The Israel-Palestine Conflict: An Asymmetric Struggle.

by

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Abstract

The current investigation focuses on the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine, which seeks to analyse the origins of the conflict, and the elements characterise the asymmetry between the two conflicting actors. This study includes a vast revision of asymmetric conflict theory that enables the reader to understand the nature of these conflicts and how they can be resolved. The role that third party actors play in negotiation processes and how much impact can they provoke towards the termination of the conflict is also addressed. For this reason, the main objective is to analyse if asymmetric conflicts lead to successful negotiation processes ending in peace accords, and in the particular case of Palestine, if statehood can be established. Furthermore, the analysis of two case studies has been included: the conflict in Northern Ireland and in Colombia, as a solid framework to understand the conditions and results that these conflicts have achieved as an example to the establishment of peace. Analysing the variables of time and political will, has also been a crucial element to understand the differences between Israelis and Palestinians, why there has been a prolongation of the conflict, and how they can be crucial towards conflict resolution. Finally, the conflict between Israel and Palestine is still characterised by violence, therefore the investigation offers possible scenarios towards the resolution of the conflict based on the conditions of exhaustion and foreign intervention to enlighten the asymmetric struggle between Israel and Palestine.

Keywords:

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I. Introduction

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has prolonged itself for fifty years and has no visible end. The on-going conflict is characterised by territorial, historical, religious and power disputes, which has established itself deeply within the societies and governments of Israelis and Palestinians, whom have witnessed in the flesh the collapse of negotiations and the failure of the international community to stop the violence, the violation of human rights and most of all, the recognition and establishment of the Palestinian state. These factors indicate that a peace agreement is far from being reached, and that security and stability continue being at risk within the Middle East.

It is not the task of the investigation to come up with the formula to solve the conflict, although possible scenarios shall be suggested at the end of the analysis. The objective of the investigation is to address the conflict through the lens of asymmetric warfare theory, and see how this theory can shine a light on the outcomes of the conflict. For this reason, the research seeks to address the following questions, which shall be linked to the main research question. The first question is: *can a peaceful solution be achieved?* A peaceful solution would mean that Israel recognises and facilitates the establishment of the Palestinian statehood and allows Palestinian refugees back into their homeland, and that the occupied territories are returned to the newly recognised state of Palestine. On the other side, Palestine would have the responsibility of recognising the Israeli state and securing the borders of the new Palestinian state so that no further violence erupts between them, leading to an atmosphere of security and stability within the region, allowing the coexistence of both states, leading to the end of the confrontation between them and working towards the establishment of peace. This solution depends on the political will of both actors, especially on behalf of Israel. Moreover, one would also have to consider the intervention and pressure of a third party actor to push Israel and Palestine towards this solution. This leads to a second question; *who will take up the responsibility of pressuring and monitoring a future peace process*? This question depends on a positive outcome of the first question and if the main research question also falls under a positive result.

The two fundamental questions that have been exposed are key for the further analysis of the asymmetric struggle between Israel and Palestine. Therefore, knowing that there is abundant literature on the conflict between Israel and Palestine,

the investigation focuses on the findings that relate best in regards to the nature of the conflict, and how the possibility of establishing the Palestinian statehood could be achieved. For this reason, the conflict between Israel and Palestine must be approached under the logic of asymmetric warfare Mack (1975), Lele (2014), Cohen & Bitton (2015) and Gallo & Marzano (2009); where Israel is conceived as the dominating nation through the power concentrated within the Israeli state and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), and the Palestinians are seen as the insurgent actors, especially through Hamas and Fatah with the Palestinian Authority (PA) as their political resistance, hence they must be taken as those who are dominated. It must be stated that Israel has the military and political superiority in power in this asymmetric relation in regards to Palestine, where the latter lacks these key factors, positioning it as the weak actor in the asymmetry.

Establishing a negotiation process, which eventually should lead to a peace accord, depends on two crucial variables, variables that have been elaborated through the research and seek to be tested with the help of the relevant literature that has been selected Cohen (2017 and Duman (2014). These variables are not only relevant for the main case of Israel and Palestine but also for the two case studies of Northern Ireland and Colombia.

The first variable *is the political will or disposition to negotiate*, since willingness (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) is the first step towards a negotiation process that enables (in most cases) the establishment of a peace accord.

The research shall show that this variable is inexistent within the Israeli administration, since Cohen (2017) states that Israel is unwilling to negotiate what has been obtained through military victories. Israel feels comfortable with the current *status quo* and views the conflict as one characterised by low intensity expressions of confrontation and violence (Aranda & Palma, 2016). On the other hand, if the political will and disposition were in fact present, then the scenario of a negotiation process would come into place, eventually leading to a peace accord and the recognition of the Palestinian state. The variable of *political will* shall be present at all moments during the analysis of the conflict. Furthermore, since the state of Israel is conscious of their power and dominion over Palestine (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), it does not feel any type of obligation to open new negotiations. This is where the second variable of *time* comes in. This variable has also been drawn out through the investigation and is supported by the findings in the literature Zartman (2001), Duman (2014) and Gallo & Marzano (2009) and it is related to the concepts of exhaustion and hurting stalemate (Zartman, 2001 & Duman, 2014), which have to do

with the prolongation of an asymmetric conflict and the consequences that it can generate to the conflicting actors.

The fact that there is no pressure (Cohen, 2017), no power threat from the Palestinians or from the international community towards Israel to negotiate, *time* is what legitimises the *status quo* for Israel and allows it to continue with their settlements and occupation of the West Bank. The more *time* passes, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians continues, and allows Israel to incorporate more territory, prolonging the conflict, generating hurting stalemate or a status of deadlock, which delays any intention of peace. Therefore, *political will* and *time* are the two variables that play a fundamental role in this conflict and will have a direct effect on the outcome of it.

For this reason, asymmetric conflict theory fits into this case because there is an unbalanced power relation (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) between Israel and Palestine, dominated by Israel's political and military force. Under this asymmetry, the Palestinians have sought to modify and employ tactics that can unbalance Israel's power position, hoping to produce an effect that could lead to a change in the course of Israeli actions towards the Palestinians, causing structural damage in the asymmetry, and eventually push Israel to the negotiation table.

To understand the asymmetry between Israel and Palestine, it shall be crucial to address the origin of the conflict between them and what events led to the establishment of an unbalanced power relation. Furthermore, it is important to stress the actors involved within the conflict, the interests they pursue and the ideologies that drive their actions when they confront each other. Another element to consider is the assessment of the Oslo Accords that were signed in 1993, which sought to put an end to the conflict and work towards the establishment of the Palestinian state. Moreover, the involvement of third party actors has also been included in the analysis, where their actions have been assessed and if their intervention could change the course of action of Israeli foreign policy, creating a possible situation that leads to the termination of the conflict. Finally, scenarios have been drawn out to suggest the paths the conflict could take considering the conditions of military *exhaustion, hurting stalemate* and *foreign pressure*, as elements that could change the course of the conflict.

Although the main focus in this investigation is the conflict between Israel and Palestine, two case studies shall be presented and analysed to expose what factors

have to come into place for asymmetric conflicts to evolve into a peace accord. The case studies of the asymmetries in Northern Ireland with the IRA, and in Colombia with the FARC, shine a light on the main case study analysis, since these conflicts ended by two factors which lead to a post-conflict third factor that are fundamental within asymmetric conflict theory: **First,** *the exhaustion of the conflict* due to the prolongation of the conflict (variable of time) and linked to the concept of *hurting stalemate* (Duman, 2014, Cohen & Bitton, 2015, Zartman, 2001 & Cordesman, 2006); meaning that both actors saw that the bloodshed and use of violence was not enough to eliminate one another, and that the costs of the armed struggle was not paving the way to their political objectives, situation that opened the door to a peaceful negotiation process as the option to end the conflict. **Second**, *the presence and intervention of third party actors,* which were able to influence, pressure, and even facilitate the negotiation process and to some extent, lead towards the end of the conflict. **Third**, *power-sharing* and *coexistence,* is also a factor that needs to be considered as a condition towards the termination of the conflict through a peace accord, since all the cases that shall be presented show that there is a territorial dispute at stake between the actors, and there is also a search for political participation and inclusiveness, especially on behalf of the insurgent actors. For this reason, if the conflict evolves into a peace accord, it is crucial to see if the conflicting parts are able to establish a scenario where both of them are able to participate in the politics of the nation and furthermore, coexist peacefully in the former disputed territories. The cases of Northern Ireland and Colombia, are now resolved cases of asymmetric conflict and by analysing them, the investigation seeks to determine if both cases serve as a model to apply to the main case of Israel and Palestine. Furthermore, the same logic of analysis of the main case has been applied to both exemplary cases.

Therefore, to clarify, deepen and specify the objective and direction of the investigation, the **research question** that has been determined to guide the whole corpus of the investigation and its analysis is; *to what extent could the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine reach a peaceful accord*?

This question, in the first place allows the research to include the two questions that we have previously stated, if a peaceful solution can be achieved between the conflicting parties and if a third party actor can influence the course of the conflict and facilitate negotiations. Furthermore, the research question engages in a profound analysis of what asymmetric conflict is and how an unbalanced power

relation can be reverted by the tactics and methods applied by insurgent groups and non-state actors versus dominant state actors. Addressing the theory of asymmetric conflict, its nature and conditions for the resolution of the conflict, is the first step and shall serve as a model and structure to analyse and comprehend the cases of Northern Ireland and Colombia, to later project them towards the main case of Israel and Palestine.

As it has been previously mentioned, an analysis of the involvement of third party actors within in the conflicts shall also be presented. For the three cases, the United States played an important role: in the Northern Ireland with the Good Friday Agreement; in the Colombian case it was strongly present on the side of the Colombian government regarding its struggle against FARC; and for the Israel-Palestine case, Washington continues to play a determining role. Furthermore, the role and impact that the European Union and the United Nations have had and could continue to have as third party actors for the case of Israel and Palestine has also been taken into account. For this reason, the interventions, policies and behaviour of third party actors have also been analysed to understand how they might condition the conflict and affect the policies and directions of Israeli and Palestinian actions. Finally, the study shall conclude with certain scenarios that can be drawn from conditions that asymmetric conflict theory provides regarding the solution of conflicts the impact they can have regarding the future relations between Israel and Palestine and within the international community.

II. Theory

1. Asymmetric Conflict Theory[1]

A. Background

The theoretical framework of the investigation is mainly based upon the asymmetric conflict theories of Mack (1975), Cohen & Bitton (2015) and Lele (2014) and especially Gallo & Marzano (2009) regarding the phases of evolution within asymmetric warfare. These authors present the underlying ideas of what asymmetric conflict is and explain the logic that arises when an insurgent actor or non-state actor challenges the dominance of the state actor and their power. They stress that asymmetric conflict always presents, in its origin, an unbalanced power relation between the two conflicting actors, and while the conflicts can be of territorial, political or religious nature, the insurgent group shall always aim, in the first place, to revert the power structure trying to balance the asymmetry in their favour (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), if this is achieved, then the objectives that they seek through the armed struggle, which in most cases is represented through the use of terror tactics, which can force the dominant state actor to the negotiation table. It is through the use of violence and terror (Mack, 1975 & Lele, 2014) that insurgent groups shall seek to modify the polices and tactics of the governing power, by breaking their might and bending their closed and inflexible political will (Mack, 1975), so that they can fulfil their political, social, economic, territorial and religious ideals.

Moreover, the insurgent groups through asymmetric conflict will also spread their ideological struggle and principles to the rest of the population, so that they can engage and support with their cause Mack, (1975), Edwards (2011), Harel (2012) and Vaknin-Gill (2017), as it will be shown in the case of Northern Ireland and further on, with Palestine. The ideas presented by the mentioned authors aim towards the victory of the insurgent groups over the state actors, and outline how they have been able to negotiate their objectives through peace accords.

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[1] During the course of the investigation the terms "Asymmetric Conflict" and "Asymmetric Warfare" shall be taken as synonyms, since armed conflicts like ones described in the investigation, especially under the concept of asymmetry are part of warfare.

Furthermore, it is important to present the steps of how the analysis shall be developed. The first step will be to detail the nature of asymmetric conflict theory, define and exemplify it, complementing it with the phases of asymmetric conflict through the theories of Gallo & Marzano (2009), since their stages of conflicts shall be the guiding framework for all the asymmetric warfare cases presented in the research. The second step shall be to put the theory into perspective with the cases of Northern Ireland and Colombia. Finally, the last step shall consider the lessons learnt from the two case studies and apply them in relation to the theory within the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Through various readings and findings, the investigation is based on sufficient and useful literature regarding asymmetric conflict theory. Before going into further details of what asymmetric conflict theory is, the consulted authors and data that we have taken into account for the analysis of the three cases of asymmetric warfare shall also be addressed.

The first the case regarding the analysis of the asymmetry in Northern Ireland between the IRA and the government of Great Britain, the articles and theories that have been taken into account were the following: Senholzi (2008), Ranstorp & Brun (2013), Edwards (2011), and finally, Democratic Progress Institute (2013). All four documents have served as a strong basis for understanding the struggle between the Catholic and Protestant population in Northern Ireland and how the asymmetry was established between the government of Great Britain versus the Irish Revolutionary Army (IRA). Moreover, they expose how asymmetric conflict tends to follow the logic of the use of brute force on behalf of the dominant actor; in this case the government and military forces of Great Britain, to deter, contain and finally, annihilate the threats and actions of the insurgent actor. In response to this use of force (Edwards, 2011), the insurgent actor (the IRA) employed the use of terror tactics and surprise attacks on civilian targets to counter the power of the dominant actor and push through the use of violence their political and social objectives.

In all four authors, there was an agreement that the conflict in Northern Ireland led to a combined status of *deadlock/hurting stalemate* and *military exhaustion* as the main reasons to open the window for negotiation talks and put an end to the conflict. The data recollected and applied from Democratic Progress Institute (2013) contributed to understand the process of negotiation and the different methods and channels that were used to build trust amongst the conflicting actors, creating an honest and committed environment to negotiate and facilitate the conditions towards a peace accord and the establishment of a power-sharing agreement between the Catholics

and Protestants. Therefore, in this case the various factors that led to the Good Friday Agreement have been analysed to address the research question and see how it could be applied and answered in this particular expression of asymmetric conflict.

For the analysis and comprehension of the Colombian state versus the FARC guerrilla group, Restrepo, Spagat & Vargas (2002), Duman (2014) and Arango (2008), lay out the basic causes that led to the origin of the conflict in Colombia and why it is perceived under asymmetric nature. Arango (2008) focuses on the tactics and techniques that were applied by the FARC to pursue their military and political objectives, and how they were able to spread the element of fear through the Colombian society, action that led the Colombian population to pressure the Colombian government to apply brutal force towards the guerrilla group and annihilate them. Simultaneously, Restrepo, Spagat & Vargas (2002) underline the power contest that arouse between the Colombian State and FARC and how external intervention, on behalf of the United States, was needed to aid the Colombian governmental forces. Finally, Duman (2014) presents the Conflict Transformation (CT), technique that was used and required to initiate negotiations and led to a peace accord. Conflict Transformation allowed the negotiating parts to foresee and envision future scenarios of power-sharing and of joint political participation of the former conflicting parties to draw upon scenarios of how they would be able to work together for the sake of justice, political inclusion and the progress of their nation. Finally, the revision of current events through the news articles from the BBC and Latin American online press of the Santos administration regarding the recent peace process with the FARC, were also taken into account.

Both cases will shed a light on asymmetric conflict theory, and how in reality an insurgent or colonised group has been able to modify government policies by inflicting significant amounts of damage, and to some extent modify the balance structure of the asymmetry, creating the opportunity for the conflict to evolve from its stage of violence to a transition of negotiations and reaching a peace agreement (Gallo & Marzano, 2009). These two cases will serve as evidence if an insurgent group that was dominated and contested by a state power was able to legitimise its cause and achieve its goals.

Finally, in regards to the development of the research question and further analysis of the investigation with attention to the case of Israel and Palestine, Galtung (1972), looks at the historical effects and consequences of the asymmetry between Israel

and Palestine, and states how has Israel's power position increased with the prolongation of the conflict. Gallo & Marzano (2009) explain and analyse in detail the asymmetry between Israelis and Palestinians, and how the power structure of the very asymmetry is deeply rooted. Moreover, they address the phases and requirements that are needed to fight within asymmetric conflicts and emphasize on the stages of *conscientisation*, *confrontation, negotiation* and *sustainable peace*, which are crucial for victory in asymmetric confrontations. Van Negri (2012), gives a historical account of the asymmetry, which is useful to understand the reasons why there is a conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians, and also addresses the failure of the Oslo Accords, which are crucial to understand the prolongation of the conflict, and why further negotiations have failed. Gallo & Marzano (2009), also touch upon the Oslo Accords and the reason why the conflict is still stuck at a confrontation stage. Cordesman (2006), addresses various topics of interest regarding the ideologies behind the main actors and what drives their actions in the conflict, the damage that the asymmetric conflict has brought to a possible negotiation process, and how the intervention of third party actors have left a bitter taste towards a successful and credible peace accord. Furthermore, Louwerse (2017), retakes the issue concerning third party actor intervention and focuses the analysis regarding the role the United States has played within the conflict, its relationship with Israel and how the United Nations has been deeply influenced by this "special" friendship. This article has been of extreme use to expose the lack of neutrality that the United States has shown towards the conflict and how it has compromised peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Vaknin-Gill (2017) makes an extraordinary contribution to the asymmetry and seeks to establish new tactics that the Palestinian Authority could use through a diplomatic path as a solution to the conflict by delegitimising the Israeli occupation within Palestine by attracting the attention of the international community. Aranda & Palma (2016) offer a historical and political account of the conflict between Israel and Palestine and its current status, which has been used to complement with the theories of asymmetric conflict. Finally, Chaime (2015) and Cohen (2017) have been used to design potential scenarios regarding the possibility of the establishment and the recognition of the Palestinian state, and if a two-state solution is a viable option.

B. What is Asymmetric Conflict Theory?

Since the references regarding the case studies have been previously clarified, the next step within the investigation is to define, exemplify and analyse what asymmetric conflict theory is and how it is applicable to the research.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is of asymmetric nature (Galtung, 1972 and Gallo & Marzano, 2009), where a strong dominant state: Israel exercises its military superiority against a dominated power: Palestine, who seeks recognition and independence. Under this description, Palestine is seen as a colonised power/actor[2] or as an insurgent actor, which deploys tactics that seek to undermine (Lele, 2014) and counter Israeli dominion through, insurgency, terror and the use of violence. The First Intifada (1987-1991) and the Second Intifada, and (2000-2005) were Palestinian attempts to pursue its political and territorial goals by challenging Israel's power in the conflict. In asymmetric conflicts, the use of force is destined to provoke a strong and substantial reaction in the policies of the dominant power and hope to produce enough damage, so that the behaviour of dominance is altered (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), increasing the power to the insurgent group, which can be extremely beneficial towards defeating the dominant actor or even pushing the conflict towards a negotiation process.

Historically, Mack (1975) stresses that in the context of warfare small resistances were crushed by dominant and colonial powers and the success of dominant nations was never underestimated, meaning that military superiority was an essential element to achieve victory in any type of conflict. This mentality and logic changed after the Second World War with the apparition of nationalist, guerrilla and terrorist movements that sought to counter and shift the power balance towards their benefit and strongly challenged and counter the colonial or dominant powers that they fought against.

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[2] During the investigation the concepts of "Colonising Power/Actor" and "Colonised Power/Actor" shall be applied as synonyms for "Dominating Power/Actor" and "Dominated Power/Actor". The use of the terms "colonising" and "colonised" should not be confused with the classic term of colonialism, since in the research focuses specifically on the power relations under asymmetry with the terminology of dominion and colonisation, since the case of Israel and Palestine is related to the concepts of occupation, these can also be understood as colonisation.

As an initial definition asymmetric conflict should be understood as "a form of warfare in which a non-state actor uses unconventional tools and tactics against a state's vulnerabilities to achieve disproportionate effect, undermining the state's will to achieve its strategic objectives" (Lele. 2014, p. 103). Once again, this definition refers to the objective of shifting the power balance in favour of the insurgent groups.

Moreover, the majority of the conflicts that happen within the modern world are defined under the term of "asymmetric warfare" (Mack, 1975) and are disputed by insurgent groups that are within states, or between combatants and existing states. A stronger party or dominant actor, which can be identified as the state authority has greater power capacities and resources that give it an advantage against the insurgent actor. The latter rely on unconventional and unpredictable resources (Mack, 1975) (Cohen & Bitton, 2015) and (Lele, 2014) to challenge the power relationship that exists between them and the dominant state; these resources are mainly related to terror tactics or just plain terrorism if one wants to be more explicit. In most cases, especially the cases referred to in the current study; Northern Ireland vs. IRA, the Colombian state vs. FARC and the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the insurgent groups are characterised by lacking the effective access towards the political system and canalise their demands through this apparatus.

Terrorism, is a main characteristic and method of action that identifies most insurgent groups, even though it can be categorised as the weapon of the weak, it has become one of the most effective resources to counter and shift the balance of power within the asymmetry that exists between the two conflicting actors. Asymmetric conflict (Cohen & Bitton, 2015) shows that it is a weaker side or dominated actor that relies on the use of terror tactics or guerrilla warfare techniques as means to an end, it is a method of survival (Mack, 1975) within the conflict that they are involved. Moreover, it is the dominating nations who suffer the consequences of terrorism, although in some cases they can become relatively tolerant to the expression of terror (Cohen & Bitton, 2015). This logic is found in the three cases that have been included in the investigation and show the common element of terror as the essential tactic to inflict damage in the power structure of the dominating of the state actor.

Furthermore, asymmetric conflict also gives the dominated actor the incentive and opportunity to differentiate (Dunne, García-Alonso, Levine & Smith, 2006) and develop peculiar tactics than can defy and even balance the power expressed by the dominating actor. "When terrorists have a choice of targets (different countries or

different objectives within the same country), effort being put into defending one target will provide incentives to differentiate, to substitute alternative targets. For example, in response to British counter-terrorism efforts, the IRA switched from attacking military targets in Northern Ireland, firstly to civilian targets in Britain, and then to high value commercial targets in the City of London" (Dunne, García-Alonso, Levine & Smith, 2006, p. 184).

