "There is a future") ● Gesher (lit. "Bridge") ● Kadima (lit. "Forward") ● Kulanu (lit. "All of Us") ● HaMerkaz (lit. "Center")
Right-wing parties	● Habayit Hayehudi (lit. "The Jewish Home") ● Kahol Lavan (lit. "Blue and White") ● Derech Eretz (lit. "The Way of the Land") ● Yahadut HaTorah Hameukhedet (lit. "United Torah Judaism") ● Tikva Hadasha (lit. "New Hope"). ● Yamina (lit. "Rightwards") ● Tkuma (Religious Zionism Party, lit. "Revival") ● Otzma Yehudit (lit. "Jewish Strength") ● Yisrael b'aliyah (lit. "Israel on the up") ● Mafdal (National Religious Party) ● Halhud HaLeumi (lit. "National Union": Moledet+Hatikva+Eretz Yisrael Shelanu+Tkuma) ● HaYamin HaMeuhad (lit. "United Right": New Right+ Union of Right-wing parties) ● Shas (Shomrei Sefarad, lit. "Sephardi Guards") ● Yisrael Beiteinu (lit. "Israel is our Home") ● Agudat Israel (lit. "Union of Israel") ● Degel Hatorah (lit. "Banner of the Torah")

E. EXTENDED VERSION OF THE TABLE 2

Prime Minister	Period	Coalition composition	Type of coalition*	Coalition leader	Seats	Extra/necessary outliers
Ehud Barak	06/07/1999 - 7/03/2001	One Israel (Labour Party+Gesher+Meimad)+Shas+Meretz+Yisrael BaAliyah+Mafdal (NRP)+ Center Party+ United Torah Judaism	NC-LEFT MINIMAL	One Israel (26)	74 (38 from the right outliers)	Necessary
Ariel Sharon	07/03/2001 - 28/02/2003	Likud+Shas+Yisrael b'aliyah+Mafdal+Center+United Torah Judaism (Yahadut Hatorah)	C-RIGHT OVERSIZE D	Likud (19)	72	-
Ariel Sharon/ Ehud Olmert	28/02/2003 - 04/01/2006	Likud+Yahadut Hatorah +National Union (HaIchud HaLeumi) +Mafdal (NRP) + +Labour-Meimad+ (Kadima,2005)	NC- RIGHT OVERSIZE D	Likud (38)	75 (19 from the left outlier)	Necessary
Ehud Olmert	04/01/2006 -	Kadima+Labour Party+ Shas+Gil	NC- CENTRIST	Kadima (29)	67 (19 from left)	Necessary

	31/03/2009		MINIMAL		outlier, 12 from right outlier)	
Benjamin Netanyahu	31/03/2009 - 22/01/2013	Likud+Yisrael Beiteinu+Shas+Jewish Home+United Torah Judaism+Labour Party	NC- RIGHT OVERSIZE D	Likud (27)	74 (11 from the left outlier)	Necessary
Benjamin Netanyahu	22/01/2013 - 02/12/2014	Likud/ Beiteinu+ Jewish Home (Habayit Hayehudi)+Yesh Atid+Ha'Tnuah+Lab our Party	NC-RIGH T OVERSIZE D	Likud (31)	82 (21 from left outliers)	Extra
Benjamin Netanyahu	17/03/2015 - 17/05/2020	Likud+Shas+ Jewish Home (Habayit Hayehudi)+Kulanu+ United Torah Judaism	C-RIGHT MINIMAL	Likud (30)	61	-
Netanyahu/ Benny Gantz	17/05/2020 - 13/06/2021	Likud+Kahol Lavan (Blue &White)+Shas+Yahad ut Hatorah (UTJ)+United Right+Labour-Gesher -Meretz	NC-RIGH T	Likud (36) Kahol Lavan (33)	74 (7 from the left outlier)	Extra
Yair Lapid	13/06/2021 -	Yamina+Yesh Atid+New Hope+	NC- RIGHT	Yesh-Atid	62 (13 from the	Necessary

/	29/12/2022	Blue and White+Ra'am+Yisrael Beitenu+Meretz+Labo ur Party	MINIMAL	(17) Yamina (7)	left outliers)	
Naftali Bennett						
Benjamin Netanyahu	29/12/2022 - nowadays	Likud+United Torah Judaism+Shas+ Religious Zionism	C-RIGHT MINIMAL	Likud (32)	64	-