One of the main advantages that the insurgents can develop is the belief and spread of their ideology (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) towards their fighters and supporters, this element can be determining when engaging in a long-term conflict, an example of this can be seen in the war in Vietnam. It was the ideology (Mack, 1975) that united the Vietnamese fighters to contain and avoid the U.S. forces to win their war in Vietnam, since the former were not able to gain domestic support for their intervention in a foreign land. The same example can be applied to the main case of Israel vs. Palestine. The Israelis consider themselves a minority and weak in relation to the Arab world (Galtung, 1972), especially due to their geographical position in the Middle East. Nevertheless, the Palestinians are much weaker in relation to power if they are compared to Israel, and this is where survival comes into play, and it is a game that both the Israeli and Palestinians have been fighting since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948. Therefore, the concept and idea of survival (Gallo & Marzano, 2009 and Mearscheimer, 2014) plays a crucial role in the actions and attacks of both groups, and can become a determining factor to create a situation of advantage for one the conflicting sides.

Gallo & Marzano (2009) identify three types of asymmetries: power asymmetry, strategic asymmetry, and structural asymmetry. For the main case of the investigation, the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the expression of *structural asymmetry* is the where the analysis has been focused towards. The following task is to briefly define the different types of asymmetry so their differences can be outlined. Once this has been exposed, structural asymmetry shall be addressed.

Moreover, Gallo & Marzano (2009), specify that in many cases the ability to distinguish these types of asymmetries is not an easy task, since there can be a combination of them in one conflict, therefore the task to identify them will depend on the degree of intensity that they are present within the conflict that is studied.

In the first place, "*Power asymmetry* occurs whenever a strong imbalance in power exists; a kind of asymmetry quite common in conflicts" (Ibid. 2009, p. 2). Power asymmetry is one of the most common features of asymmetric conflicts. Therefore, if one were to pinpoint where this type of asymmetry has existed, an example is found in the First Gulf War, where the coalition led by the United States presented an asymmetrical power stance against Iraq and its Armed Forces, the latter had absolutely no chance in containing or even matching the power that the United States presented and inflicted towards them. What this means, is that in the end, it is the military superiority that an actor has will prevail in regards to its enemy. Gallo & Marzano (2009), simplify it by stating that it is a matter of quantity over quality.

On the other hand, *strategic asymmetry* refers to the tactics applied by the actors involved the conflict, which lead to a substantial unbalance of power. Here the presence of guerrilla groups and the use of terror tactics can be found, like in the cases of Northern Ireland and the IRA, Colombia and the FARC and Hamas against Israel, which are a centrepiece of the analysis. The asymmetry is mainly defined by technology and firepower on behalf of the dominating actor, which is seen as an initial advantage within the conflict, and terrorism, expressed through decentralised cells define the dominated or insurgent actor. Gallo & Marzano (2009), clarify that it has to do with the strategic approach that the actors take regarding the conflict. Once again, there is an unbalance of power.

Finally, *structural asymmetry* is also characterised by a significant imbalance of power and it is this very element that the actors seek to change; "the real object of the fight is to change the structure of relations between the opponents. Usually one of the parties seeks to modify it, while the other (mainly the dominant actor) will do everything in its power to maintain the rooted structure and avoid any changes. Sometimes one of the parties is a governmental institution and the other a non-state organisation" (Ibid, p. 3).

This last expression of asymmetry relates to all of the cases of the analysis. It shall be used as a guiding principle for the conflict between Israel and Palestine, where Israel seeks to maintain its strong and firm power dominance over Palestine, and where initially the Palestinians, through violence, sought to alter and shift the power structure in their favour, and recently have reached out for international support through a process of *delegitimisation* (Cohen, 2017 and Beck, 2015) defying Israel's expressions power and dominance.

Therefore a new question arises, *how can the structural asymmetry change through asymmetric warfare*? For this, Gallo & Marzano (2009) have been taken into consideration once again and what they present shall be the main framework to address the research question of the investigation. Both authors identify four key steps that need to be taken: *conscientisation* is labelled as the primary step. Here, those who are dominated become aware of the unjust structure that they live in. They know that they are on the weak side of the balance. For this reason, they have to come together and have a strong desire to change the power structure. In all three cases that are analysed in the investigation, the insurgent actors had gone through this stage and became aware of their status of domination. "There cannot be conscientisation without the awareness of domination" (Ibid, p. 7). Moreover, the *conscientisation* phase allows the insurgents to form a group identity and organise themselves, under common values and ideals, and overall, identify that they have a common enemy, this way they can mobilise their political objectives.

Confrontation is the next stage, where the dominated seek and demand the change, and fight for the recognition of their rights and objectives. Evidently, there cannot be any type of real and effective confrontation without the development of *conscientisation*. Gallo & Marzano, (2009) indicate that the phase of confrontation can take different forms; passive resistance, mobilisation of political objectives, terror attacks and the use of military force. It is possible that more than one of these expressions of confrontation can take place at the same time, since it is most likely that the insurgents have military and political factions, as it shall be exposed for the case of Northern Ireland (the IRA and Sinn Féin), the case of Colombia (FARC and Unión Patríotica) and the main case of Israel and Palestine (Hamas and Fatah).

The third step would eventually lead to a *negotiation process*. In this phase, the balance of power between both actors has reached a stage of reduction, where in most cases the dominating actor has lost its initial advantage over the insurgents. "Negotiation is a way to make each side confront their opponent's objectives and to reorganise the legitimacy of the dominant, since the power balance has increased and they have to adjust to the new reality and renounce some of their own objectives" (Gallo & Marzano, 2009, p. 10). Here is where the awareness of the conflict reaches its highest point. Moreover, this stage can only be reached when effective damage has been inflicted towards the power structure of the dominating actor; this means that the power balance is not asymmetrical anymore. Furthermore, "negotiation is reached when the two parties arrive at the conclusion that the cost of

the struggle is becoming unbearable" (Ibid, p 10). The conditions of *military exhaustion* and *hurting stalemate* can also be reasons why the conflict evolves from the confrontation stage to a negotiation state. Zartman (2001) refers to this evolution of the conflict as the "ripe moment", it is here where the conflict has prolonged itself for too long and stalemate has installed itself within the same conflict. "The concept is based on the notion that when the parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to both of them, they seek an alternative policy or way out" (Zartman, 2001, p. 8).

If this does not happen, the stage of *confrontation* can prolong itself, and can produce a spiral effect, which Duman (2014) identifies as a constant transition from confrontation and negotiation, deepening the status of *hurting stalemate* or *deadlock*. Gallo & Marzano (2009) also identify this problem and threat to the evolution of conflicts, labelling the failure of negotiations and the return to the confrontation phase with the term "looping", where the confrontation could escalate to greater violence.

Now, the *negotiation process* can or cannot begin with the presence or intervention of third party actors, this means that both conflicting actors can come to the agreement to initiate the *negotiation process* and draw upon solutions to the conflict and see how their objectives can be established. Moreover, a third party actor could intervene and push one of the actors towards the negotiation table and take charge of the negotiation under a neutral stance. Duman (2014) questions the intervention of the third party actors, "Should they intervene before the conflict reaches hurting stalemate or should they intervene after the hurting stalemate stage?" (Duman, 2014, p.19). Furthermore, Duman (2014) believes that third party actors should encourage the conflicting parties that a non-violent solution is possible and beneficial for both of them. Gallo & Marzano (2009), also refer to the intervention of third party actors in this phase, since they have the possibility to convince or even force the conflicting actors to negotiate. In most cases it is the dominating party that needs to be convinced to negotiate.

The final stage is *sustainable peace*; where the some of the objectives of the insurgent group can be achieved and some modifications of polices that originate from dominant actor are made. Peace leads to restructuration and there is an equal balance, which in the end should eventually lead to power sharing and coexisting under a peaceful relationship. This is the objective to present in the cases of Northern Ireland and Colombia, and to later drawn upon regarding the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Sustainable peace is what evolves from negotiation,

the task is not easy since both conflicting actors have to reset their relations and leave aside the hatred that separated them. For this to work, Gallo & Marzano (2009) emphasize that a "cultural transformation" must be made. It is the most difficult phase of asymmetric conflict, since the previous three follow a nature course but sustainable peace is not always guaranteed. This is due to the fact that the conflict can always return to the phases of confrontation and negotiation "looping" (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), situation that shall be exposed in the case of Israel and Palestine after the Oslo Accords of 1993. For this reason, both authors sustain that negotiations and sustainable peace fail because of the lack political will (condition that has been set for the solution of asymmetric conflicts). Another element that has been identified by Gallo & Marzano, (2009) is the their concept of "feet-dragging", where in most cases the dominant party prolongs the negotiation phase as long as they can, so that they can continue their gains on the battlefield. Finally, dominant parties can also use tactics to try to divide the insurgent actors and choose to negotiate with certain groups and grant them benefits, situation that once again breaks the possibility of sustainable peace.

Powell & Moaz (2014) and Duman (2014) present certain barriers that have to be overcome and draw suggestions for the resolution of conflicts. **First** of all, there is a need for both actors involved to articulate and design a vision of a shared future (Powell & Moaz, 2014), where the both sides would accept as bearable, this also relates to idea of *Conflict Transformation* (CT) presented by Duman (2014) of foreseeing a power-sharing and territorial coexistence scenario between the conflicting actors. **Second**, an environment of trust has to be created in relation to the future common goals they seek to establish and share, moreover, there has to be a commitment and the willingness has to exist to fulfil these objectives throughout a determined matter of time. Here, once again, the variable of *political will* comes into play, as a determining factor for the resolution of conflicts. **Third**, both sides have to be prepared and willing to accept the fact that their initial objectives, which might have been present at the beginning of the conflict, will not all see the light of day, and that some of the victories that were achieved during the course of the conflict have the possibility of being lost, all for the greater good of the negotiation process and the establishment of peace. Finally, the **fourth** step or barrier that has to be overcome, is the *political will* and disposition that the parties have to show to act together (Powell & Moaz, 2014), this means leaving their differences and hatred behind them, by sharing the commitment to tackle the injustices that might have divided them the in the past, and adopt an attitude of reconciliation to work together. These conditions

are extremely relevant for setting the scenario for a negotiation process and should be present at all times, so that the conflict does not return to a stage of violence.

The ideas presented by Gallo & Marzano (2009), Duman (2014) and Powell & Moaz (2014), are key for understanding how the three cases that have been analysed in this investigation can or not lead to a peaceful negotiation process.

Furthermore, in regards to asymmetric conflict theory, Mack (1975) states that the conception of how the conflict is perceived differs from both actors; those who have the military superiority (the dominant actor) see the armed conflict as something limited and it will not have a long duration, since they have the initial advantage of force and technology over the insurgents. On the other hand, the insurgents see war as something total, it is the only way to achieve their objectives; therefore they will prolong the conflict until their objectives are fulfilled. "Since most insurgents lack the technological capability to destroy the military capability of their opponent, they must of necessity aim to destroy its political capability" (Mack, 1975, p. 179). This makes reference to the variable of *political will*, if the insurgents desire to shift the asymmetry and seek to reach their objectives, their attacks have to be made with the intention to bend and change the *political will* of their adversary to obtain important victories. In the same line of thought, Cohen & Bitton (2015), sustain that the weak parties of the conflict believe that prolonging the conflict through violence (which also relates to the variable of time) will allow them to accomplish their political and territorial objectives.

This mentality leads to the following thought: most of the times the colonising power believes it is fighting a military war, and the insurgents are leading a political battle (Mack, 1975) to achieve their objectives. Under this logic, the dominating side will seek physical attrition to counter and detain insurgency. According to Mack (1975), those who are colonised will use everything in its power to succeed using psychological exhaustion, because if the *political will* from the dominating power is destroyed this will have an instant effect on the military power that they possess, weakening their position in the conflict, losing *political will* is the worst blow a colonial power can suffer. For this reason, asymmetric warfare can be also understood as "a war between two sides with very dissimilar goals, which makes the fight inherently asymmetrical from the beginning" (Lele, 2014 & Libicki, 1997, p. 102).

The innovative element that the theory of asymmetric conflict presents is that the concept of power is no longer conceived as a key element of superiority (Mack, 1975) in the hands of the dominant or colonial power. Initially one tends to think that having military technology and superiority, the conflict is guaranteed to result in a victory for the dominant actor, is can actually become a counterproductive element. Therefore, warfare is not to be confused as a conflict fought always on the battlefield, where actors measure each side's capacities and capabilities but it expands itself and compromises the polity and social institutions. What is being exposed here is fundamental for a complete victory: what truly needs to be defeated is the political capability and will of the adversary (Mack, 1975). If this is achieved then the military power of the dominant state actor will be irrelevant, that is why the spread of the ideology is crucial, it drives the insurgents through political mobilisation becoming an essential advantage (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), creating the possibility to change the complete course of the asymmetry. This is another tactic that must be employed by those who are dominated and seek any type of success in the conflict.

Furthermore, asymmetric approaches must be seen as attempts to undermine and contrast military strength while exploiting the weaknesses of the stronger counterpart, using differentiation methods (Dunne, García-Alonso, Levine & Smith, 2006) that are unexpected, the investigation will touch upon this with the delegitimisation campaign against Israel in the hands of the Palestinians (Cohen, 2017, Vaknin-Gill, 2017 & Beck, 2015). For this reason, the insurgents seek, through their tactics and techniques, to provoke a psychological impact and shock towards their opponent, confusing them to the extent that the opponent will eventually, change their tactics, freedom of action and even their political will and disposition in regards to the conflict. This causes a disproportionate effect that was never calculated or estimated by the colonising power. "Historically, weak powers have sought to avoid an opponent's strengths and instead attempted to exploit the latter's weaknesses" (Lele, 2014, p. 98). For this reason, seeking asymmetries is the key element to victory in terms of the insurgent or dominated state, these asymmetries are categorised as unconventional or non-traditional methodologies.

Moreover, the immobilisation of the capacities and the containment of the influence the dominant power can apply will eventually lead to a change in its behaviour and open windows of opportunities for the insurgents to achieve their objectives. "Asymmetry between entities is measured not only in terms of force but also exists in every aspect in which there is a difference in the nature of the conflicting sides, in

their goals, power, methods of operation, and especially the rules of the game they play" (Harel, 2012, p. 18). In this sense, the relevance of *conscientisation* (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) comes back into play because the insurgents are conscious of their disadvantage, and they set themselves the task of finding tactics and methods that can modify and shift the balance of the asymmetry.

Therefore, it is fundamental that the insurgents seek to maintain themselves invulnerable and provoke huge amounts of costs and loses to their opponents (Mack, 1975), so they can prevail within the conflict. They have to avoid physical defeat but at the same time always show that they cannot be defeated. The more movement of troops and budget used to mobilise them will have political and economical effects on the dominating power's government and that is a cost that can affect the prolongation of the conflict itself (Cordesman, 2006) because the loss of troops and military force is something that the colonising power does not want to compromise.

In some specific cases the insurgent side is not always capable of shifting the balance or has the ability to modify the political will of the dominating power. There are cases where the strong state suffers constant terrorist attacks, which are orchestrated by a militarily weaker state, here the dominating state has the capacity to threaten the weaker state with the engagement of a full-scale war; this is what Cohen & Bitton (2015) call "intolerant trigger strategy". This can be applied to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, specifically to the struggle weighed between Hamas and Israel, where Hamas has constantly employed terror and suicide attacks on Israeli targets and has suffered the consequences of brute force by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), leading to the isolation of the Gaza Strip and containing and cornering the terrorist insurgency. In most cases of asymmetric conflict, this expression of brute force is generally avoided, unless the impact of the terrorist attacks surpasses substantial critical mass.

In the end, asymmetric conflict can also be understood under this logic, "big incumbent actors choose to involve itself in a conflict, while the challengers (state actor), choose to differentiate their technology or tactics to exploit the incumbent's vulnerabilities" (Dunne, García-Alonso, Levine & Smith, 2006, p. 202). Most conflicts of asymmetric nature that prolong themselves in time do favour the insurgent group (Powell & Moaz, 2014) since they tend to be much more committed to victory than the state actor. This explains the possibility of differentiation and how it can give the dominant side an edge and increase their probability of winning should they attack.

Without the element and evaluation of differentiation, the incumbent can always deter the challenges using sufficient effort, but with differentiation, the attack may be inevitable, and deterrence results as an impossible option, no matter the investment the incumbent state has made. Differentiation (Dunne, García-Alonso, Levine & Smith, 2006) reduces the effectiveness of the incumbent's effort if conflict arises, the incumbent's effort will be lower with differentiation than without it. This is a strategy that works in favour of the dominant power and can also be determining for the outcome of the conflict, the tactic of evaluation of differentiation has been applied by the Israeli government and by the IDF to deter and neutralise Palestinian insurgency. Moreover, asymmetric conflict follows these steps: "the first is the need for a capacity to absorb setbacks and persevere. The second is deterrence, the ability to thwart an opponent into a specified area while taking away their advantages. The third is attrition, drawing out your opponent until they are forced to give up" (Vaknin-Gill, 2017, p. 2).

As a conclusion to the nature of asymmetric conflict, it must be stated that conflicts are not solely to be understood as two powers trying to annihilate each other but that they should tend to seek a negotiation process that should translate into a peace accord. This is what the investigation seeks to address and answer regarding the **research question**, *to what extent could the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine reach a peaceful accord*?

To a certain extent, asymmetric conflict theory states (Mack, 1975) (Lele, 2014) that it has been the insurgent power that has been able to take the dominating power to the negotiation table and engage in a peaceful dialogue process, due to the use of terror tactics and the constant will to pursue their objectives. Moreover, the intervention, pressure and participation of third party actors have also been a determining factor in transforming the conflict into a negotiation process. This is what the cases of Northern Ireland and Colombia seek to address and to be later applied in the case between Israel and Palestine.

With the different approaches regarding asymmetric conflict; the knowledge and background of how insurgent actors either triumph or fail, how power balances can be modified, and how asymmetric conflicts can be resolved have been presented and analysed and can now be applied to the cases that seek to resolve the research question regarding the possibility of asymmetric conflict ending in a peaceful accord, especially in regards to Israel and Palestine.

C. Hypothesis

Considering that the investigation and analysis is based asymmetric conflict theory, where a strong state actor: Israel has engaged in a conflict with a non-state actor defined by insurgency: Palestine, the latter seeks to modify the asymmetric power structure that exists between them, and for over fifty years has sought the establishment and recognition of statehood. For this reason, **two hypotheses** will be taken into account to support the **research question**: *to what extent could the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine reach a peaceful accord*?

1. The conflict could eventually come to an end due to hurting stalemate and if a foreign actor intervenes.
2. Palestine's most viable option is to develop a tactic of non-violent confrontation to delegitimise Israel.

D. Conceptualisation and Operationalisation

The intention of the research is to measure how the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine can evolve into a negotiation process, which leads to a peace accord, establishing a two-state solution and the recognition of the Palestinian statehood. Therefore, the following two independent variables[3] shall be observed and analysed to explain the situation being investigated.

1. The political purposes of the Israeli government, the power expressions of the Israeli Defence Forces, and the factor of time are the **variables** to analyse. Here the **concepts** to define are **power incentives** and **time**. Everything here is related to Israel's political incentives and its position regarding the conflict in regards to negotiation and its solution. Israel's political objective is to extend and gain more time so it can avoid negotiations with Palestine and continue with the occupation of the West Bank. The *status quo* legitimises the illegal occupation of Palestinian and since no concrete agreements have been reached since the Oslo Accords of 1993, Israel has continued to build its settlements over Palestinian territory. To **measure** these variables, it shall

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[3] It is important to clarify that the variables considered in this section and within the methodology have been set initially by the researcher and has found through the literature that these variables: political will and time, play a relevant and determining role within the investigation.

be essential to look at the motives behind Israeli military and political actions under Primer Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. A brief look at the Zionist ideology will help clarify the expansion towards a Greater Israel. Articles and academic papers that refer to the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine shall be analysed to further expose the lack of Israeli political will and their tactics to apply force on Palestinian insurgency. Once again the academic papers from Galtung (1972), Gallo & Marzano (2009) and Cordesman (2006), aid the research to comprehend the origin of the asymmetry, the ideologies behind the actors and how the conflict has evolved into a stage of low intensity violence. Moreover, the research shall look at how the Palestinians have contested the Israeli actions in the political and military arenas, seeking to modify the political will of Israel and its power structure with the objective of obtaining statehood. For this, the investigation has focused on the findings from Cohen (2017), Vaknin-Gill (2017), Gallo & Marzano (2009), Beck (2015) and Lourwerse (2015).

2. The *external pressure* and involvement on behalf of third party actors, in particular the role of the United States is the second **variable** to be studied. The **concept** to be addressed here is the **intention** to solve the conflict. How can this be done with the presence of world's superpower and its recent announcement of the recognition of Jerusalem[4] as the capital of Israel? First, the relationship between the Israel and the United States and how the intentions of the latter influence the behaviour and the policies of not only the Israeli administration but also the effects it has on the Palestinians, and what are the consequences regarding the conflict and peace negotiations shall be addressed. Furthermore, the following scenarios shall be looked upon: how will Israel react towards Palestine when there is either pressure or support from the U.S.? How will Palestine react to U.S. support towards Israel, will there be a Third Intifada? How will Palestine react towards the conflict when there is no presence of the U.S. and the international community? How will Israel react to the conflict and Palestine when there is external presence and pressure, will the settlements continue and no peaceful agreement will be sought? All these scenarios have to be addressed and the effects it has for

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[4] View online article:
https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/trump-s-jerusalem-plan-undermines-u-s-interests-credibility-analysts-n826966.

both of the main actors and towards the conflict itself must be measured. Therefore, the intentions of the United States and other third party actors (the EU and the UN) shall be **measured** by analysing the relationship between the Israel and the United States, the role and position the European Union has regarding the conflict between Israel and Palestine, and finally, how the United Nations has reacted to the conflict. For this, data extracted from press articles from the BBC and Al Jazeera regarding President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem have been consulted. Regarding the relationship between Israel, the U.S. and the UN, Louwerse (2017) shall be taken into account. For the intentions and the role of the European Union in the conflict Youngs (2014) has been consulted. Finally, analysing and addressing the relationship and the behaviour that third party actors have on Israel and Palestine shall be crucial to understand the certain actions and directives of the conflict and will further enlighten how their participation can modify and create new scenarios.

For this reason, the variables of political will, time, and the role that third party actors play within asymmetric conflicts shall aid the research to test if the framework presented by Gallo & Marzano (2009) in regards to the evolution and resolution of conflicts, can address the main research question and lead the case of Israel and Palestine towards a peaceful solution.

III. Methodology

Considering the nature of the research question, *to what extent could the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine reach a peaceful accord*? The analysis of the investigation shall be a qualitative one, since the objective is to test if asymmetric conflict theory is a viable solution towards the establishment of Palestinian statehood under a peace accord between Israel and Palestine. For this reason, an analysis of two case studies: Northern Ireland and Colombia, has been included as tested models that refer to the research question. Moreover, the research that is carried out is focused on the specific asymmetric conflict case study of Israel and Palestine, and follows a discourse analysis focusing on the implications and consequences of a prolonged conflict and the use of violence, considering as well, the intervention of third party actors and how their involvement affects the asymmetry and behaviour of the actors but overall, how it affects the establishment and recognition of the Palestinian State.

For this type of analysis, the data collected and used consists on policy documents, academia articles, analysis of the concepts included in asymmetric conflict theories, previous agreements and negotiations. Evidence and examples of declarations and interventions from United States and European Union in the conflict have also been included. Finally, United Nations declarations, press articles on the current status of the conflict, and finally, consultation of the previous literature on the subject matter are also taken into account for the analysis of the research.

Moreover, the **variables** that shall be analysed and considered for **data recollection** in the current research are as follows:

- **The political and power incentives for Israel**. For this part the research shall focus on the objectives and ideology behind Israeli power, with special to the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). Looking into articles regarding the current policies of the Likud led administration and party declarations shall be taken into account. Furthermore, the ideology of Zionism (Sternberg, 2012) shall be addressed to understand Israel's growth of power as a means of survival for the state and the security for the Israeli population.

- **External pressure and presence from the United States.** Regarding the pressure and relationship between Israel and the United States, the data that shall be used corresponds to academic papers that refer to this special relationship with special attention to Louwerse (2017). Moreover, President Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, shall also be monitored by current press articles, and how expert analysis foresee how this will either deepen the conflict, lead to a wave of violence on behalf of the Palestinian insurgents, maintain the *status quo*, or provoke a reaction from the Palestinian government calling the international community to recognise East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine[5]. All these scenarios have to be addressed in the investigation.

The demonstrative analysis presented regarding the reality of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, under the theory of asymmetric conflict should be sufficient to address and contribute to the posed research question, and explain why there is still

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[5] This declaration was made on December 13 by president Abbas, see article: https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-usa-trump-israel-oic/muslim-leaders-call-on-world-to-recognise-east-jerusalem-as-palestinian-capital-idUKKBN1E731V.

no end to the violence and the conflict itself and why no strong and compromising peace accord between Palestine and Israel has been established. Furthermore, addressing and applying asymmetric conflict, which calls for a change of tactics on behalf of the insurgents (Lele, 2014), seeking to modify policies and the power structure will help design scenarios that could change the course of the conflict itself. It will be fundamental to touch upon recent events regarding the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by the United States, and see how this causes a reaction in regards to the asymmetry between Palestine and Israel, which could also create the possibility in a change of policies, not only within the two actors but also at a global level, leading once again to consider the involvement of other third party actors, e.g. the United Nations, the European Union and Russia.

IV. Analysis

In the following chapters the asymmetric conflicts of Northern Ireland and Colombia shall be analysed before addressing the main case of the Israel-Palestine conflict. For both cases the main research question has been adapted to each particular case, therefore *to which extent could the asymmetric conflict in Northern Ireland and in Colombia reach a peaceful accord*? To answer the question and to guide the research it shall be established, that asymmetric conflict theory leads to a peaceful negotiation when; **first**, there is either *military exhaustion* within the conflict and both conflicting parties seek negotiation because the very conflict is at a stage of deadlock, meaning that violence is no longer an option. **Second**, asymmetric conflict comes to an end when there is a strong and pressuring *intervention* of a third party actor and how their application of pressure can led to a negotiation process between the main actors of the conflict. Finally, the analysis seeks to address if the resolution of asymmetric warfare can lead to political recognition and establish a situation of power sharing within the society and territory where the conflict was fought, and furthermore, if the conflicting parties once reconciled through a peace accord, are able to coexist within the former disputed territories. This means that Gallo & Marzano (2009) ideas regarding the evolution of conflicts shall be put to the test.

The two case studies will aid the research regarding the conflict between Israel and Palestine and test if the elements that led to the respective peace accords in Northern Ireland and Colombia can serve as a model for the main case. The two exemplary cases shall proceed by introducing the asymmetry: presenting the actors involved and their objectives; making reference to the conditions that led to the end of the violence; and how third party actors came into the scene and aided the negotiation process. In the conclusion of each case study, a reflexion to the initial research question shall be made to test if the conditions and expectations of asymmetric conflict theory have been applied.

1. The Asymmetric Conflict in Northern Ireland

A. The origin of the conflict and its asymmetry

The conflict in Northern Ireland is labelled under the concept of asymmetry because weaker combatants like the IRA gave into non-traditional strategies and terror to engage and weigh a conflict with a stronger opponent (Edwards, 2011); the British state. In this specific case the British Government and the Unionists of Northern Ireland alongside with the Royal Ulster Constabulary paramilitary group are the dominant powers in relation to their counterpart, the Irish Revolutionary Army (IRA)[6], and the political wing of the Republican Irish paramilitary group Sinn Féin, which are considered the dominated actors. The relationship between both sides is of asymmetric nature, "it was a structure of dominance, dependence and inequality" (Todd, 2003, p. 3), where the Catholic Irishmen represented by the IRA sought to counter the British government and their power dominion in Northern Ireland, and who were able to negotiate and establish a peace accord.

Asymmetric conflicts (Mack, 1975) can be of various natures and characterised by religious, political and territorial disputes. Therefore, why was the conflict so complex in Northern Ireland? The reason behind this is that the conflict was characterised by a religious divide between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, where the Catholics had the strong desire of creating a unified and independent Ireland from the United Kingdom. The division between Catholic and Protestant communities dates back to the 1600s (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013) leading to the division of the island of Ireland with the **United Kingdom's Government of Ireland Act** of 1920 (Ibid, p. 10). The act established 26 countries in Southern Ireland (which is now the Republic of Ireland) and 6 countries in Northern Ireland, giving Dublin and Belfast separate parliaments. Moreover, the North of the island continued under British rule and the South became an independent state. The establishment of two separate Irelands was not accepted by the Irish Republic, stressing that the Act lacked legitimacy, and that they had jurisdiction over the entire island (Ranstorp & Brun, 2013).

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[6] The IRA split into two divisions: the Official Irish Republican Army (OIRA) and the Provisional Irish Republic Army (PIRA), it was the PIRA who continued the battle and conflict against the British forces and the Northern Irish Unionists (Edwards, 2011, p. 12). This means during this chapter the Irish Republican Army shall be referred to under both terms: IRA and PIRA. Sinn Féin would be the political wing of the IRA when it came to negotiations and accords.

The **Government of Ireland Act** meant that the Catholics were left inside a Protestant state as a minority, struggling for their basic human rights and positioning them in a state of dominion, leading to the origin of the asymmetry. The Northern Irish Protestants had the full support of the British government in London and positioned them as the dominant power in relation to the Catholic minority, seen as the oppressed actor. "Britain's answer to the Unionists demands was the establishment of a permanent boundary between the North and the South" (Senholzi, 2008, p. 3). This evolved into the establishment of a type of Northern Irish apartheid applied on the Catholic minority, causing the division between both communities, and deepened the asymmetry between them[7]. This led to what Gallo & Marzano (2009) would call the *conscientisation* phase, where the Catholic Irish became deeply aware of the asymmetry and how, slowly the government of Great Britain was dominating the Irish territory and community.

Tensions rose within the both communities in the decade of 1960, leading to the deployment of British troops in Northern Ireland to stop the communal clashes. The intervention of the British troops and their alliance towards the Protestant community in Northern Ireland sets the stage for the second phase of conflict evolution (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), since the phase of awareness shifts towards *confrontation.*
At first, the presence of the troops brought hope to the Catholic community, believing that they would solve the injustice and seek a reconciliation of the differences between them. The intervention of the British forces actually caused the growth of hostilities, creating the establishment of a deeper asymmetry between Protestants and Catholics, since the former had the support of the state of the United Kingdom. The presence of the British troops unfolded into the birth of the Irish Revolutionary Army (IRA), which in the first place sought the use of "civil rights movement as a tool in order to establish a cross-community that would fight for social justice and the end of unionism using political means" (Ranstorp & Brun, 2013, p. 8). Since this did not echo or produce the desired effect to solve the unjust treatment, the use of force and terror came into play and the conflict became rooted within the society.

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[7] A similar situation that will be repeated in the case of Israel and Palestine, with the Israeli West Bank barrier, separating the Palestinians from each other and denying them access to certain cities within Israel.

The conflict escalated in 1972 with the "Bloody Sunday[8]" killings (Edwards, 2011), leading to the suspension of the Northern Irish parliament on behalf of the United Kingdom, provoking a violent clash between the IRA and the British forces. Here is where the asymmetric conflict techniques and tactics play a fundamental role in the case of Northern Ireland. "Asymmetric conflict is understood here as the armed confrontation between state and non-state challengers in the form of terrorist groups. In this type of conflict there is often a considerable power disparity between the belligerents that can place the latter at a structural disadvantage. Thus, asymmetric threats to state security tend to be unusual, irregular and uneven in terms of capabilities, dexterous in terms of securing leverage over state assets, and difficult for states to deter, especially in a discriminate and proportionate manner. In this respect, states must develop new ways and means of responding to terrorists that departs from how they might deal with more conventional opponents. Crucially states have to reconfigure their militaries in order to counter asymmetric threats[9], perhaps by developing Special Forces capabilities to engage the enemy at close quarters" (Edwards, 2011, p. 227). This is specifically what the British forces had to do when they engaged violently with the IRA, the suppression of a manifestation by the colonial power, provoked the call to arms from the insurgents, which gave birth to an asymmetric conflict. The British troops were not confronting a traditional war enemy that they were historically used to. Hence, deterrence became the first option but failed, in came the application of brutal force as the only plausible solution to obtain a certain degree of victory for the dominant power. Moreover, one must understand that this specific type of conflicts are characterised by being deeply unstable because there is no agent that is able to or in control to establish any type of order (Todd, 2003). This was the complexity of the conflict in Northern Ireland due to the fact that the very state, Great Britain, was deeply involved and compromised in the conflict, and for the beginning applied constant brute force against the IRA. Therefore, the British troops showed a lack of neutrality by supporting the Unionists of Northern Ireland.

The use of brutal force led in the first place, to the increase of terror tactics and change of targets on behalf of the IRA, which in the first place challenged the power

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[8] On 30 January 1972, a civil rights demonstration through the streets of Londonderry in northwest Northern Ireland ended with the shooting dead of thirteen civilians by the British Army (BBC. Archive Bloody Sunday. http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/bloody_sunday.)

[9] This can also be taken into account in regards to other asymmetric conflicts the Taliban's in Afghanistan and the recent fight against ISIS.

structure of the British forces, which eventually deepened and prolonged the conflict. Instead of one side seeking to annihilate one another, the British forces found themselves engaged in a conflict with a powerful revolutionary power that was able to respond with the same kind of force, leading to a deepening of the confrontation phase (Gallo & Marzano, 2009). Moreover, this provoked a shift in the power structure, which in the beginning of the conflict shifted towards the British government and their forces but with the evolution of the conflict the IRA was able to increase the power balance, where they now became a worthy contestant of the dominant power expressions.

For this reason, the conflict in Northern Ireland gives clear evidence that deterrence and the offering to negotiate did not produce the results that the British government hoped for, because the IRA was able to respond and canalise their demands through unorthodox tactics, characterised by terror, which were able to challenge the power domination imposed by Great Britain. Hence a change of power tactics had to be made on behalf of the British forces, "if one's opponent decides against cooperation, then the next logical step –according to the strategic line of reasoning- is to employ brute force" (Edwards, 2011, p. 228). It was the abuse and constant use of violence that finally provoked *exhaustion* and deadlock stalemate of the conflict.

The advantage that the IRA had over the British forces in Northern Ireland is that the latter did not value how well spread the IRA and its ideology was throughout the Catholic community in Northern Ireland, since it was deeply rooted and became a common element of unity within the Catholic Irish combatants (Edwards, 2011) & (Mack, 1975). This also has to do with what Dunne, García-Alonso, Levine & Smith (2006) refer to in regards to differentiation, which is an evaluation process of forces of the tactics and strategies that one's enemy is employing within the conflict. The British forces failed to do this in relation to the IRA, and it could have been easier for them to contain and eventually eliminate the insurgency. Since this was not done, and even if the British troops had succeeded in defeating the IRA, nationalist fighters would have still remained in the region with the desire and will to take up arms and counterattack the British army. The British forces lacked the knowledge of how deeply rooted an ideology can be, and how it can become a dangerous weapon to counter within asymmetric conflicts. This is one of the advantages that asymmetric conflict tactics offers the insurgents. Therefore, the ideal and objective of Irish nationalism was so deeply rooted in the Catholic Irishmen and women that defeating solely the paramilitary group would have not ended the conflict. A common ideal that

can unite a whole community proves to be an element of power for those who are in the weaker side of the conflict. The common ideology factor is why the IRA had success countering the British power in the region and with it was also able to create a tighter cellular terrorist organisation (Edwards, 2011), which became the military power to challenge the British and Unionist forces.

It was the combination of a common ideology and the use of unconventional tactics, like the use of terrorism that allowed the IRA to become such a successful and powerful insurgent actor in this conflict. "The PIRA was one of the world's most impenetrable organisations and displayed a high and often amazing degree of operational ingenuity in launching new and unexpected terrorist attacks. The ensuring intelligence and operational cat-and-mouse game between the PIRA and its enemies over the last three decades have been matched by formidable levels of technical skills, innovation and learning curve in weapons design, bomb-making expertise and delivery of unexpected and sophisticated terrorist attacks" (Ranstorp & Brun, 2013, p. 11). Moreover, the IRA obtained victories and continued undermining the Unionists and the British forces by changing "their tactics a number of times over the years from killing local police officers to sending members of the British military home in coffins in great numbers. And then they decided that was not going to work because it was in the confines of Northern Ireland, so they took their expertise not just to Great Britain in terms of massive commercial bombings but also to killing British military officers in places like France, Belgium and Holland to show us that they could fight this war anywhere the British had military personnel" (Ranstrop & Brun, 2013, p. 53). This was the way that the IRA sought to obtain its objectives and demonstrated that their threat and use of power could not be ignored or undermined, scenario that obligated the British military to respond with the same kind of force.

Most of the times, colonising powers believe that brute force will provide the knock-out punch towards the colonised power but it is not always the case, "asymmetric conflict is a long-term competition, with state and challenger reacting to one another across a series of moves and counter moves" (Edwards, 2011, p. 228). For this reason, it is clear that this long-term competition and prolongation of the confrontation phase (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) is what military exhausted both powers in the conflict in Northern Ireland and produced a status of hurting stalemate, leading to the ripeness of the conflict (Zartman, 2001), opening the following stage of conflict asymmetric conflicts: *negotiation* (Gallo & Marzano, 2009). These factors (exhaustion

and hurting stalemate) took the conflicting parties to sit down and work on the **Good Friday Agreement**.

B. The Road Towards the Good Friday Agreement

The conflict could not prolong itself any longer, the use of force was not only tiring the IRA but also the Unionists and especially the British government were suffering from exhaustion, plus there was a military and political stalemate (Edwards, 2011), making it clear that the conflict between the Unionists and the Republicans would not end through military force. For this reason, the unsuccessful campaign under violence from both side, opened the window to consider a negotiation process as a means to end the conflict. The stage was set for the third stage of asymmetric conflicts to enter; the *negotiation phase* (Gallo & Marzano, 2000) was the next step to consider after decades of confrontations between the conflicting actors.

The **Downing Street Declaration** in December 1993 paved the way to peace, giving the right to self-determination to the Irish population, and the future possibility of transferring Northern Ireland from the UK to the Republic of Ireland, only if a majority of the Northern Irish population was in favour of such an outcome (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013). The declaration was also seen as a big contribution towards the establishment of the **Good Friday Agreement** of 1998.

The conflict in Northern Ireland came to an end with the **Good Friday Agreement** in 1998 and it is viewed as a successful model for conflict resolution (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013), since it was able to establish power sharing within the Northern Irish government and community, giving political participation to both the Catholic Irish and to the Protestant community, result which translated into a sign of progress and recognition, "a pure majority government in a divided society would be inappropriate" (Mathews, 2009, p. 38). Moreover, the idea of a shared future presented by Powell & Moaz (2014), came into place here since both sides would be part of a new government.

The Agreement translated as a key victory for the IRA and Sinn Féin, and it became the first step towards a post –conflict environment seeking fairness and recognition for both sides involved in the conflict, creating democratic institutions[10] and focusing

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[10] The agreement is also characterised by sections regarding civil rights, safeguards, equality of opportunities, decommissioning, security, policing and overall the implementation of justice to all parts.

on the promotion and guarantee of human rights, especially for the Catholic minority within Northern Ireland. Overall, the **Good Friday Agreement,** is a testimony of the fourth stage of asymmetrical conflicts (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), since the negotiation phase, evolved into sustainable peace and the conflicting parties were able to agree on terms towards the establishment of a shared coexistence.

One of the techniques that helped put an end to the conflict were **back-channel negotiations**: "a secret communication between the leadership of opposing groups, conducted by a third party or even by an intermediary" (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013, p. 19). In the case of Northern Ireland, back-channel negotiations were held between the British Government and the Nationalist paramilitaries (PIRA mainly), achieving a ceasefire in 1994. "The effectiveness of any back-channel lies in its ability to foster the appropriate conditions for the development of mutual trust and solidarity between parties, as these crucial factors can move the positions of the respective parties forward" (Ibid. p. 20). The elements that helped this method were information sharing, personal relationships but overall, trust between the parties involved, this means that they have a transformative effect and build to contain and solve the conflict. Without the building of trust and respect towards each other, the negotiation process towards the Good Friday Agreement would have collapsed, for this reason, any type of asymmetric conflict that enters a stage of negotiation must foster an environment of trust and respect. "Building trust requires time, especially under conditions where both sides reject one another's legitimacy, therefore continuity in personnel and entrusted individuals gave the secret channel high levels of validity, which came to be a defining characteristic for cooperative communication" (Ibid, p. 22). Furthermore, a lesson that has to be learnt from the conflict in Northern Ireland is that states should in the first place be prepared to talk to terrorists and lines of communication should always be open (Ranstrop & Brun, 2013). This is why back channel negotiations became a positive asset to the culmination of the conflict and resulted in the Good Friday Agreement.

The fact that back-channel communications are used instead of public official talks, allows the parties involved to focus on the very nature of problem solving and reaching a plausible agreement (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013). For this reason, those who conduct the back-channel communications and negotiations are not seeking public approval or attention, and helps to keep the tension off the negotiators from the public eye. Although, this method is not 100% flawless, there is

always a possibility that information gets leaked to the press and jeopardises the negotiation process.

In their essence, back channel negotiations seek to provide an environment of trust and the possibility to exchange information, they reduce uncertainty but can also provoke misunderstandings that can "hurt" the whole negotiation process. Building trust has also been mentioned by Powell & Moaz (2014) as a key step to establish negotiation and peace talks within asymmetric conflicts; therefore, the back-channel negotiations serve as a premise for this environment of trust.

These were a significant contribution to the peace process, since the conflict in Northern Ireland was strongly characterised by hatred and an environment of mistrust between the two divided communities (Senholzi, 2008). Back-channel negotiations are a step forward in easing the tensions between conflicting groups and pave the way to a fruitful negotiation process. Back channel negotiations can also be linked to Duman (2014) and his idea of Conflict Transformation (CT), where both parties foresee a joint future together and drawing upon scenarios of co-existence under peace.

C. The Role of the United States as a Mediator

Third party negotiations play a crucial role in the evolution of an asymmetric conflict towards a peace settlement, as it has been mentioned in the theory section, Gallo & Marzano (2009), Duman (2014) and Zartman (2001), refer to that a third party actor intervention is most likely to occur when the conflict is defined by a status of deadlock and they intervene to break this. Moreover, their intervention should be made before stalemate (Duman, 2014), so that further victims and damages can be made. In the case of Northern Ireland, third party intervention came in at the stage of deadlock after decades of violence and to the complexity of the conflict and the difficulties of opposing views presented by the actors (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013). Hence, the involvement of mediators encourages negotiators to change their attitudes and to be open to conflict resolution but overall to put an end to the use of violence.

The United States played the role of a mediator, under the Bill Clinton administration, through Senator George Mitchell. The U.S. senator was able to introduce his own set of principles for the resolution of the conflict under the name "Mitchell Principles"

(1996), making a call to the public embracement of democracy and non-violence, seeking decommissioning, and to go further with the peace negotiations. The involvement of senator Mitchell led to a ceasefire declared by the PIRA, contributing once more to creating an environment of trust between the conflicting parties.

"Third parties, just like back-channel links, can play an important role in facilitation of a process that opens up lines of reliable communication between conflicting parties, developing good will and a common sense of humanity" (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013, p. 26). The U.S. helped the two conflicting parties to comprehend the importance of cooperation towards a viable and realistic solution that could mend the very problems that originated the conflict: economic and industrial development, employment, security, housing and civil rights. "The multiparty negotiated settlement, facilitated mainly by the United States was indeed a landmark achievement, for it addressed all the contentious political aspects of the Northern Ireland conflict – the relationship of the region with the UK, its relationship with Republic of Ireland, and the relationship between the Catholic and Protestant communities within the country" (Toomey, 2009, p. 3). The US involvement not only facilitated the creation of an environment of trust and went even further by exposing the issues that needed to be resolved to move on towards a peaceful settlement but also allowed the development of positive political will (Mack, 1975) from the conflicting actors.

President Clinton's participation in the peace process began in 1992 by sending a peace and economic envoy, and grating a U.S. visa for Gerry Adams in 1994 (who has been the president of Sinn Féin since 1983), actions that once again helped build on common trust to ease tensions and show both sides that the U.S. was seeking a position of neutrality towards the Catholic Irish, the Northern Irish Protestants and the British. These actions were something completely unseen and unexpected (MacGinty, 1997) since Washington always held a special relationship with London during the Cold War, and the case of Northern Ireland was strictly seen as a domestic affair for Great Britain, and was not to become an international affair that sought the intervention of the very same international community. Therefore, the intervention of the U.S. was a wise one, since from the very beginning it claimed neutrality and pursued the peaceful end of the conflict.

The **Good Friday Agreement** was deeply supported by the Clinton administration and was seen as an exemplary model for asymmetric conflict resolution, especially because it was able to silence terrorist insurgency by applying multiple diplomatic and political tactics that led to an end of the violence. The Clinton administration's

role can be characterised for seeking and pushing for both communities in Northern Ireland to sit down at the negotiation table (BBC, 2000). Whether the actions played by President Clinton and his administration were a strategy to boost U.S. foreign policy and secure its investments and deepen their relationship with the EU, shall remain a mystery. Or, was it a genuine intervention to support the spread and rule of peace and democracy? Nevertheless, one cannot deny that the presence of the U.S. was crucial in bringing the IRA to stop using violence and to push them towards the negotiation table, enabling Sinn Féin to take part in this process, seeking peace with the British and Unionist forces.

D. Conclusion

The asymmetric conflict in Northern Ireland responds the initial research question that has been adapted to this case; *to which extent could the asymmetric conflict in Northern Ireland reach a peaceful accord*? The condition that a conflict reaches a state of *military exhaustion* and of *hurting stalemate* enabled a negotiation process ending with a peace accord, was met in the description and analysis of the conflict between the IRA and the British forces. The reason why the terror tactics and unconventional attacks aided the IRA was because they were united under a strong ideology: the establishment of a unified Ireland and the equal recognition of rights. Moreover, a second condition that has been presented was also accomplished, since the conflict fostered the intervention of a third party actor, in this case the United States, to create an environment of trust and work towards joint solutions, so that the differences of the past could be overcome and mended. Finally, a third condition is also met in this conflict, where the Catholic Irish minority was able to gain political representation through Sinn Féin, establishing a government under the concept of power-sharing where both communities will have a voice and presence in the political process, leading to mutual identity recognition and political representation (Toomey, 2009), and above all, they were given equal recognition of rights, and have the guarantee of coexisting and living peacefully within the Northern Irish society. For this reason, it is fair to say that asymmetric conflict can lead to a peaceful negotiation process and all the conditions that were set to find were accomplished, proving that Gallo & Marzano's (2009) phases of asymmetric conflict have been fulfilled and that the most difficult stage, sustainable peace was in fact achieved between the Protestant, Catholic and British actors.

What are lessons and techniques can be recused from the conflict in Northern Ireland so that they can be applied to the main case of conflict between Israel and Palestine? The use of back-channel links and third party involvements were of crucial importance to the solution of the conflict, it is because of these two elements that a peace agreement between the IRA, the Unionists and the British government was reached. Moreover, one of the strongest points that the Good Friday agreement includes and leaves a lesson of fairness, is that it allows referendums to be held in both the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland, leaving always the option to establish a unified Ireland if this is approved by a majority. For this reason, conflict resolution tends to favour diplomacy and bargaining techniques.

Joint political will (Powell & Moaz, 2014) is the other variable that played a fundamental role in the solution of the conflict, since both powers desired and wanted the termination of violence, allowing back-channel talks and the acceptance of a third party actor as a mediator and contributor to peace. This will be a crucial variable to consider in relation to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, since the political will and disposition to negotiate is not a shared variable between Palestinians and Israelis (Cohen, 2017).

The negative aspect of this conflict is that it showcases a disastrous application of hard power (Ranstrop & Brun, 2013) and that the confrontation stage (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) lasted too long provoking *military exhaustion* and *hurting stalemate*. Moreover, in this particular case of asymmetric conflict, the state is not always considered the "good" guy, since the British government sided with the Northern Irish Protestants and lacked neutrality to solve the conflict in the first place. This makes it harder for an insurgent group to trust and take seriously their opponents when the negotiation process is opened, since it is difficult to erase the scars of the past. This aspect will repeat itself in the main case study of Israel versus Palestine, where there has been a prolongation of the conflict for over half a century, and the state actor, Israel, has applied various amounts of brutal force to corner and to some extent annihilate the Palestinian insurgency, therefore, building on trust is an element that is strongly encouraged in the process of a peaceful negotiation.

What the conflict in Northern Ireland provides is a framework of how an insurgent actor can challenge a dominating power, contest the power structure that at the beginning of the conflict was balanced towards the British government, and how to direct a conflict towards a negotiation process, where the opportunity for dialogue

and obtainment of objectives can be dealt without the use of prolonged violence and the application of brute force.

Finally, the great contribution of the negotiation process in Northern Ireland, is that it shows the world that an ethnic conflict that deeply divided the Irish population in Northern Ireland could be solved (Edwards, 2011) by peaceful accords, meaning that the **Good Friday Agreement** of 1998 responds the research question, "if asymmetric conflict can lead to a peaceful negotiation process". In this case, the question has a positive outcome and is yet to be tested in the case of Palestine and Israel.

2. The Asymmetric Conflict in Colombia

The asymmetric conflict in Colombia shall also be guided with the same research question, *to which extent could the asymmetric conflict in Colombia reach a peaceful accord*? Once again the conditions of *military exhaustion and hurting stalemate* as reasons why conflicts evolve into a negotiation process, and the role of third party actors and their influence towards the resolution of the conflict shall be considered. This shall be complemented with the framework of Gallo & Marzano (2009), regarding the evolution and stages of asymmetric conflict, and if the conflict in Colombia can also be an example of the fulfilment of the four stages. Moreover, this case seeks to address if power-sharing and territorial coexistence is possible between the two conflicting parties in case the conflict evolves into a peace accord.

A. The Colombian Government and the FARC

The asymmetric warfare that characterised the nation of Colombia was a conflict between the state of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) [11] . In this conflict, the Colombian State has to be seen as the colonising/dominating power and the FARC is the insurgent actor. The origins of the conflict can be traced back to the decade of the 1960s. This conflict is different from the previous case of Northern Ireland, since it was not a religious or a communal conflict like the previous case and must be seen as intra-state conflict.

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[11] Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia or FARC is the Spanish acronym for the revolutionary group.

The origins and causes of the conflict can be found in the unequal distribution of wealth, high levels of poverty, inhumane labour conditions and the deficient assignation of the land in Colombia. All of these factors led to a hostile and tense environment within the Colombia society, especially in its working and peasant class. This scenario set the stage for the creation and organisation of violent groups with revolutionary ideals in search of a communist Colombia. These events can be translated as the first phase of asymmetric conflicts: *conscientisation* (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), where those who had revolutionary ideals and sought for the equal distribution of the wealth were ready and aware to defy the state power in an armed conflict.

The FARC is to be understood as the armed wing of the Colombian Communist party, which sought to eliminate centralism, inequality, and introduce rural reforms and achieve the opening of a closed political system that was shared and dominated by liberals and conservatives for a period of over twenty years (Duman, 2014). Since it was conceived as a guerrilla group from the Colombian Communist party, it did not have any status of political representation, and believed that the armed struggle was the only way to introduce and impose these structural reforms. The fact that the FARC had to challenge the Colombian government and its Armed Forces, it emerged on the low side of the power balance of the asymmetry, situation it sought to change immediately. The conflict in Colombia also follows the logic of Gallo & Marzano (2009), since the FARC's intention was to attack the very root of the power asymmetry that distinguished the insurgent guerrilla group from the Colombian state, therefore, terror tactics and direct confrontation was needed to change the structure.

Violence erupted at the end of the 1940s and led to the formation of many guerrilla groups in the 1960s, as a response to the political oppression (Arango, 2008) that characterised Colombia. The initial intention was to send a message to the authorities so that the ignored minorities could be heard, this did not happen. For this reason, the guerrilla groups especially the FARC applied terror tactics to pursue their demands, "violent acts, massacres, bombings with different types of explosive devices, indiscriminate killings, the use of landmines, kidnappings, drug production, and trafficking among others, were the tools employed by the terrorists groups to wage the war in Colombia" (Arango, 2008, p. 2). These were unconventional tactics to fight the oppressing power of the Colombian government, which were unknown to the Colombian society and especially for the Armed Forces, leaving them with no other option then to respond with the use of brute force, a pattern that was seen in

the case of Northern Ireland and shall repeat itself in the main case. For this reason it is fair to establish that the conflict between the FARC and the Colombia state took immediately the form of the second stage of asymmetrical conflicts: confrontation (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), since the insurgents wanted the changes to happen rapidly and the use of violence was the best option within this stage to achieve their political and territorial objectives.

The problem that arose between the Colombian government and the FARC was that the state, had no intention in recognising the revolutionary group when it was conceived (Duman, 2014), and by no means was it willing to concede or consider any of the demands and reforms that insurgents stood by. The FARC saw that violence and terror were the only methods for the realisation of their ideas and challenged the authority and power of the Colombian government, who was in a position of domination because it had the control of the political direction of the nation. However, the FARC did have one factor to its advantage, even though the Colombian State was the ruling power, it did not have complete sovereignty over the whole Colombian territory (Duschka, 2017), which can be seen as an advantage for the insurgency, it was in the mountain range and in the jungles where the FARC was able to operate, grow and retreat when it attacked. For this reason, the FARC's power grew rapidly and was able to show a strong resistance within the asymmetric power balance, defying the Colombian state. The fact that the state did not have a complete dominion of the territory (Duman, 2014) is seen as a failure because it allowed the creation of irregular and guerrilla groups and favoured the obtainment of power for the FARC. Therefore, the armed conflict in Colombia became the primordial topic on the presidential agendas, affecting every aspect of the Colombian society, and conditioned the design of policies within the Colombian government. The conflict put at risk the very survival of democracy and the Colombian state.

The Colombian conflict suits the logic and characteristics of asymmetric warfare, where the FARC focused its strategy on spreading terror as its main tactic (Arango, 2008) (Mack, 1975) and (Lele, 2014) for effectiveness, its objective was to undermine the political will (Mack, 1975) of the Colombian government so it would give in to its demands and reforms, and at the same time, they sought to attract the support of the rest of the Colombian society to empathise with its revolutionary

cause[12]. "Asymmetrical warfare is often used to describe a situation where an adversary can take advantage of its strengths or an opponent's weakness. It is an attempt to circumvent or undermine an opponent's strengths while exploiting his weakness using methods that differ significantly from the opponent's usual mode of operations" (Arango, 2008, p. 12). If the *political will* was destroyed (Mack, 1975), the FARC could advance and acquire more of the land, and begin executing its Marxist objectives. "When the guerrillas engage a stronger enemy, they withdraw when he advances; harass him when he stops; strikes him when he is weary; pursue him when he withdraws" (Ibid, p. 16). Under asymmetric conflict, this is the strategy the insurgent power uses to win the conflict; in this particular case; both the FARC and the Colombian Armed Forces powers sought the same tactic to annihilate each other.

The similarities that can be found with the conflict in Northern Ireland is that the conflict in Colombia was a contest for power (Restrepo, Spagat & Vargas, 2004), which sought to shift the dominating power structure that the Colombian state was characterised with and engage with them in a violent conflict that prolonged itself for a significant period of time. Political violence, insurgency, guerrillas, militias, paramilitary groups, drug smuggling, and "nacroterrorism" (Arango, 2008) sum up the different categories and evolution of the conflict, which created a climate of violence, terror and death throughout Colombia, a tactic that the FARC was willing to continue in order to fulfil its demands and become the rulers of the Colombian society.

Ideology also played a big part in the Colombian conflict, since it has been stated (Duman, 2014) that the FARC sought to establish a Marxist regime in Colombia; the conflict was a result of the ideological struggles that defined the Cold War, element that does not repeat itself in the conflicts of Northern Ireland and Israel versus Palestine. The communist ideology was deeply rooted in the working and rural classes, which favoured the recruiting of warriors for the FARC and deepened the differences between the insurgency and the Colombian government.

Through asymmetric conflict, especially in the Colombian case, one is able to see that the state lost its monopoly on war, even though it might of had a status of a colonial power, it could not control or contain in an effective manner the conflict, and

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[12] Once again the rooted ideology (Edwards, 2011) (Mack, 1975) concept as a determining factor to counter dominating powers comes into play.

it was difficult for the state to distinguish who were the insurgents and who were the innocent civilians that got caught up in the fire fight. This is the harsh reality regarding asymmetric conflict, which is not only carried out by two actors that seek a power dominion, but innocent lives are compromised and are considered targets and means to an end by the insurgent actor. Moreover, "the enemy in modern warfare enhances his strength from people; whether they use them for recruiting influencing the public opinion, or utilizing them as their primary target" (Arango, 2008, p. 17).

In the face of danger, the Colombian administration's priority was and still is internal security, therefore the Colombian government had to modify their combat tactics to deter and contain FARC but at the same time, they had to convince the population that the state was protecting them from the guerrilla threat, gaining trust to secure peace within society also became a "war" that they had to fight. Moreover, with the creation and aid of right-wing paramilitary groups, the Colombian government found allies in their struggle towards the insurgency and provided significant blows to the FARC, suffering important defeats, forcing the insurgents to change once again their tactics, increasing "urban terrorist cells and placing bombs in strategic infrastructure locations, such as oil installations and pipelines. The FARC is responsible for the majority of the kidnappings committed in Colombia during the last 25 years" (Ramírez Montañez, 2017, p. 323). For this reason, it is fair to say that the asymmetric conflict in Colombia was characterised by a rapid and constant change of tactics (Lele, 2014) by both conflicting actors.

Attempts to end the violence emerged with the formation of the Patriotic Union in the 1980s, a political branch of the FARC that sought politics as the way to achieve their objectives, these failed due to that fact that most members of the Patriotic Union were assassinated. This sent a clear message: the Colombian government was unwilling to allow terrorists to participate in any type of political activities, action that once again led to the intensification of brutal violence within the conflict and increased the environment of insecurity and fear, "everyone was afraid of being killed or kidnapped" (Duman, 2014, p. 5). It would be fair to say that in the decade of the 80s the FARC sought a change in the conflict towards a third stage: negotiation (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), since Unión Patríotica was meant to become a political wing and negotiate politically with the Colombian Government but it failed to do so, since the Colombian state was defined by the intolerant "trigger" strategy (Cohen & Bitton, 2015) to eliminate the insurgent threats and prolonged the confrontation stage (Gallo & Marzano, 2009).

Moreover, "the conflict was fought against an extremist minority fuelled by narcotics, money, kidnapping, extortion and expropriation that particularly victimises civilians, mainly in isolated and poor areas of the countryside" (Restrepo, Spagat & Vargas, 2004, p. 399). This was a turning point in the conflict not only for the Colombian government but also for FARC, since during the prolongation of the confrontation, the revolutionary group lost track of its ideological principles and turned towards drug trafficking, kidnapping and terror tactics not only within Colombian soil but also in bordering nations, all as a sign of maintaining its power and influence in regards to the Colombian Armed Forces.

A turning point of the conflict can bee seen in the administration of former President Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010), where the government's strategy was of no quarter towards terror insurgency and large amounts of brutal force were to be applied to neutralise and eliminate insurgency. Uribe's strategy echoed in the Colombian population who were tired of living in fear and insecurity, desiring an end to the conflict and to the violence. The consequence of this successful governmental campaign had consequences within FARC (Arango, 2008); they were definitely weakened, they no longer operated in large units, forcing them to respond with isolated terror attacks to inflict some damage on governmental forces and their supporters. Moreover, Uribe's zero tolerance and democratic security policy, alongside with Plan Colombia[13] and current Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos objective to achieve a peace agreement is what helped weaken and take FARC to the negotiation table, which opened the doors for the conflict to evolve from the tense and prolonged confrontation stage, characterised by military and physical exhaustion and a state of hurting stalemate, to a negotiation phase (Gallo & Marzano, 2009).

The Colombian state versus FARC is seen as a weak state entering the second millennium (Ramírez, 2017), since the conflict evolved into "narcoterrorist" attacks that affected and compromised the security and lives of innocent Colombians. Drug trafficking became the central element of the conflict, something that was not seen in the Northern Ireland conflict or that will be seen in the case of Palestine and Israel. The Colombian government not only had to contain guerrilla groups but at the same time it had to deal with the internal threat of drug cartels that put at risk the security of

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[13] Plan Colombia was an aid package from the United States to Colombia to strengthen the Colombian state against the threats of the guerrilla. Plan Colombia shall be described in more detail in the following pages regarding the role of third parties.

the Colombian society. The conflict lasted over fifty years and came to an end with negotiations in Havana, Cuba in 2016[14].

B. The Role of the United States and Third Party Actors

The difference between the asymmetrical conflict in Colombia with the conflict in Northern Ireland is that here third party actors played a crucial role during the conflict but these interventions were not primarily defined by a neutral role, the third parties that participated in the conflict sought to aid and assist one or the other conflicting actors, situation that had an effect on the power balance, shifting primarily towards the Colombian state. This is why they have been addressed before actually referring to the negotiation process and peace accord. "The impact of third parties is directly related to the results of peace summits. It depends on whether and how they support the communication between opponents, if they show the ability to bring suggestions in order to facilitate the formulation of the written agreement and, lastly, how their individual interest has manipulating effects at the negotiation table" (Duschka, 2017, p. 4).

The **United States** since it is the recurrent third party actor of this investigation; shall be addressed first. Washington has always had strong ties with Bogota, especially in economic aspects, the fight against drug trafficking and the war on terror as of 9/11, also led to the increase of the relations between both states, where both governments adopted a much more intolerant attitude against terrorism. Moreover, the United States assisted the formation of the paramilitary groups (Duman, 2014) in Colombia to support the national armed forces to contain and fight-off the FARC. Therefore, Washington's influence in the conflict favoured the Colombian state and aided them to eliminate the terror and drug trafficking. Furthermore, Washington increased its relationship with Bogota in 1998 with the creation and implementation of "Plan Colombia" (Restrepo, Spagat & Vargas, 2004), an aid programme that served to put pressure on the local government in relation to the human rights performance and to combat drugs, contributing towards peace in Colombia. Moreover, it provided technological equipment and training programmes for the military forces. With "Plan Colombia", the U.S. government has given more than $5

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[14] Although, the two main actors of the conflict are the Colombian government and the FARC, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), which is another rebellious group within in Colombia who has threatened the stability and security of the Colombia society, shall not be addressed in the present research.

billion to Colombia's military and polices forces (Ramírez Montañez, 2017) to contain and fight terror and drug trafficking. To a certain extent it managed to give an advantage in the conflict to the Colombian state, since it was able to modernise the Colombian Armed Forces (Gomez-Suarez, 2014) and strike significant blows towards FARC. This can also be seen as an action destined to deepen the asymmetry between the conflicting actors and seeking the termination of the conflict through military force, although it has been previously stated that terror and insurgency (Edwards, 2011) are not always solved through brutal military campaigns, where it is better for a conflict to evolve from a confrontation phase to a negotiation phase (Gallo & Marzano, 2009). With a unilateral intervention from third party actors, they might even prolong the conflict and led it to a stage of *hurting stalemate*. In the end, Plan Colombia provided "sustainable social and economic opportunities, keeping human rights, strengthening rule of law, and making governance more transparent, participatory and accountable" (Ramírez Montañez, 2017, p. 325). For this reason, it was able to restructure and revitalise Colombia's legal and political systems, and it helped professionalise the national Armed Forces. The plan boosted the weakened state and avoided turning into a failed state. The intervention of the US must be conceived as a gain for the Colombian state, and a unilateral aid towards the government of Colombia. For this reason, the United States could not be considered an actor that pushed the conflicting towards peace; its involvement clearly favoured the war against drugs and terror, promoting democracy and safety in the region. Having the US as a mediator during the negotiation process would have deepened even more the sense of mistrust between both conflicting parties and would have not contributed directly towards a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Although, at one point FARC was in favour of the U.S. aiding the peace accords as a third party actor, since it had played a fundamental role in the Northern Ireland negotiation process and had shown actions of good faith, building trust between the two actors, when president Clinton granted a visa to Gerry Adams. With this in mind, the FARC reached out to the Obama administration so it would grant permission to Ricardo Palmera, alias Simón Trinidad, an ex commander of the FARC, who is captive in an U.S. prison, to participate in the negotiation process (Gomez-Suarez, 2014). This action would once again create an environment of trust and position the U.S. towards a more neutral and transparent position in the negotiation process, situation that did not happen and caused greater division between the FARC and Washington.

Therefore, U.S. involvement in the conflict consisted mainly in a clear and unilateral support towards the government of Bogota, seeking to neutralise and eliminate the FARC's threats by supporting and aiding not only the government but also the Armed Forces to succeed in the conflict. The reason behind this, were that the causes of the conflict were clearly a common enemy to Washington and since Colombia is a producer and exporter of cocaine through drug cartels and guerrilla groups like FARC, the U.S. felt committed to takes sides with the Colombian government.

Another third party that played a significant role in conflict and in the peace process was the government of **Venezuela**, especially under the presidency of the late Hugo Chávez. Not only is Venezuela a nation affected by the spill-over effects of the conflict but it has been deeply criticised by the Colombian government for aiding and allowing FARC camps within its territories and overall, giving the FARC recognition and legitimacy (Duman, 2014). Chavez went even further by denying that FARC was a terrorist group and it should be seen as a belligerent group (Arango, 2008), hence its fight is a legitimate one and its demands and interests should be heard and accepted. "Chavez managed to get FARC to the formal negotiations, not only because he had the willingness to do so, but also because he had won the respect of FARC's leadership. Such a respect developed thanks to a shared ideology upon which FARC members were allowed to seek refuge in Venezuela" (Gomez-Suarez, 2014, p 5). Although with his death in 2013, Venezuela lost a leading role in assisting the peace negotiations in Havana.

For this reason, Venezuela was much more involved and interested in supporting the demands and changes that FARC desired, and gave them political support and protection. Neutrality was not characteristic of the Chavez administration and linked the FARC's cause with the Bolivarian revolution, which he sought to lead and develop in South America. It must be stated that the Venezuelan involvement fostered an end to the conflict by opening the possibility for a negotiation process, since it was able to gain the trust of FARC.

The fact that two third party actors took sides in the conflict and in regards to the negotiation process, this finally compromised their involvement for the setting up of the peace talks in Havana, where both the Colombian government and FARC decided that the future accords would touch upon domestic affairs and that the participation or assistance of third parties would not be necessary, and that the initial negotiations would have a character of closed-doors (Gomez-Suarez, 2014). This shows that third parties in the end where not as useful and determining as they were

in the negotiation process of the Northern Ireland conflict, because the conflict of interests that both the United States and Venezuela sought in the region were much greater than establishing peace for the very sake of peace. Although negotiations and the peace accord was supported and praised by the international community and observed by other nations (Chile and Norway), the two main actors of the conflict took the mature decision to continue the negotiation process on their own and concentrate on the issues that divided and compromised Colombia's stability and progress.

C. The Peace Accord

The negotiation process and the recent peace accord in Colombia, follows the logic of asymmetric conflicts according to Gallo & Marzano (2009), since the conflict evolved from a prolonged confrontation stage and reached its ripeness (Zartman, 2001), due in the first place to military *exhaustion* and second to the fact that it was stuck in a state of deadlock because of the constant attacks from both conflicting sides. The variable of *time* also came into play, since the conflict was hurting both sides and the safety of the Colombian population was at risk. The consequences of Colombian conflict added up to 1,982 massacres between 1980 and 2012, where more than 5.7million Colombians were displaced, situation that was "sufficient to declare the conflict at a state of stalemate" (Duman, 2014), leading to a negotiation process. Moreover, the negotiations were also possible because the political will and disposition existed on both ends, "willingness of the parties to start the negotiations was another factor that facilitated the talks" (Ibid, 2014, p. 14). Furthermore, Powell & Moaz, (2014) underline the importance of shared political will of the conflicting actors to work together towards a new future where the conflict was fought and this condition is also fulfilled between the Colombian state and the FARC.

Origins of the peace negotiations can be traced back to the decade of 1980, where peace commissions were designed to initiate the dialogue between the government and the guerrilla groups. Many of the initial talks failed and favoured the regrouping and reorganisation of the FARC, making use of these negotiations as a means to buy time and prepare themselves once more to engage in conflict. The prolongation of the conflict and the change of tactics in the asymmetric warfare on behalf of FARC brought the sense of fear that Colombia would end up becoming a "Narco-democracy" (Ramírez, 2017) jeopardising its institutions, the rule of law and the

survival of the state. Therefore, the use of brutal force appeared on the table as a solution, as it was applied during the Uribe administration under his policy of democratic security, but since exhaustion grew stronger and stronger, the will to reach a peaceful solution under both Santos governments became a national priority. During the evolution of the conflict the majority of the Colombian population showed constant and faithful support towards the governmental institutions and especially towards the Colombian Armed Forces to contain and end the conflict, showing a complete degree of opposition in regards to the guerrilla groups and their interests (Restrepo, Spagat & Vargas, 2004). The risk of reaching the destruction of society and the democratic institutions with the increase of violence, terror and drug trafficking is what exhausted not only the Colombian government but also the FARC, since it found itself lacking ideology, support and disintegration. Therefore, the clear and present option was to engage in a negotiation process.

What finally brought the two parties to the negotiation table was "hurting stalemate" (Powell & Moaz, 2014), since both actors were completely deadlocked, they had inflicted enough damage to each other and especially towards the Colombian population. For this reason, opening channels of communication and to negotiate was the way forward, the *political will* to do so was strongly present on both sides, coming to terms and seeking a solution that would benefit the two parties was the best way to overcome the state of violence.

One of the diplomatic tactics that the FARC applied to gain the trust of the Colombian government was to send letters to current president Santos, manifesting that they had the full desire to sit down and talk and hopefully draw an end to the violence. These can be seen once again as back channel forms of communication (Democratic Progress Institute, 2013), as they were also used in the Northern Ireland peace process negotiation, and produced the same effect in the Colombian case, since they led to a window of opportunity of trust, where the Colombian administration could see the intentions of a peaceful outcome with their enemies. The use of *conflict transformation* (CT) (Duman, 2014), "where the parties or mediators evaluate the conflict in different ways and by different means. It is a process that requires transformation of relations, needs and discourses" (Duman, 2014, p. 15), offered both parties problem-solving cases, where they could assess their interests, the role of civil society, concessions, and the effects the end of the conflict would have over the Colombian population. They were able to draw scenarios of power sharing and foresee how coexisting could be a possibility.

Therefore, *conflict transformation* was a useful and practical method for the resolution of the conflict, where both parties could improve their communication, cooperation and trust.

The peace talks began in Norway and then moved to Havana in November 2012, where both actors opted for neutral ground for their isolated negotiations, element that was crucial to build on trust and confidence (Duschka, 2017), the talks "focused on six key issues: land reform, political participation, disarmament of FARC's soldiers, drug trafficking, the rights of victims, and the implementation of the peace deal" (Ramírez Montañez, 2017, p. 324). Reintegration became one of the greatest challenges due to prejudice and disapproval from various sectors of the Colombian population, questioning how was it possible that the government would give into negotiations with terrorists, and allow them to take part of the reconstruction and politics of Colombia.

Colombia's conflict with the FARC finally came to an end on August 26, 2016, when the ultimate peace accord was signed between the Colombian government and the FARC. Situation that led to the final stage of asymmetric conflicts: *sustainable peace* (Gallo & Marzano, 2009). The reconciliation between the opposing actors began with the words of FARC leader Timochenko declaring that for decades the Armed Forces of Colombia were enemies to the revolutionary group but from now on they have become allies for the sake of a united Colombia (Loingsigh, 2016). The peace accord would seek various points that the FARC fought for, especially the establishment of a welfare economy with fairness and social justice. "The peace accord is not an end point but a starting point for a multi-ethnic and multicultural people, united under the banner of inclusion to forge and sculpt the changes and social transformations that the majority cry out for" (Ibid, p. 4).

One has to also consider the variable of *time*, how long it should take to engage and establish a peace accord? This is due to the fact that sometimes one of the actors is unwilling and worried that they "can lose certain hierarchical position and sovereignty" (Duschka, 2017, p. 2) and that there is no bargaining space left. This is what occurred in Colombia, leading to countless failed negotiations and the extension of the conflict, provoking military exhaustion on both sides and the transforming the conflict into a state of deadlock, where in the end the differences that separated both conflicting actors had to be put aside and seek a peaceful end to the conflict (Duman, 2014).

The underlying point of the negotiation process was that by no means the Colombian government was willing to concede or give any territory to the FARC during or after the peace accord, dividing the Colombian territory was an absolute "no" for the government. The only "triumph" that the FARC would obtain was the legal guarantees that they could integrate themselves within the political and democratic channels and take part in the national elections and by these means seek their political objectives. Another important aspect that surfaced from the peace accord is the idea of a constituent assembly. This would pave the way to a greater sense of unity in Colombia, where all political ideals and public sectors of the Colombian society can be involved in the reconstruction of a much more democratic nation.

D. Conclusion

The asymmetric conflict in Colombia once again is able to answer the research question in a positive manner, *to which extent could the asymmetric conflict in Colombia reach a peaceful accord*? Furthermore, it is also an approved case within the theories of Gallo & Marzano (2009) since it was a conflict that went through the four phases presented by them and includes the concept of *conflict transformation* (Duman, 2014), where the conflicting sides were able to envision a joint future (Powell & Moaz, 2014) towards the progress of the Colombian nation, which can also be combined with the ideas of Powell & Moaz (2014), since the conflict in Colombia evidences that both conflicting sides were able to develop an environment of trust through their negotiations and peace talks and shared a common *political will* to reach an end to the violence.

The brutal conflict that was fought between the Colombian government and the insurgent guerrilla group FARC, was strongly characterised by the use of terror tactics, unconventional methods of force and the change policies and strategies to try to undermine each other. The implementation of strong waves of violence led to a *deadlock stalemate*, where *military exhaustion* and the prolongation of the conflict were the determining factors that allowed the use of force to cease within the conflict, evolving into a negotiation process, which was characterised by the mutual expression of political will to establish a peace accord.

In regards, to third party actor intervention as a determining factor to end the conflict, it does not strongly apply to this case, since both the United States and Venezuela

involved themselves to pursue their own interests by supporting their allies in the conflict. Finally, the peace accord in Colombia did result in a scenario of power sharing since FARC has committed to demilitarise and integrate themselves in the political arenas of Colombia (Vulliamy & Mulholland, 2016), and the government has guaranteed the political recognition of them. Moreover, since the conflict was disputed within Colombian soil, the FARC has once again stated that it will demilitarise its operation areas and seek to aid the Armed Forces to continue their struggle against other guerrilla groups that threaten Colombian security, therefore, coexistence between the two former conflicting actors has also been established.

Although peace was achieved between the FARC and the Colombian government, the Colombian state still has to deal with drug trafficking and other guerrilla groups that have not shown the *political will* to end their military struggle and to sit down and negotiate with the authorities. A challenge that rises, is how the reintegration of the members of the FARC into the political arena will contribute to Colombian politics, and help contain, dismantle and hopefully bring to peace the remaining guerrilla groups in Colombia?

Furthermore, the essential challenge of the peace accord have been the results of the Colombia plebiscite held in October 2016, where the Colombian population voted "no" in regards to the peace accord. This reflects the distrust the Colombian population has in relation to the establishment of peace and the distribution of justice (Ellis & Ortiz, 2016). Moreover, there is a sense of doubt that the FARC will truly cease to operate, since there is still an environment of suspicion that they still act under clandestine groups, their modus operandi was violence, therefore how can one expect the people to accept the FARC and their guerrilla leaders as potential candidates and political representatives? Situation that challenges Gallo & Marzano (2009), in regards to their fourth stage of asymmetric conflicts, posing the question how long can sustainable peace last, if the population is still hurt and affected by the conflict?

The renegotiation process began in November 12, taking into account the concerns and considerations of those who voted "no", the new process began with the demobilisation of insurgents and the delivery of weapons to the UN (Scorp Camp Colombia, 2017). What deepens the rejection of the peace accord is the fact that FARC has achieved 10 potential seats in the Colombian Congress for the 2018 elections, and a transnational justice system that would allow various FARC

members to avoid punishment for the crimes committed during the conflict (Ellis & Ortiz, 2016). With the recent announcement of ex FARC leader "Timochenko" as a presidential candidate for the upcoming elections in May 2018 (BBC, 2017), this has also sparked clashes, and provoking a sense of concern not only within Colombia but also especially towards Washington. These issues that will affect Colombia's government and the public opinion for the following months and show that the conflict still has some unresolved issues.

The particular case of Colombia in regards to asymmetric conflict theory, can lead the research to conclude that the conflict benefited the FARC to a greater extent over the Colombian government, proving that an insurgent group is able to defy the power structure of a dominant state actor, although it is important to clarify that FARC was not able to control the Colombian territory or establish a Marxist regime, its battle against the Colombian government through terror tactics and the spread violence, led the Colombian state to seek a peace accord as the only way to end the conflict, since there was a ripeness of the conflict (Zartman, 2001) and the conflict itself evolved towards a stage of negotiation and sustainable peace (Gallo & Marzano, 2009). The fact that the Colombian Armed Forces applied brute force to try to eliminate the threat and weaken the guerrilla group did cause *military exhaustion* and the very prolongation of the conflict, where President Santos ended up favouring a diplomatic resolution to end the conflict for the greater good of the people and future of Colombia. One could argue that allowing the FARC leaders and members to take part of the political elections in Colombia is a sign of progress and reconciliation but on the other hand it leaves a bitter taste for those who still seek justice and bring criminals to court and jail, and leaves a divided Colombian society.

In regards to **power-sharing**, this objective is yet to be tested with the upcoming elections in May 2018, there is an opportunity for FARC to integrate themselves in politics and seek the changes they wanted, therefore if the FARC members do not obtain political representation, one would have to see how they react; will they either seek representation in future elections? Or, will they go back to the armed struggle and jeopardise the peace accord and the security of their nation? The last points shows that even if the conflict led to a peace accord, there are still unresolved issues in the Colombian society regarding integration and acceptance, questioning the idea of *sustainable peace* (Gallo & Marzano, 2009).

As a conclusion to both case studies, it must be made clear that the termination of a conflict cannot always be expected to end with the complete military defeat or annihilation of the opponent (Edwards, 2011), a diplomatic agreement can also appear on the horizon, which has been tested through the evolution of asymmetric conflicts presented by Gallo & Marzano (2009), proving that these types of conflicts can move from a stage of confrontation towards negotiation and sustainable peace, although the final phase is always the most difficult to achieve and overall, maintain. Both cases of asymmetric conflict in Northern Ireland and Colombia have evolved into the final stage of asymmetric conflicts and have showcased the conditions of military exhaustion, deadlock or hurting stalemate, which are related with the variable of time, since time will either prolong the confrontation stage until there is a need to assess the status of the conflict and switch to diplomacy instead of the continuation of force, and if power structures can be increased towards the sides of the insurgent actors. Moreover, the need of the mutual disposition and *political will* as an underlying variable for the evolutions of conflicts towards a peace accord, without it there can be no progress for a conflict to see its end. For this reason, once negotiation is on the table and the actors involved are committed to achieving peace, the success depends (Duschka, 2017) on the same political will and the capability to solve the inherent causes of the conflict.

Furthermore, the involvement of international or third party actors should always be an element to consider, especially if these participate under the concept of neutrality, since they can aid the conflict and avoid a constant a state of deadlock, due to the risk of increasing human casualties, destruction of the territory and the breakdown of democratic institutions.

This chapter ends the analysis of the two cases studies as examples for the main case of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, where the investigation seeks to once again analyse if the phases of evolution of asymmetrical conflict presented by Gallo & Marzano (2009) can also be applied to the case of Israel and Palestine, answering the main research question **to what extent could the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine reach a peaceful accord?**

3. The Asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine

In this chapter the investigation focuses on the main case study: the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine. Moreover, the primary objective is to answer the research question that guides the whole corpus of the investigation: *to what extent could the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine reach a peaceful accord*? The research question allows one to understand the origin of the asymmetry between Israel and Palestine, and what are the reasons behind such a conflict that has prolonged itself for over half a century. The framework that has been used in this section also follows the theories of Gallo & Marzano (2009) in regards to the resolution and evolution of asymmetric conflicts and if they reach the phase of sustainable peace. Moreover, the analysis also seeks to see if there have been any structural changes (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) within the power relation between Israel and Palestine, which could also aid the posed research question.

For this reason, the current conflict follows the classic description of asymmetric warfare, where Israel is conceived as the dominating actor in the conflict, portrayed as modern day Goliath and Palestine is the insurgent actor who lives under occupation and can be seen as David (Shlaim, 2014).

Second, the research question will give an insight of what are the key objectives that Israel and Palestine seek within the conflict and where do they stand in relation to these objectives. Furthermore, previous negotiation processes shall be analysed to see how these have either contributed to the solution of the conflict or have failed to reconcile the conflicting sides. Therefore, the conditions of *military exhaustion*, deadlock stalemate and the intervention of third party actors, are key to analyse if the on-going conflict between Israel and Palestine could reach a state of *sustainable peace* (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) just like it has been presented in the previous cases. The underlying difference between the cases of Northern Ireland and Colombia is that the conflict between Israel and Palestine has not yet been resolved and it is characterised by an unbalanced asymmetry that favours Israel (Galtung, 1972). For this reason, after the analysis of the conflict, the research presents a series of scenarios that show how the conflict could evolve from a current *confrontation phase* towards a *negotiation* (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) and further on into a post-conflict phase. Finally, a conclusion regarding the research question shall be once again addressed to see if the investigation ends on a positive or negative note regarding the conflict.

A. Origin of the Asymmetry

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has become the oldest conflict in the Middle East, since 1970 every Palestinian faction; the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO)[15], the Palestinian Authority (PA), Hamas and Fatah have declared war against Israel and have also rejected its right to exist (Cordesman, 2006). Since the occupation of Palestinian territory in 1967, the Palestinians have engaged in violent confrontation with Israel, where the conflict has gone through various negotiation phases to solve their territorial disputes and ideological differences, "despite so many negotiation phases have taken place so far not one of them was able to achieve sustainable peace, and after more than 15 years since the first negotiations started, the conflict is still trapped in a never-ending negotiation-confrontation cycle" (Gallo & Marzano, 2009, p. 13). Even the intervention of third party actors has been unfruitful towards the resolution of the violence. The conflict continues to be at a stage deadlock stalemate, with no intentions on behalf of Israel (Cohen, 2017) in reaching peace accord that can satisfy the demands of each actor, and creating a sense of stability and security in the region.

Regarding asymmetric conflict theory, Mack (1975) and Gallo & Marzano (2009), the conflict between Israel and Palestine responds to a structural asymmetry, where there is a struggle between those who dominate and those who are dominated, therefore what is sought by those who are dominated is a process of decolonisation through an armed struggle. The conflict is characterised by a clear unbalance of power between Israel and Palestine, where the latter lacks relevant power and force to significantly damage the former, who possess the resources and technology to a large and overpowering extent, leaving the Palestinians the only option to apply terror and guerrilla type tactics to counter the use of Israeli force (Lele, 2014). This is a domination relationship that has grown with time, prolonging the conflict and delaying a peace process. For this reason, the conflict between Israel and Palestine can be described as a conflict between two persecuted and self-preserving peoples: the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews (Galtung, 1972). Not only have they engaged in warfare since for more than over half a century, they also share a long and tragic history of persecution: where the Palestinian Arabs suffered this persecution within the territories of the Middle East, and the Jews experienced their persecution mainly under the atrocities of Nazi Germany.

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[15] The PLO would be the first faction to recognise the state of Israel in 1988, situation that lead to the Oslo Negotiations (Aranda & Palma, 2016).

Although the objective is not to give a historical account of the conflict, since the main task is to answer if asymmetrical conflict can lead to a peaceful negotiation process between both Israel and Palestine, it is still fundamental that the historical events that sparked the very nature of the conflict should be mentioned.

The Balfour Declaration in November 1917 " turned the Zionist aim of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine into a reality when Britain publicly pledged to establish a national home for the Jewish people there" (Tahhan, 2017, p.1), and the UN Resolution 181 in November 1947, which established the partition of Palestine into two states; the Palestinian Arab State and the Israeli Jewish State, leaving the city of Jerusalem divided between the two actors. These two historic events can be considered the root of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, where the Palestinians see these declarations and resolutions as illegitimate [16] and a continuation of British colonialism (Galtung, 1972), transferred to the new Israeli state. Furthermore, not only did these events spark the tensions in the Middle East, they also led to spill over effects that transcended the borders of the Middle East and has reeled in big powers to either mediate or aid one of the two actors.

The origin of the asymmetry can also be seen during the British Mandate (1922-1948), where Jews were recognised as a nation and the Palestinians did not have that status. Gallo & Marzano (2009) also see these actions as the origins of a legal asymmetry, giving Israel framework of the recognition of its territory, something that Palestine was not granted and seeks to achieve through this asymmetrical struggle. Moreover, the diplomatic actions of Theodor Herzl with the United Kingdom helped the Zionist movement to achieve the desire of establishing an Israeli state, situation that did not happen with the Palestinians. These political victories boosted and favoured the growth of Israeli power in regards to Palestine, and were complemented with the Zionist ideology, which sought for Israelites[17] to survive from anti-Semitism and the atrocities of Nazi Germany. Under this reason, the realisation of the state of Israel was a matter of life and death.

These events clearly established the asymmetry, where the Palestinians found themselves in a tremendously disadvantageous situation in comparison to the new Israeli state. With the passing of UN Resolution 181, it was established that the

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[16] Galtung argues that the resolution was not completely representative, giving Israel an unjust conception and an illegitimate presence in Palestinian territory.

[17] Israelites are the Jewish population part of the diaspora who wanted to establish their homeland in the Palestinian territories. Israelis are those who have citizenship in Israel as of 1948.

Jewish and Arab states that were under the British Mandate of Palestine should exist side by side (Van Nergi, 2012). The structural asymmetry deepens in the year 1948 (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), because from this date Israel exists as an independent state, recognised internationally with its borders, defined by a clear and direct political agenda that focuses on a defensive foreign policy, defined by the strengthening of national borders, the security of the population and growth of its Armed Forces (IDF). The Palestinians, on the other hand, have not had the same fate and fortune as the Israelis. They have gone through a status of non-existent and unrecognisable (Galtung, 1972), constantly fighting for their self-determination and independence.

The foundation of the Israeli state brought immediate effects of rejection and retaliation from the Arab forces in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, who invaded Israel. The result was a victory for the newly founded Israeli state, which enabled it to begin with a campaign of expansion and occupying former Arab territory. Israel's policy of expansion and security continued to be fruitful, especially with its preventive attack on Egypt in 1967, which is also referred to as the Six Day War. This war is a key point of origin of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. It was here where Israel seized and occupied the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria (Aranda & Palma, 2016). Only the Sinai Peninsula was returned to Egypt after a peace accord between Tel Aviv and Cairo. Since then Israel held on illegally to the Gaza Strip[18], the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. The 1967 war and occupation of Israel in Palestinian territories marks the main issue of the struggle and conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, since the latter seek the retreat of Israel's occupation and the return of the territories to the Palestinians, where the whole of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem should be a part of the new Palestinian state.

A new war broke out in 1973, where Israel fought Syrian and Egyptian forces. With the war of Yom Kippur Israel showed its dominance of power in the region. It did not matter if the Arab forces were united, they were not match for Israeli power, which was underestimated since Israel had no military or conflict history, it was their sentiment of wanting to prevail as united Israeli state was an ideology what allowed them to stand strong against any military threat. The failure of the Arab wars against

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[18] Which was returned to the Palestinian Authority in 2005 and is cut off from the rest of the Palestinian territories.

Israel left the Palestinians alone in their struggle to reclaim their previous homeland. A peace deal was signed with Egypt under the Camp David Accords of 1978, Syria was not willing to risk another confrontation with Israel, and Jordan in 1988 surrendered their claim over the West Bank to the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and trusted them to be the sole representatives of the Palestinians (Van Nergi, 2012). As a result the Palestinians were left pretty much alone to face the might of the Israeli forces. For this reason, asymmetric warfare is no stranger to the Israeli state since it has engaged in various conflicts of this nature with Arab nations in the Middle East, who have sought ways to contain and circumvent the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) military and technological superiority (Vaknin-Gill, 2017) so that they could inflict some type of damage that would impede Israeli power to be imposed over their territories.

The theory section of this study Gallo & Marzano (2009) presented the different phases of the evolution of asymmetrical conflicts, where the element of *conscientisation* is the starting point for asymmetric warfare. Therefore, it is fair to say that the *conscientisation* phase was firstly developed in the minds of the Jews who sought the Israeli state in relation to the Palestinians that lived in the disputed region. This has played to Israel's advantage ever since the recognition of the Israeli state and has been the determining variable that explains the increase of its power and of its territorial expansion. Although, the *conscientisation* phase for the Palestinians began after the defeat of the Arab states in 1967, leading to the regrouping of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Fatah, led by Yasser Arafat. Arafat's leadership sparked the Palestinian desire of establishing themselves as an independent and recognised nation, and began confronting the Israeli Defence Forces. Not only was the phase of *conscientisation* developed here but at the same time, *common identity* and the idea of a *common enemy* (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) was solidified within the Palestinians who began to mobilise their political ideas. This meant that the asymmetrical conflict between Israelis and Palestians became a reality that emerged from the previous Arab-Israeli conflicts. Since then, the Palestinians have caught the attention of the international community as a "self-confident and mature national movement that was aiming to create their own state" (Gallo & Marzano, 2009, p. 17).

The structural asymmetry that defines this conflict is also determined by physical force and Israel has an advantage in this aspect, "the state of Israeli was able to build the strongest and best-equipped army of the Middle East, the Palestinians

could only create armed groups that carried out resistance actions, sometimes of a terrorist nature, both inside the territory of Israel and against Israel (but also Jewish) targets abroad" (Ibid, p. 16). This is a clear example of the asymmetric nature of the conflict, where the Israeli state has been able to apply force with the IDF against an insurgent actor dispersed not only within the regions of Israel and Palestine but also in foreign states.

The evolution of Israeli power with the passing of time and the prolongation of the conflict has favoured Israel to increase its military capacity, which is expressed in an accumulation of power, which has been implemented constantly to overcome its threats, and overall, to guarantee a certain degree of security to its population and to achieve its political objectives (Aranda & Palma, 2016). The occupation of Palestinian territories of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, plus the Golan Heights, respond to the military capacity that Israel possess, and the occupation of these lands is kept with military surveillance and presence. Moreover, the increase of Israeli power is essentially based on its scientific and technological development, which since the creation of the state of Israel was orientated to create a military industry. The efforts made to strengthen its defence capacity also included a nuclear programme in Dimona, which culminated in the production of nuclear bombs, situation that has never been admitted by Israel. Furthermore, the realisation of this type of power responds and relates to the ideology of Zionism, which can also be seen in the actions of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). The IDF is a military organisation with a mission to "defend the existence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the State of Israel, to protect the inhabitants of Israel and to combat all forms of terrorism which threaten the daily life" (Sternberg, 2012, p. 12). Therefore, the government of Tel-Aviv has and will do everything protect its national interest, even if it goes beyond its borders and the respect of human rights and international accords within the Middle East.

Another factor that has deepens the asymmetry is the fact that Israel has suppressed and denied the rights of the Palestinian citizens (Aranda & Palma, 2016). This is due to the political advantage and strength that the state of Israel has over Palestine. Therefore, Palestine's weakness not only lies in its lack of technology and military force but also because it is an **unrecognised state**. Moreover, the Palestinians have been faced with the challenge that they are dispersed and divided (Aranda & Palma, 2016), and they have failed to organise themselves under a common strategy, which makes it difficult to present a strong and unified resistance towards Israel. Under this

situation, they have sought through an armed conflict (stage of confrontation) to change and break the structure that defines the conflict. Looking once again at Gallo & Marzano (2009), the Palestinians are conscious of the power unbalance and of the structural injustice that characterises the conflict, they are also aware of the objectives that the Israeli government seeks, situation which has permitted the conflict to evolve from the stage of awareness (conscientisation) to a strong phase of confrontation, because the Palestinians wish to strongly resist domination and establish themselves as an independent nation.

The asymmetry between Israel and Palestine, is also characterised by the atrocities committed under the regime of Adolf Hitler, which has had consequences on attitudes and postures that many nations have adopted in terms to their relation and treatment towards Israel (Bravani, 2017) (Youngs, 2014), and has to some extent conditioned their actions and behaviour in regards to their involvement in the solution of the conflict, "there seems to be a feeling of guilt and or/pity towards the Jews, as against a non-feeling or vague paternalism and contempt for the Arabs" (Galtung, 1972, p. 36). This has had a conditioning impact on the asymmetry between Israel and Palestine, where the big powers have either favoured the strengthening of the Israeli state or have turned their sight away from the conflict. Moreover, the conflict has produced a significant divide because of the values, goals and interests that both actors have, which are completely incompatible. Israel and Palestine seek the control not only of disputed territory but also to control the polity they are both living in (Galtung, 1972). This means that there has been a constant battle to see who establishes themselves a solid and independent state within the region, "they do not just want a home but a state" (Ibid, p. 39). So far the advantage lies on the Israeli side because Palestine rejected UN Resolution 181 of 1947, which stated the partition of the Palestinian territory, allowing the establishment of the state of Israel, situation that increased Israeli power and weakening the Palestinians, granting them a less favourable position in the asymmetry.

Therefore, the conflict shows that there is absolutely no balance of power or even a challenging of the rooted structure (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) between the two actors, just as the previous cases that we have analysed, the conflict between Israel and Palestine is of complete asymmetric nature, "a conquering against a conquered people that has only recently risen to any level of political consciousness and capability to act, and has not yet achieved this in a concerted fashion" (Galtung, 1972 p. 47). Moreover, the Israeli state has been expanding itself on foreign territory

through the construction and imposition of illegal settlements within the West Bank, with to the extent of establishing an almost absolute territorial control of what used to be Palestine (Aranda & Palma, 2016). The conflict and occupation of Palestinian territory has led to a massive exodus of Palestinians towards other Arab nations in the Middle East and even reaching South America, meaning that the Palestinian cause for independence and recognition is literally spread and divided throughout the globe, having to be fought without a solid territorial base, condition that has increased the Palestinian resentment towards Israel.

The problem this conflict presents is that both actors have created an environment of fear towards each other when they engage in violent behaviours, and the fact that Israel responds with brutal force, these actions are seen as "a continuation of tradition of dominance of an imperialistic nature, and the fear of structural violence" (Galtung, 1972, p. 56). Comparing this case to the case of Northern Ireland, it can be seen that heavy weapons were not applied in the British-Irish conflict, neither were collective punishments inflicted nor firing against unarmed crowds (Creveld, 2008). The latter methods characterise the Israel-Palestine conflict and put a huge risk towards the achievement of peace. Israel's conflict with Palestine is one of the most bitter and polarising sources of tension in the Middle East, it is a "war of political and military attrition that has led to a brutal struggle in which Israel has exploited its vast superiority in conventional forces to attack Palestinian insurgents and terrorists in ways that have often produced significant civilian casualties and collateral damage" (Cordesman, 2006, p. 5). In response, the Palestinians have applied terror tactics against innocent Israeli civilian lives and to provoke a sense of insecurity within Israel. Finally, the conflict suffers from a problem of leadership, Israel's current administration under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is unwilling to even consider a negotiation process with the Palestinians, and has no intention of surrendering what as been obtained through military campaigns (Cohen, 2017), which seek the creation of a Greater Israel and the protection of the Israeli population. Palestine, as it has been stated, has a weak source of leadership, where Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has not been able to come up with a clear negotiation strategy and convince Hamas to form a strong coalition government that can stand strong against Israeli domination[19]. Under this current scenario, it is very

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[19] Mahmoud Abbas manifested and condemned the constant violence and has been willing to reach a peace agreement with his Israeli counterpart. Abbas's complications have not mainly come from Israel but within Palestine with the parliamentary victory of Hamas in 2006, where the Islamic faction has

difficult that it can be expected for this asymmetric conflict to evolve into a renewed negotiation phase (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) and it will continue under low-level confrontations on the battlefield, which generates a prolonged status of stalemate. Leaving the door open to the most favourable cause to the end the conflict under international intervention or pressure[20] from a big power (Cordesman, 2006).

4. The Actors and their objectives within the conflict

A. Israel and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF)

It has been previously stated how the power balance and structure is strongly inclined towards Israel's advantage in this asymmetric conflict, positioning it as a strong dominant actor that leaves few chances for the conflict to evolve into stage of negotiation process. History has shown that Israel's foreign and military policy has been to achieve military victory and avoid any type of negotiation that would demand them to lose what has been achieved through military campaigns. For this reason, since the foundation of the Israeli state, all of Israel's governments have set the objective to develop a quantitative and significant edge in regards to the threats that the Arab neighbours pose to their security and maintenance of the Israeli statehood.

The survival of the Israeli state has been the main task of its foreign policy, and is backed by the religious ideal of Zionism, "classic Zionism represents those who believe in a strong armed military force and power as the only tools to protect states interests, as a realistic way of thinking" (Sternberg, 2012, p. 11). This ideology combined with the use of military power has been executed since the birth of the Israeli state allowing it to succeed in conventional war fighting. Its conflicts with Egypt, Syria and Lebanon have been proof of significant victories in positioning the Israeli state as a hegemon within the Middle East. Although Israel is not a Great Power within the international system, accumulation and expansion of power is one of its main objectives and the use of political and military force aims towards survival, in a region where it feels constantly at risk and threatened. "There is a relentless seeking of power. Survival mandates aggressive behaviour" (Mearscheimer, 2014, p. 21). Power in this sense must be seen as a means of survival and the extension of

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sworn to intensify its struggle with Israel and regain all of the Palestinian territory by erasing Israel from the map (Cordesman, 2006).

[20] These two last factors shall be further addressed in the analysis to answer the central research question.

territory for Israel. Therefore, the prolongation of the conflict with Palestine, favours Israel to continue its desire to survive and eliminate any type of threats but most importantly it is a means to expand its dominion over Palestine and secure its nationalist interests. The conflict with Palestine has not only proven that Israel has the military superiority against the Palestinian insurgency, which is composed by Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad[21] (PIJ). Nevertheless it has still been unable to fully defeat and annihilate the Palestinians and impose an absolute Israeli rule over them.

Since this conflict is defined by asymmetric nature, Israel has been forced to develop tactics to damage the Palestinians on the battlefield. Furthermore, if a negotiation scenario would see the light of day, Gallo & Marzano (2009) state that Israel has always applied a tactic of separation, towards the two main actors of the Palestinian resistance: Hamas and Fatah, by inflicting military damage to Hamas and ignoring political demands from Fatah. The strategy used by Israel seeks to show the Palestinians that neither force nor diplomacy will be enough to challenge Israeli power and bend its political will and disposition to end the conflict. Creating tension between them, buys Israel more time to continue occupying territories within Palestine, resulting in victories solely for Israel. With this strategy Israel is causing a territorial separation of Palestine, especially with its retreat from the Gaza Strip in 2005, where it constructed security borders between the two lands (Aranda & Palma, 2016). These actions have not only received the rejection of the United Nations, the European Union and Human Rights NGO's but at the same time, the Palestinian freedom fighters have been able to strike back and continue their battle with rockets and mortars, targeting the Israeli population and increasing the threat towards Israeli security, situation that leaves the conflict at a constant phase of confrontation (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) prolonging a status of deadlock.

In regards to its political tactics, these have also been modified due to the constant Palestinian threat; therefore, Tel Aviv has conducted aggressive diplomatic efforts directed especially their main ally: Washington, asking for more support and economic aid. Moreover, the tactics and technology applied by the IDF; "defensive force, shock, and tools such as bulldozers, tanks, and clearing of security perimeters

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[21] The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) was founded during the 1970's with the objective to destroy Israel with war and establish Islamic state in Palestinian areas. It is one of the more extreme groups from the Palestinian areas (Cordesman, 2006, p. 289).

has helped to provide protection and separation from Palestinian threats" (Cordesman, 2006, p. 69) and have proven to be extremely effective.

The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have also played a crucial role in the development and use of power in the conflict; "armies are a paramount importance in warfare because they are the main military instrument for conquering and controlling land, which is the supreme military objective in a world of territorial states" (Mearscheimer. 2014, p. 86). The IDF is in charge of protecting the Israeli population and carries the responsibility of the survival of the Israeli state, "armies are the central ingredients of military power, because they are the principal instrument for conquering and controlling territory-the paramount political objective in a world of territorial states. In short, the key component of military might, even in the nuclear age, is land power" (Ibid, p. 43). Furthermore, the military power that Israel has reached has been supported and strengthened by the political and military alliance that the United States has provided for decades (Cordesman, 2006). The political support that the White House has given to Israel with the uncountable vetoes against resolutions in the Security Council of the United Nations, condemning Israel's illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories (Aranda & Palma, 2016) and the construction of Israeli settlements, has not only favoured Israel but it has increased and hardened the Israeli unilateral policy of occupation and has allowed Israel's position of not wanting to negotiate and to put an end to the conflict.

Another tactic that Israel has implemented to contain Palestinian resistance, and to destroy the Palestinian moral and political will, has been the demolition of Palestinian homes (the Bulldozer policy) through the construction of illegal settlements within Palestinian territories. The Israeli government and the IDF have applied this measure as of 1987 and continue to do so in present days. This policy has been used to literally punish those Palestinians that are suspected of resistance or attempting to commit violence against Israel. According to Shai Nitzan, former head of the Special Functions Division in the Israeli State's Attorney office, "Destroying houses is intended, among other reasons to deter potential terrorists, as it has proven that the family is a central factor in Palestinian Society" (Cordesman, 2006, p. 71). Therefore, these tactics seek to counter unconventional methods that arise from Palestinian resistance, but they also have the objective to provoke an impact on those who could or are linked to terror attacks, by targeting their families and taking over their land to immobilise Palestinians. Furthermore, the IDF and the Israeli government have also applied the tactics of targeted assassinations as another way of defeating the

Palestinian insurgency, leaving the small guerrilla groups leaderless. Therefore, preventive military campaigns are Israel's most effective tactic to justify their attacks on Palestinians and isolate the insurgency. Moreover, large-scale arrests have also been employed by the IDF, taking Palestinians into custody, to obtain Intel, to later arrest persons that have strong connections to the militant groups (Cordesman, 2006). These arrests have been done with no warrants, and the Palestinians do not have the possibility to defend themselves in a court of justice. Finally, Israel's military superiority in this asymmetric warfare can be seen in the use of Air Power on behalf of the Israeli Air Force (IAF), having the access to high-accuracy weapons (drones and UAB's) that can be applied from a long distance has completely benefited the Israeli forces to inflict serious damage not only towards the Palestinian insurgency but also towards the infrastructure and the institutions that have been founded within Palestine. "Israel has not only exploited its conventional military and tactical superiority of over the Palestinians, it has exploited its ability to largely isolate them" (Ibid, p. 86).

One must not ignore the role that the Likud party[22] has played along the conflict, their political philosophy advocates for an Israel that compromises the whole of the ancient land (Van Nergi, 2012), which includes the West Bank, hence the reason why the Netanyahu administrations has sought the incorporation of the land through the construction and expansion of Israeli settlements. "The foreign policy guidelines of his government (Netanyahu) expressed firm opposition to a Palestinian state, to the Palestinian right of return, and to the dismantling of Jewish settlements. They also asserted Israel's sovereignty over the whole of Jerusalem and ruled out withdrawal from the Golan Heights. In the Arab world this programme was widely seen as a declaration of war on the peace process" (Ibid, p. 30). Moreover, the Likud has shown a constant lack of political will to remove any of the Israeli settlements it has constructed in the West Bank, situation that compromises the Oslo Accords of 1993[23], creating a sense of mistrust towards any further type of negotiations between them. Finally, the Likud party has put a high value to the occupied territories, instigating Israeli settlers to refuse to give up their land, situation that violates the initial agreements between Israel and Palestine under the "land for peace"

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[22] Inspired by the ideology of the revisionist Zionist leader, Zev Jabotinsky, founded in 1973, the Likud is right wing and nationalist and opposed the 1993 Oslo Accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Source: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-21073450.

[23] The Oslo Accords of 1993 shall be addressed in the following chapter along with the reasons of the on-going conflict between Israel and Palestine.

agreement within the Oslo Accords, which was signed by former Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

It has been under the Labour Party administrations and policies that negotiation and the political will to move towards ending the conflict has appeared, especially with the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who initiated the Oslo peace talks in 1993 and further on, Labour Prime Minister Ehud Barak who promised to do everything to achieve a peace treaty with the Palestinians (Cohen, 2017). Although the Labour Party does not support a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine, its interest of dealing and negotiating with Palestinians is to be separated from once and for all from Israel, so that the Israeli state can obtain a greater sense of security (Cohen, 2017).

To conclude, it has been exposed how Israel sees the conflict with Palestine as a war that it has to come out triumphant from, currently it has the advantage to do so with how its military and political might evolved since the creation of the state of Israel. Moreover, its power is characterised by use of force of the IDF, positioning it as the strong and dominant side of the asymmetry. Furthermore, the current Likud administration has been responsible of increasing this by ignoring Palestinian pleads to negotiate and reaching a peaceful settlement (Cohen, 2017). Although Israel has the military superiority to challenge any of its neighbours, it is still engaged in an asymmetric conflict with the Palestinians since 1967, which makes sense with what Gallo & Marzano (2009) present in their theories regarding asymmetric conflicts, since the conflict is characterised to be halted in a prolonged confrontation phase. Since there has been no further political will to negotiate, Israel has suffered constant attacks from the Palestinian insurgency modifying and developing new tactics to counter the attacks without obtaining an absolute victory over them.

B. Palestine: Hamas and Fatah

The Palestinians are deeply divided in their struggle against the Israelis. The Palestinian Authority (PA), which is the political force of Palestine led by Fatah but contested for the representation of the Palestinian struggle by the insurgent and terrorist group: **Hamas**. Since the analysis focuses on asymmetric conflict theory, this section is dedicated more towards the role and tactics that Hamas has played in the conflict and the consequences it has brought upon Palestinians.

Hamas[24] (The Islamic Resistance Movement) founded by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin in 1987 with the aid of the Muslim Brotherhood and religious members of the PLO, is defined under a fundamentalist ideology, guided by a messianic idea of establishing the Greater Palestine from the Jordan River until the Mediterranean Sea (Harel, 2012). Furthermore, Hamas strongly believes that the use of terror tactics and targeting Israeli civilians will provoke a reaction in the Israeli government to put an end to their use of force towards Palestine, allowing the Palestinians to achieve statehood. Their logic strongly responds to asymmetric conflict theory, where they are conceived as the insurgent group who can defy and modify the dominant power structure of Israel. Hamas is determined by Islamic fundamentalism and seeks the Jihad for the complete liberation of Palestine from Israel (Cordesman, 2006). Its fight for this objective is a personal and religious task for every Muslim. Moreover, they firmly reject any type of political agreement or accord (reason why the opposed to Oslo Accords of 1993), since these would slightly relinquish any part of Palestine and would be a terrible setback for the resistance. To achieve the desired objective one has to fight with blood and violence, targeting the IDF and Israeli civilians. Without the use of terrorism, Hamas strongly believes that the Palestinians stand little chance to defy Israel's power position and change the structure of the asymmetry between them. Terror and violence are the only methods that Palestine can actually achieve the return of the occupied territories (Van Nergi, 2012) and reach the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

To support its fight, Hamas has received support from abroad, especially from unofficial Saudi Arabian channels, the Iranian government and other Gulf States. This is due to the charisma and motivation that Sheik Ahmad Yassin[25] was able to transmit to the Palestinians and other Islamic supporters for the creation of an Islamic Palestine. Moreover, Hamas has been able to recruit young Palestinian boys in their fight against Israel, forming small cells so that they can carry out bombings and suicide attacks against Israeli targets. These new "tactics" can be understood as methods of unconventional warfare to undermine the enemy and surprise them by inflicted unexpected damage, making it difficult to control the terror attacks.

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[24] Hamas: Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya. Islamic Resistance Front founded in 1987 and seeks to establish an Islamic Palestinian state in place of Israel. Its name means "zeal" or "courage and bravery".

[25] Sheik Ahmad Yassin was the spiritual leader of Hamas until his death in 2004.

Since Hamas is an insurgent group and a non-state actor it has applied a series of tactics to defy Israel power. They have been responsible for political agitation with propaganda and mass demonstrations to roadside murders, suicide bombings and the use of mortar rockets. Since its creation in 1987 before the First Intifada, it has operated in the West Bank and in the Gaza strip, and is responsible for over 600 attacks (Cordesman, 2006) on Israeli targets and is blamed for increasing the violence within the Israeli and Palestine conflict. Since their ideology seeks the destruction of Israel, which can only be done through methods of violence and terror tactics, Hamas targets densely populated civilian areas to cause its damage. The use of civilians as human shields has become a tactic to gain small but significant victories against the IDF. "Hamas is eager to see many casualties on both sides. Its guiding principle is damaging Israel's resilience and maintaining the determination to fight after having sustained many losses, while at the same time creating a troubling humanitarian picture that will lead to international pressure that will result in the end of the fighting" (Harel, 2012, p. 20). These tactics seek to undercut Israel's legitimacy to act. Moreover, the techniques applied by Hamas force the IDF to always be protective of their soldiers, making it hard for them to engage in direct combat and neutralise Hamas, since they are not concentrated in one single area and is characterised by not having a centre of gravity (Harel, 2012). In this sense the power structure of the asymmetry tips a bit towards the advantage of Hamas. Insurgent groups like Hamas fit into the description of how symmetric conflict becomes a new form of warfare for state actors to contain, making it difficult for them to calculate their attacks and their *modus operandi.* Although Hamas does not posses the military might that the IRA or FARC had in the previous conflicts that have been previously addressed, it has sought to strike Israel (Harel, 2012) and make them change their tactics so that the insurgent group can achieve small but significant victories.

With the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000, Hamas was responsible for making brutal call to violence and was seen as the prime mover of the escalated violence in the conflict, in the words of Sheik Ahmad Yassin, "Palestinians must transform the Intifada into an armed struggle against the Israeli conquest" (Cordesman, 2006, p. 298). This because Hamas above all seeks the creation of an Islamic theocratic government in Palestine and "is unwilling to accept any long-term agreements or treaties that recognise Israel as a state deserving of land in what it regards as Palestine" (Ibid, p. 301). This objective led to an increase in popularity for Hamas since the outbreak of the conflict during the Second Intifada in the year 2000 and continues to pose a threat to any trustful agreement or solution to the conflict.

Mahmoud al-Zahar, who is the top Hamas official in the Gaza Strip, addressed CNN with the following words; "negotiation is not our aim. Negotiation is a method. And the way the word terrorism is used on us is unfair. Israel is killing people and children and removing our agricultural system-this is terrorism. When the Americans (are) attacking the Arabic and Islamic world whether in Afghanistan and Iraq and they are playing a dirty game in Lebanon, this is terrorism. Hamas is a liberation movement" (Ibid, p. 306).

With the elections of 2006 Hamas became the dominant political party both in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank. Even though Israel and the United States rejected the political involvement of Hamas in politics, the radical Islamic group came out triumphant. The presence of Hamas as the ruling party in the Palestinian parliament put at risk any type of peaceful talks with Israel and received condemnation from various nations abroad. "A largely secular and pro-peace Palestinian government was suddenly and unexpectedly replaced by a radical Islamic group whose character and ideology called for Israel's destruction" (Cordesan, 2006, p. 273). Moreover, Hamas expressed that they were determined to transform their armed wing into a new national Palestinian army, to continue its battle with Israel and succeed in its primary objective of deepening the conflict, since the armed struggle is seen as the only way to succeed. The parliamentary results for Hamas in 2006 led to the shutting off financial aid to the Palestinian government, since Hamas stood strong in not recognising the existence of Israel. The latter put president Abbas in a complicated situation, since Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority had decided to recognise Israel as a state, which was a crucial condition for a future negotiation and peace process. Therefore, the victory of Hamas in the elections was seen as a definite setback to the whole negotiation process, bringing more tension between the Palestinians and overall, buying more time for the Israelis to continue with their settlements and instauration of apartheid in the West Bank.

The second actor within the Palestine resistance is the political faction **Fatah**, who is basically in control of the Palestinian Authority, seeking the Palestinian statehood and recognition of its sovereignty through diplomatic talks and peaceful negotiations. Furthermore, Fatah is seen as the secular and moderate political body that has been in charge of the Palestinian Authority. Fatah does not believe in the continuation of terror and retaliation as the primary elements that will lead Israel to the negotiation table and allow the establishment of the state of Palestine.

Fatah is a reverse acronym for Harakat al-Tahrir al-Filistiniya or Palestinian Liberation Movement in Arabic (Tahhan, 2017) etymologically it means, "to conquer". Its origins are traced to Kuwait in the end of the 1950s, where expelled Palestinians from the creation of the Israeli state found refuge and sought to fight for the liberation and independence of Palestine. It was founded by Yasser Arafat, Khalil al-Wazir, Salah Khalaf and current Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. As of 1965 its objective of establishing Palestinian statehood was pursed by an armed struggle against the Israeli forces. Moreover, in 1967, it became the dominant party of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and has remained as the main Palestinian political actor within the conflict.

Since Fatah began operating outside of Israel, from Lebanon and Jordan, they later changed their armed struggle to a political one by choosing to negotiate with Israel. The diplomatic route has been Fatah's main resource for the liberation and establishment of a free Palestine and supports its objective with the UN Resolution 242, which refers to the return of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem to the Palestinians. Furthermore, Fatah has never agreed or shown any type of approval regarding the use of force on behalf of Hamas, "The PA does not believe in the legitimacy of Hamas' arms" (Tehhan, 2017). This has been a cause of controversy and brings contradiction to the Palestinian actors, because if Fatah wishes that Hamas ends its resistance in Gaza against Israel, and then Hamas sees Fatah as a weak fighter, but if Fatah would support any type of violent resistance orchestrated by Hamas, then this prejudices Fatah's position to negotiate with Israel.

The problem that Hamas and Fatah face is that throughout the conflict against Israel both Palestinian factions have struggled to reconcile their differences, situation that clearly favours an expansion of Israeli dominion. Even though they both have a shared history of hatred towards Israel, they are unable to unite and defeat a common enemy. The key difference in their ideologies lies in the fact that Fatah is secular political faction, who seeks to establish a democratic government for an independent Palestine, and it has shown this throughout the conflict. Moreover, it has manifested its desire to negotiate with Israel as the only true and viable way to obtain the Palestinian independence. Furthermore, Hamas is an Islamic fundamentalist movement, hence the incompatibility with Fatah. The latter has a strong sense of criticism towards Hamas, since they find that they have "no commitment religious or secular, to the welfare of the people it rules in Gaza. Using the people of Gaza as

human shields" (Walzer, 2014, p. 1). Therefore, how trustworthy can Hamas be on the battlefield of the political arena?

Another problem the Palestinians are faced with is how to move towards the acceptance of mutual coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. "Like the present Israeli government, Hamas does not believe in a Palestinian state alongside Israel. These two bitter enemies are actually helping one another. Every rocket that Hamas fires weakens the Israeli left[26] and makes it more difficult for ordinary Israelis to contemplate a withdrawal from the West Bank - since rockets from there could make all of Israel uninhabitable. And every new settlement, every price tag attack on the West Bank, weakens Fatah and the PA and lends credence to Hamas's claim that violence is the only way" (Ibid, p. 2). With this current scenario the only one who benefits from this war is Israel, Hamas and Fatah continue to be divided by political and military interests and Israel can continue use this to its advantage and its expansion through Palestine.

Therefore, it has been shown that clearly Hamas posses a constant threat to any negotiation process and towards the formation of an honest and unified Palestinian government. Hamas has the military might in Palestine and Fatah lacks the political force to persuade Hamas to disarm and to work towards a diplomatic solution with Israel. If Fatah had a strong military force it could convince Hamas to disarm, eliminating the terror inflicted by the radical Islamist group but this scenario is very unlikely since it goes against the founding principles of Hamas. Although Fatah is recognised by its diplomatic and political struggle against Israel, it is strongly criticised by not having a strong and solid negotiation plan and lacks the principles to direct its actions and persuade Israel to negotiate, and that it has been unable to gain an inch of territory for the establishment of the Palestinian state (Aranda & Palma, 2016). On the other hand, Hamas' ideology is much more appealing to those who seek the liberation and establishment of a Palestinian state, since violence has been the only way to damage Israeli dominance.

A sign of hope and reconciliation between both factions arose in 2017, when Hamas declared that it was willing to accept a Palestinian state based upon UN Resolution 242, and the 1967 borders for the Palestinian state and allowing the return of all

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[26] The Israeli left which is mainly represented by the Labour Party is much more inclined to a two-state solution with the Palestinians through a peaceful negotiation process.

Palestinian refugees to their motherland (Tahhan, 2017). Hamas accepted and declared a political compromise and it should not back down from it. Although "Hamas rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea but considers the establishment of a sovereign Palestine state on 1967 borders to be a formula of national consensus" (Ibid, p. 3). This marked an epic event in the future of Palestinian unification, where the objectives of both factions would be consolidated, furthermore allowing Fatah to present in decisions taken within the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, the Netanyahu administration has done everything in its power to undermine the Palestinian Authority and deepen the divide between Fatah and Hamas by expanding and increasing the settlements in the West Bank.

To conclude this section of the actors involved in the conflict, one cannot ignore what is evident: the predominance of the military and political power that Israel has over Palestine (especially in relation to Hamas and Fatah). Here lies the basis and structure of the unbalanced power asymmetry, where the IDF is made up of hundreds of thousands of soldiers, tanks, planes and ships, and on the other hand, Hamas is the weak and dominated side with tens of thousands of combatants (Harel, 2012), and lacks the heavy artillery to match Israel's force in the conflict. It is also clear that Israel's superiority on the battlefield has not been matched, and that the Palestinians have had fewer opportunities to access or use new weapons and tactics. The balance and structure of this conflict is still strongly in favour of Israel, where the Palestinians have been forced to adopt a clear defence strategy instead of an effective offensive attack mode that could gain them victories and push towards a negotiation process, hence the reason they have used suicide and car bombings to counter Israel's conventional strength. Even with the acquisition of mortars and rockets that have been employed to damage Israeli infrastructure and kill civilians, sending the clear message to the Israeli's that with these tactics the IDF cannot protect everyone (Cordesman, 2006), they are still in a situation of disadvantage. Furthermore, the Palestinians have done their best effort to fight a political battle through the eyes and ears of mass media, showing the rest of the world the occupation of the Palestinian territory, the injustices committed by the Israeli police and IDF towards civilians. Former Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat understood the power of mass media and sought to use it as call for the end of the violence, announcing ceasefires through them, and the desire to negotiate peacefully with Israel, this would attract the international community's attention and empathise with

the Palestinian cause and struggle, and hope for international intervention to pressure and push Israel towards a new and fruitful negotiation process.

5. The Oslo Accords and the on-going conflict

A. The Oslo Accords and the pursuit of peace

The Asymmetric war between Israelis and Palestinians is an on-going reality, where one would tend to think that the conflict would at some point lead to a balance based on peace and deterrence (Cordesman, 2006) but instead it has been defined by conventional war fighting, eliminating the possibility of peace unless there is a strong shift in the balance of power towards the Palestinian side or there is a major intervention from a third actor that forces both actors to sit down and negotiate.

The Oslo Accords of 1993 has been one of the most significant events towards the end of the conflict and can be considered an initial indicator to answer the research question of the investigation, if asymmetric conflict leads to a peaceful negotiation? Furthermore, the Oslo Accords respond to the evolution of asymmetric conflict theory posed by Gallo & Marzano (2009), since they present a shift from a prolonged confrontation phase, characterised by violence and the use of terror tactics, to a negotiation phase, where the establishment of peace came to be an option for both conflicting sides. For this reason Oslo was a negotiation process that sought to establish the end of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Moreover, two of the conditions that have been considered for the evolution of a conflict towards the negotiation process were present in the Oslo Accords: *military exhaustion* due to the violence inflicted by Palestinians towards Israelis during to the First Intifada, which led to the apparition of political will on behalf of Israel to negotiate (Gallo & Marzano, 2009). At the same time, the wave of violence perpetrated by the Palestinian insurgency allowed them to not only physically hurt Israel but at the same time provoked an attack on its psychological will power, element that has been identified as crucial for victory in the ideas of Mack (1975). However, it has been previously stated that the conflict between Israel and Palestine still exists; hence the reason why Oslo has to be explained and address the fact it failed.

Although Israel's military capability has been addressed, showing its capacity and advantage that it has over the Palestinian fighters, one would tend to think that the

conflict would not prolong itself too long due to the power that Israel possesses. Nevertheless, this slightly changed during the First Intifada[27] (1987- 1993), where there is a shift in the power structure of the asymmetry. The First Intifada intensifies the conflict between Israel and Palestine and sent a clear message to the Israeli government; "no solution would be reached unless the Israelis were willing to consider the Palestinians as political community with national and political rights" (Gallo & Marzano, 2009, p. 17).

What also favoured the Palestinians to build their strength in the battlefield and unleash the First Intifada was all the bloodshed and brutal force that they received on behalf of the IDF in the decade of the 1980s; Black September and the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, led the international community to recognise and view the Palestinians as a national movement that had the objective to establish their own independent state. This gave the Palestinians an amount of power, leading to the creation of political institutions and the organisation of the OPT (Occupied Palestinian Territories). The international support, the rejection of Israeli actions and the growth of Palestinian might through the Intifada, positioned the Palestinians as a worthy challenger of the Israeli might, leading to the Oslo Accords of 1993, where Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, saw the obligation to negotiate with the Palestine, as the only way to put an end to the conflict. What has to be stressed here is that with the rise of the Palestinian insurgency through the First Intifada, the structural asymmetry (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) was affected and the power balance increased, favouring the Palestinians, without this wave of violence, it would have been impossible for Palestine to force the Israelis towards the negotiation table. Therefore, it is important to highlight that with the First Intifada, the conflict reached its ripeness (Zartman, 2001), provoking a sense of fear towards Israeli survival and security. For this reason, a step forward from confrontation to negotiation (Gallo & Mazano, 2009) had to be made. "Confrontation allowed the weaker party in the conflict to strengthen itself as to force the stronger party to begin negotiating" (Ibid, p. 18).

The orchestration of the Oslo Accords also sees the presence of another condition that has been set as determining for the resolution of asymmetric conflicts, the role of

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[27] The First Intifada was the Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where protests began without the use of force on behalf of the Palestinians but were contained by military force on behalf of the IDF, which led to the killing of various Palestinians, provoking an armed and violent reaction from the Palestinians that showed no mercy upon the Israelis.

third party actors, in this case it was Norway who played the role of a neutral actor, seeking to bring both Israelis and Palestinians to the negotiation table. Norway as third actor in this process (Damen, 2013) was a known ally to the Israeli government since it supplied oil to Israel after the Iranian Revolution in 1979. The Norwegian initiative was also supported by Yasser Arafat, who aided the Norwegian foreign office regarding their peace corps in the United Nations mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and was in favour of the oil trade between Norway and Israel. Norway conducted back-channel talks just like the ones seen in the conflict in Northern Ireland, to strongly convince the Israeli government to show the political will and disposition to agree to talks and negotiate with Palestine, as a way to stop the violence that was being applied during the First Intifada. The combination of the external persuasive pressure from Norway and the intense violence that came from the First Intifada finally led to Israeli Prime Minister at the time, Yitzhak Shamir to say these determining words, "Stop the riots and let us talk[28]". Here the involvement of a third party actor was able to modify the behaviour of the dominant Israeli state, by applying pressure under the concept of peace and avoiding the spread of violence.

Moreover, the presence Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was a representative of the Israeli Labour Party, defined by a socialist approach and in favour of a diplomatic relationship with the PLO (Van Nergi, 2012), was the key player in orchestrating the negotiations and seeking a peaceful conclusion to the conflict. Negotiations began between Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat, leading to the signing of a complementary letter of mutual recognition between Israel and Palestine, and the signature of Declaration of Principles On Interim Self-Government Arrangements, leading to a framework under the name "land for peace" (Ibid, p. 10). For this to work, the Rabin administration saw that inflicting more damage towards Palestine was not the option to follow, negotiations where a much better and viable route for peace. The Palestinians had to renounce to violence in exchange for land in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, situation that would eventually lead to the creation of an independent and recognised Palestinian state.

During these negotiations the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) under their leader Yasser Arafat, committed to giving up the armed conflict, to become a "protostate" (Cordesman, 2006) and form the new Palestinian Authority (PA), therefore, negotiations between Israel and Palestine could be conducted under a

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[28] Quote extracted from Al Jazeera Online
http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/aljazeeraworld/2013/09/2013910121456318891.html.

peaceful environment. The Oslo Accords were finally signed on September 13, 1993, on the lawn of the Whitehouse in Washington, although they were orchestrated by the Norwegians and previously signed in August 18 of the same year in Oslo.

Oslo established the two-state solution of the conflict, where Israel and Palestine would coexist living side by side under peace. The peace accord would be based on the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338[29]. Having the international framework of the two mentioned United Nations Security Resolutions for the implementation of the Oslo Accords was a promising step towards the establishment of an independent and recognised Palestinian state. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat referred to the Accords as a sign of new times, "My people are hoping that this agreement which we are signing today marks the beginning of the end of a chapter of pain and suffering which has lasted throughout this century and that it will usher in an age of peace, coexistence and equal rights" (Pressman, 2003, p. 7). After two years of the signing of Oslo, Arafat addressed the importance of the Accords once again; "A significant portion of Palestinian national rights reverts today to the Palestinian people through their control of cities, villages and populated areas. We urge you all to recognise the importance of this historic interim step that demonstrates that the Israeli and Palestinian peoples would coexist on the basis of mutual recognition of rights, while enjoying quality and self-determination without occupation or repeated wars and without terrorism" (Ibid, p. 7).

The Oslo process was initially well received by both sides, and prompted the conflict to evolve into the fourth phase presented by Gallo & Marzano (2009): sustainable peace, since Israel would transfer land to the Palestinians under a five-year period and to be controlled by the Palestinian Authority. Moreover, the points regarding refugees, the status of Jerusalem and the occupied territories would be further discussed with other meetings and negotiations that the Oslo Accords included. "The

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[29] UN Resolution 242 was created on November 22 1967, after the Six Day War between Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Its focuses on the prohibition of acquiring territory through war, demanding Israel to return the territories to their respective nations that were captured and put illegally under Israeli sovereignty. The return of the occupied territories would allow peace to return within the Middle East, where all the states that were involved in the conflict could live peacefully within recognised borders and allow the free movement of people, aiming to solve the Palestinian refugee problem (Harlem, 2013). Moreover, UN Resolution 338 was effective after the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and called for the immediate ceasefire of the hostilities, making reference to Resolution 242 and to restore the peace once again in the Middle East.

Oslo process included an interim phase of up to five years. By the end of the third year, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were supposed to begin permanent (or final) status talks on what were expected to be the most difficult issues: Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbours, and other issues of common interest" (Cordesman, 2006, p. 8), the resolution of these issues would, in the mind of the Palestinian Authority, lead finally to independent statehood.

To conclude, it can be said that the Oslo Accords of 1993 were a turning point in the conflict and presented the necessary promises for peace and the establishment of Palestine as a state. They have been the only negotiations that had the prospect of ending the conflicting, where the theory of Gallo & Marzano (2009) would have fulfilled the four stages of the evolution of asymmetric conflict theory. Unfortunately, the peace accord between Israel and Palestine fell through and is one of the key reasons why the conflict returned and no further talks or negotiations have been able to restore the trust, especially on behalf of the Palestinians, to negotiate with Israel once again.   Therefore, it is extremely important to state *why did the Oslo Accords fail.*

B. The Failure of the Oslo Accords

Although Israel was severely damaged by the characterised in the First Intifada, its political tactics were still intact when they came to negotiate with the Palestinians during the Oslo Accords. Their first strategic move was to initiate talks with the Palestinians from the Occupied Palestinian Territories but then they shifted and decided to negotiate with the PLO, without even informing the OPT. The reason behind all of this was to restore the power influence Israel had before the Intifada and shift the balance of power in their favour. The Israeli government opted to negotiate with the PLO because it saw that its leadership was much more weaker than the OPT (Gallo & Marzano, 2009). The reason behind this because PLO lost significant funding and assistance with the collapse of the USSR, furthermore, the fact that they did not condemn Iraq's behaviour and attack against Kuwait in the First Gulf War, left them badly positioned in the international arena and they were seen as detractors of the struggle for democracy and international justice. Therefore, Israel's strategy and supposed intention to negotiate was a decoy that allowed them to control the negotiations, and to continue dividing the Palestinians creating tension between

them, so that Israel could recover, restructure and take control of the conflict once again. Israel's decision to not include and negotiate with all of the Palestinian actors, responds to Gallo & Marzano (2009) when they refer to the concept of "foot-dragging", which is a technique destined to make the negotiations last as long as possible and for the affected actor to regain power and position on the ground. With this technique, Israel moved from side to side negotiating and extended the negotiation process with agreements that would be made in the long run, simultaneously, it chose to deal with the weaker Palestinian side with the intention to divide the Palestinians, to fortify themselves once again. "The Israelis succeeded in transforming the negotiations, especially with the Oslo Accords, into a never ending-process of bargaining" (Gallo & Marzano, 2009, p. 18).

For these reasons, Oslo was destined to fail and also, because it did not include any points or restrictions that forbade Israeli settlement building in the West Bank or in East Jerusalem. Although it divided territory within the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, giving the Palestinians full responsibility for civilian security affairs. The Israelis ignored this last point and continued to increase their settlements and isolate the Palestinians. This broke the trust towards the Rabin administration, leaving the door open for the return of the violence, making the whole negotiation process void. The failure deepened with the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin in 1995 by an Israeli radical (Van Nergi, 2012), Rabin was replaced by Shimon Peres, and then by the conservative and actual Prime Minister; Benjamin Netanyahu, who has always been a strong defender of Israel's security, driven by an attitude of zero tolerance towards the terror tactics of Hamas. Moreover, Israel continued its control over the Palestinians, by securing all of the Palestinian borders; with Egypt and Jordan, and even closing the access to East Jerusalem, to prevent the movements of Palestinians from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip and vice versa. This domination also became an advantage for the IDF and deepened the power asymmetry between the two actors. Therefore, the failure of the Oslo Accords and the unilateral occupation of Palestinian territories set the stage for the Second Intifada, which has seen the prolongation of the conflict and the failure of any hope in a negotiation process, provoking a set-back in the evolution of the conflict, where the negotiation phase failed to grow towards the fourth phase of sustainable peace (Gallo & Marzano, 2009).

Rejection of the Accords came immediately from various Palestinian organisations, that stood strong to continue their battle against Israel, and some even expressed

their desire to completely destroy Israel (Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad). Hamas continued its violent campaign against Israel, since it did not see the diplomatic option as a solution to the Israeli occupation. The return of the violence towards Israeli targets, and the inability of the Palestinian Authority to control or persuade Hamas, weakened the negotiation process.

Even though the First Intifada had pushed Israel to the negotiation table, which can be seen as an initial victory for the Palestinians, it actually became a significant loss for them, due to the fact that they did not obtain an independent state or any type of formal commitment to it, neither was the two-state solution of a peaceful coexistence of Israel and Palestine established. Moreover, none of the issues that kept the conflict going; the expansion of settlements, the borders between Israel and Palestine, the status of the city of Jerusalem, refugees, were never touched upon or settled during the Oslo. The Accords are a testament to the failure of a negotiation process (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) and lacked two elements that have been exposed in the previous cases of Northern Ireland and Colombia; back-channel negotiations (Democratic Public Institute, 2013) and conflict transformation (Duman, 2014), since there was no chance of creating an environment of trust because not all Palestinian factions were present during the negotiation process, leading to the impossibility of foreseeing a joint future (Powell & Moaz, 2014).

Not even the pressure that came from the Clinton administration in 2000 towards Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to meet in Camp David and discuss a two-state solution was able to revive the promises and agreements from Oslo, since all trust towards Israel had been lost by the PLO and the PA, and Hamas saw that no negotiation would fulfil the Palestinian dream of an independent nation. A further negotiation attempt was made in 2001, which was the Taba Summit, Israeli Prime Minister Barak was willing to offer 97% of the West Bank and all of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority (Van Nergi, 2012), offer that was rejected by Arafat and the rising power of Hamas, since the Second Intifada had already begun in 2000. "If the deal were rejected, they would look good (Israel) because they had offered so much; if it were accepted, they would secure the majority of the peace dividend and end the conflict. Thus, it is possible that Israel was actually better off having the deal rejected (as opposed to not offering a deal at all), and it is certainly true that they, had at most, little to lose" (Van Nergi. 2012, p. 38). This completely favoured Israel's image in the public opinion but the offer came too late since the Palestinians had lost complete faith in a peace accord as the ultimate solution to the conflict and towards

the realisation of a Palestinian state, violence appeared once again as the only method to change the course of Israeli dominance, just like it had occurred with the First Intifada.

Therefore, it can be said that the Oslo Accords did not fulfil the objective of the research question set out to answer if the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine ending in a peaceful negotiation, neither did they fulfil the theory of Gallo & Marzano (2009) since the negotiations did not lead to the final phase of asymmetric conflicts; sustainable peace. Therefore, Oslo has to be seen as a complete failure to peace, since it favoured Israeli interests and was unable to establish concrete guarantees for Palestinian statehood. In the end, it led the conflict to a stage of involution, where the negotiation phase took a step back towards the confrontation phase (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) setting the stage for the return of violence and towards a significant deepening of the asymmetry between both Israelis and Palestinians.

C. The Second Intifada and the on-going conflict

Since the Oslo Accords did not improve or solve the Palestinian demands of the establishment of the state of Palestine and reach the stage of peace, a new wave of violence irrupted under the Second Intifada. The First Intifada had brought Israel to the negotiation process, proving to be a successful technique. For this reason, the PLO and Hamas believed that a Second Intifada could produce the same effects, and even go further and demand much more from Israel.

Therefore, the Palestinians, within the logic of asymmetric warfare, saw that the use of force would shift the power structure in their direction once again and produce the effect of exhaustion within the Israeli forces and give into a new process of negotiation, this time under Palestinian terms.

The Second Intifada began in the year 2000, showcasing the complete collapse of the Oslo Accords (Cordesman, 2006), leading to the complete failure of the Israeli and Palestinian peace process, extinguishing any possible negotiations to reappear on the horizon, and is responsible for the current prolongation of the confrontation phase, creating the "spiralling" effect (Duman, 2014) of constant violence, instead of seeking negotiations once again. Another cause of this second outbreak of violence has been attributed to the visit former Israeli Primer Minister Ariel Sharon made to

the Temple Mount [30] on September 28, 2000 (Pressman, 2003). Situation that immediately sparked tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. Sharon's visit broke the *status quo* and is responsible of the non-ending violence that characterises the conflict, and served as the perfect opportunity for the Palestinians to execute their second attempt to bring Israel to negotiate, since the Palestinians believed that violence would once again deter the Israelis and provide them similar bargaining power that they had achieved through the First Intifada (Pressman, 2003). Furthermore, the Palestinian insurgency believed that recurring to a second wave of strong violence would "accomplish its territorial and ideological goals" (Cohen & Bitton, 2015, p. 49-50) through *military exhaustion*. Diplomacy was not an option (Pressman, 2003).

The Oslo Accords did not provide any guarantees for the Palestinians nor did it include a plan for the establishment and recognition of an independent Palestinian state; a second wave of violence was the only method to achieve this once and for all. "Palestinians expected their lives to improve in terms of freedom of movement and socioeconomic standing: when both worsened, significant resentment built up in the Palestinian society" (Pressman, 2003, p. 1). Oslo failed to put an end to Israeli occupation in the West Bank and in Gaza, and showed absolutely no signs of the beginning of Palestinian self-determination. Therefore, it sounded reasonable to launch a Second Intifada, because diplomacy was dead. This is a testimony that the negotiation phase had failed, where a return to the confrontation phase was seen a the only option to achieve the Palestinian objectives, under a new cycle of violence under the Second Intifada (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), the PLO strongly believed that a military campaign would bring Israel back to the negotiation table but this time under Palestinian terms.

"The Second Intifada did not occur because of planning or ill intentions but due to Palestinian desperation after seven years without arriving at a final agreement. The Intifada happened because of the loss of hope in he peace process" (Pressman, 2003 p. 10). Furthermore, the Israelis had the advantage, they knew that their unilateral policy of expansion and occupation would be contested by a new wave of violence and they were prepared for it. The Israeli Chief of Staff, Mofaz addressed

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[30] Ariel Sharon decided to visit the Temple Mount (Haram al-Sharif) in Jerusalem to demonstrate his commitment to Israeli access to the site and to make a political statement to show that the Temple Mount would remain under Israeli sovereignty (Pressman. 2003).

his soldiers in July of 2000, " If tanks are needed, tanks will be brought in, and if helicopters are necessary, attack helicopters will be brought in" (Ibid, p. 13). Perhaps Israel's easiest battle within the conflict that emerged from Second Intifada was the war in the Gaza Strip. Since it is a compact region, a densely populated urban area home to mainly Palestinian citizens, it became an easy target for the IDF to penetrate, isolate and seal off. This decreased the threat of Hamas and the PIJ to enter Israel and portray their terror tactics on Israeli soil. These actions were supported by the 2005 construction of a security fence with an extension of 70km around the Gaza Strip, creating a buffer zone between Israel and the Gaza Strip. The same security measures have been taken in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, although here, the challenge to isolate Palestinians becomes a greater risk. This is due to the fact that the population between Israelis and Palestinians is much more intermingled than in the Gaza Strip. The IDF has found it difficult to build complete and extensive walls that can isolate the Palestinians from entering Israel. For this reason, they have had to send in special security missions to contain insurgents or to target specific Palestinian leaders.

Israel withdrew unilaterally from the Gaza Strip in 2005 (Cordesman, 2006) and the responsibility of the former occupied areas was handed over to the Palestinian Authority[31]. This meant that the Gaza Strip was completely cut off from Israel. The Israeli homes within the Gaza Strip were demolished; Israeli settlers were taken to the West Bank to begin a new occupation and the construction of settlements. "Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the small West Bank Settlements has so far done nothing to ease Palestinian resentment and anger at Israel" (Cordesman, 2006, p. 85). However, Israel did not give up control of the Gaza Strip's waters, airspace, and access to the same Strip. These actions reaffirms Israel as the dominant and occupying power, justifying the surrounding and control of Gaza as a means to protect its citizens. Therefore, securing off Gaza and the West Bank by imposing Israeli settlements is not a solution to end the conflict, it has sparked greater tensions by stimulating Hamas and the PIJ to respond with more suicide attacks and bombings towards Israeli civilian targets.

The mistake the Palestinian made since the outbreak of the Second Intifada was that they underestimated the Israeli government and their forces, a crucial error and

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[31] It was taken over by Hamas with the parliamentary elections of 2006 and remains under the authority of Hamas today.

miscalculation in asymmetric conflict, since one should always seek to undermine the enemy (Mack, 1975). Moreover, they did not consider the element of differentiation (Dunne, García-Alonso, Levine & Smith, 2006), which cost them large amounts of damage and losses on the battlefield. Israel had almost seven years to restructure itself and organise its forces, when the Palestinians began the Second Intifada in the year 2000, Israel was armed and ready to respond with brutal force and did not even consider the option that it would allow itself to be "hurt" again like in the First Intifada. The IDF was able to strike hard on the Palestinian Authority, destroying its institutions and ministries (Gallo & Marzano, 2009). The Israeli forces sought to destroy all of what the Palestinians had built to one day become and independent state. This meant, that the Israeli strategy was to leave the Palestinians completely defeated, and not even allow them to consider negotiation as an escape to the force inflicted towards them. In principle this was the strategy of the Palestinians but they were beat to it by the Israelis because they were planning and waiting for this moment since Oslo. Not only did the Israelis set back the Palestinian gains from Oslo but also they were successful in deepening the divide between Fatah and Hamas. Therefore, the Second Intifada did not produce the desired effects for the Palestinians and has completely shifted the power balance to Israel's benefit, making the asymmetry difficult to counter and to modify through military combat, this means that the power balance between Israel and Palestine has significantly decreased since Oslo, positioning the Palestinians in an unfavourable position to push the conflict out of the confrontation phase back into a fruitful negotiation process (Gallo & Marzano, 2009).

The Second Intifada not only saw the defeat of the Palestinian military and insurgent campaigns but it also saw the return of the very problem that has haunted them from the very beginning: the lack of unity, a common aim and the struggle for political power between the secular and religious Palestinian factions. The division has increased the hurt with the Israeli occupations and military victories during the Second Intifada. Nevertheless, the Palestinians seem to be still alive and willing to continue their struggle towards statehood. Although Israel has been able to apply brutal force on the Palestinian insurgency, it still "faces problems with anti-peace/anti-Arab extremist groups like Hamas. These groups lack anything approaching Israel's military strength and have been able to do little more than carry out bombings, suicide attacks, and low-level ambushes, but they present a continuing threat. Furthermore, the Israeli-Palestinian War and the creation of security walls and other measures have alienated Israeli-Arabs and have given

extremist movements a strong incentive to find ways to use asymmetric/terrorist attacks in Israel" (Cordesman, 2006, p. 9). A situation like this could strongly favour the research question since there is a strong belief (Pressman, 2003) that the combats between the IDF and Palestinian factions would evolve into a stage of deterrence. Nevertheless these low intensity encounters have created a spiral of insecurity and escalation of greater violence.

Currently, Hamas continues to stand strong with its ideals and will not cease until it achieves a Greater Palestine. On the other hand the Netanyahu administration is moving towards a Greater Israel with its settlements and expansion campaign in the West Bank. This leads to the conclusion that Hamas is buy no means willing to accept a divided territory that would leave a Greater Palestine and a Little Israel and at the same time, Israel is showing that by no means they are currently happy with a Little Palestine (Walzer, 2014). Furthermore, the on-going war in the Gaza Strip continues to be asymmetric, due to the deaths, injuries, the destruction and the misery that affects the Palestinians (Pillar, 2014), which are still struggling to reach their political and territorial goals against Israel. Although the Palestinians through Hamas and Fatah have manifested their will to achieve peace, it is clear that the Israeli government does not share the same will and intentions as their counterparts and still stands strong to hold on to the lands that were obtained through military campaigns that ended in victories for the IDF. "Unless the power balance between Israel and the Palestinians increases and unless each side considers the other partner at its own level in terms of status, rights, and needs, there is no realistic chance of reaching a phase of sustainable peace" (Gallo & Marzano, 2009, p. 23). Therefore, the situation on the ground is not at all promising and Israel continues to be a dominant state and the Palestinians have deepened their burden of being subjects to domination, showing that there is no sign of evolution of the conflict, where there is a indefinite prolongation of the confrontation phase (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) producing a latent state of deadlock stalemate, with no new negotiations in sight, since there has not been a new reduction of the power imbalance like the one seen in the First Intifada. Using the ideas of Cohen & Bitton (2015), Israel sees the elimination of opening a new negotiation process as an advantage to grow stronger with the prolongation of the conflict and continue its expansion in the West Bank.

Since the power asymmetry completely favours Israel, one questions why Israel has not annihilated Hamas? To answer this history gives us some examples; even though the United States is the world superpower with a high-tech army, it was

unable to defeat Vietnam in an asymmetric war and it seems like the scenario could repeat itself in Afghanistan (Walzer, 2014). Israel had the same fate in Lebanon against Hezbollah, and with he current war in Gaza, "the reason has a lot to do with civilian casualties, in asymmetric warfare, low tech forces –call them terrorists, militants, or the more neutral insurgents – aim at the most vulnerable targets, civilians, and they launch their attacks from the midst of civilian population. The high-tech forces respond, in defence of their own or allied civilians, and end up killing large numbers of enemy civilians. The more civilians they kill – this is the sad, but not morally puzzling truth – the better it is for the insurgents. If you kill civilians in places like Vietnam or Afghanistan, you lose the battle for the hearts and minds. If you kill civilians in a place like Gaza, you lose the battle for global support. The two losses are different: America was defeated in Vietnam, while Israel in Gaza (2006) was merely forced to accept a cease-fire, and so prevented from winning" (Walzer, 2014, p. 3).

This is the war that Israel is at risk of losing, and it is the war a united Palestine has to fight. When Israel inflicts large amounts of damage to a population that has been isolated in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank, it loses global support and the approval and justification of its attacks. If Israel is exposed for its use of brute force and the use of high-tech weapons on innocent civilians, the victory for Palestine will come in political and social terms, what they have to do is to continue resisting the attacks while the whole world is watching. To a certain extent Israel has understood this, hence the reason why it has not annihilated the Palestinians but since they are constantly provoked by insurgency, they have not learnt to control their use of force. "The lack of success in exterminating the enemy is not what defeats conventional forces when engaging with insurgents. Conventional forces are beaten by their success in countering the enemy. Each time you fight a weaker adversary you are the murderer" (Van Creveld, 2008, p. 5). The Palestinians have to project and show these actions to the outside world with the use of mass media communication, so they can receive not only moral support to their cause but also effective action and intervention from international bodies that will condemn Israel, forcing them to end the conflict and negotiate. For this reason, Palestine's objective has to be the demoralisation of Israel's political and military will, with this tactic it will be the only way to change the structure of the asymmetry, tactic that follows Mack (1975), where he states that insurgents must constantly seek the destruction of their enemies political will to continue their struggle and result triumphant.

6. The intervention and role of third party actors

The international community has not been immune to the on-going conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Many of the world powers have condemned the actions of violence portrayed by both conflicting actors (Youngs, 2014) but up until now no intervention or participation of a third party actor has been successful in ending the violence and establishing a peace accord that will foster a two-state solution. The analysis of third party actors in the conflict would help respond one of the conditions for the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine to evolve into a peaceful negotiation process, which is in line with our research question. Furthermore, the condition of third party actors intervening in the conflict could once again produce a shift from the stagnated confrontation phase and reopen the negotiations, which see the establishment of sustainable peace (Gallo & Marzano, 2009). Moreover, it is extremely important to see how the pressure of third party actors modifies the behaviour of both Israelis and Palestinians in regards to the conflict.

Since the conflict is still in stage of violence, even though it is seen at a level of low intensity at the moment, this still has not allowed it to take steps towards a new negotiation process that could remedy the failures of the Oslo Accords. Furthermore, none of the big powers in the international arena and not even the United Nations have been able to persuade the actors to put an end to the conflict.

As mentioned previously, the conflict certainly has the attention of the international community and has had consequences and spill over effects in other Arab nations: in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Although there have been past differences and conflicts between Israel and Egypt, they were able to sign a peace accord in the 1970s (Cordesman, 2006), and the same happened between Israel and Jordan in 1994. Both Arab nations have not taken a military or determining role to pressure Israel to end their violence and seek the diplomatic option as the best way to end the conflict. Moreover, they do not have the power or the effective influence to modify Israel's actions and policies towards Palestine. Their role within the conflict has been reduced to simply condemning Israeli attacks towards Palestine, since they do not have any intention to break their peace accords with Tel Aviv. Therefore, they have limited their role as a third party actor in the conflict and have opted to aid Palestine with undercover funding and supply of weapons. Furthermore, the Syrians have been out ruled of the picture, since the on-going civil war that has divided the country and by no means seen as a third party actor that can wage any type of pressure due to

its lack of internal unity. Moreover, Lebanon has a history of warfare with Israel and is seen as one of the weakest nations in the Middle East, its only way of inflicting damage towards Israel has also been through insurgency through the actions of Hezbollah, and since the government of Beirut has been heavily criticised by Israel and the United Nations for not been able to dismantle the militia group, therefore any type of involvement that could come from Lebanon would not be accepted by Israel as means of pressure to end the conflict. Finally, the role of Iran is completely discarded since they deny the existence of Israel and the latter considers them as a crucial enemy and a mortal threat to the security of the Middle East (Aranda & Palma, 2016) and towards global peace, due to their enrichment of uranium.

Therefore, the analysis shall concentrate on third party actors and their influence in the conflict between Israel and Palestine with two actors that have been present during the conflict and how they have influenced it either to deepen the conflict or have contributed to its resolution. These two actors are the United States and the European Union[32].

A. The role of the United States as a third party actor

The United States as the world's superpower appears once again as a potential third party actor that could influence and pressure a new negotiation process between Israelis and Palestinians and put an end to the conflict. Although, it must be specified that the role of Washington has been strongly questioned by the Palestinians and especially by the neighbouring Arab nations throughout the whole evolution and prolongation of the conflict. Moreover, the recent rise of Islamic fundamentalism has increased the rejection of U.S. intervention and presence, first of all with the war in Iraq and most important, with the special relationship it has with Israel. "Many Arabs and Muslims perceive U.S. counterterrorist activities since 9/11 as hostile to all Arabs and Islam" (Cordesman, 2006, p. 2).

When speaking of a special relationship between Israel and the United States, neutral intervention on behalf of Washington towards a positive and peaceful outcome of the conflict has to be ruled out. The intention is not to outline the history of the relationship between the United States and Israel but some key issues will

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[32] The role of the United Nations shall also be analysed but in relation to its involvement with the United States and Israel.

serve as evidence that a current U.S. administration cannot be seen as a guarantee of peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

Israel is viewed and considered as a crucial political and economic ally (PBS, 2006) in the Middle East, through the years and especially during the conflict that Israel is engaged with Palestine. The United States has been the key financial and military partner of Israel, contribution that surpasses any other foreign nation. The fact that various U.S. administrations have provided the governments of Tel Aviv with military aid and financial resources that allow them to grow in military power and possess the funds to continue their unilateral expansion of a Greater Israel, positions the United States as much more of an unconditional ally to Israel than a neutral mediator that could intervene and pressure Israel to fulfil the two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians. Nevertheless, in certain moments during the Arab-Israeli conflict and the current conflict between Israel and Palestine, former U.S. presidents have intervened and have used their political leverages to put pressure on Israel to seek the achievement and fulfilment of peace accords, specifically with the Camp David Accords of 1978, which led to the settlement of differences between Egypt and Israel (Carter, 2006) and where both nations have remained at peace ever since. Moreover, the United States was a strong endorser of the Oslo Accords of 1993, and had the desire to show its support towards peace by having the public signature of the peace agreement on the White House gardens (Cordesman, 2006). Furthermore, the United States under the administration of G.W. Bush recognised that the solution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine lied within the establishment of a two-state solution (PBS, 2006), declaration that made him the first U.S. president to publicly endorse the coexistence of both an Israeli and Palestinian state.

The United States more than being a third party actor that has been able to push both conflicting actors to the negotiation table, its presence or pressure that it has been able to inflict has affected the behaviour of Israel to ease the use of violence and delay the further expansion of the settlements (Aranda & Palma, 2016), especially in the West Bank. On the other hand when pressure from the United States is put on the Palestinian Authority, since Washington does not see Hamas an actor to negotiate or to hold talks with, the PA has called for ceasefires. The cessation of violent activities by both Israelis and Palestinians can be granted to U.S. intervention, where one can see a return of the *status quo*, situation that in the end Washington is much more comfortable with and allows Israel to continue prolonging the conflict.

Moreover, the relationship with Israel and the United States deepens because Tel Aviv exports itself as the most authentic and only democracy in the Middle East (Ruebner, 2017), and fits into Washington's foreign policy of being the promoter and grantor of peace, democracy, the prosperity of economic capitalism and the respect of human rights. Since the United States has a long history of not negotiating with terrorists and sees the corruption that corrodes the Palestinian Authority (Aranda & Palma, 2016), it has always inclined to favour Israeli demands over the ones that could originate from the Palestinian resistance. The special relationship between Washington and Tel Aviv not only deepens the conflict and the very structure of the asymmetry (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) between Israel and Palestine but also strips the United States of any type of neutrality it could have in a future negotiation process, situation that has left the Palestinian Authority with the choice of not to trust or even rely on the United States. Not only has the United States showed its "special treatment" towards Israel by vetoing countless UN Security Council Resolutions, "where Israeli interests are advanced and protected from international actions by U.S. support, including a guaranteed veto in the UN Security Council" (Chamie, 2015, p. 4) and with the Obama administration being responsible of signing a 38 billion dollar aid deal to Israel (Louwerse, 2017), which is the largest aid deal in human history. With a relationship like this it is difficult to imagine that the U.S. will change its policy towards Israel and force it to end the conflict.

Furthermore, the U.S. support to the Israeli state is also found in the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which is the Jewish lobby group in the American Congress. The power of the lobby has been able to mould U.S. foreign policy within the Middle East, serving Israeli interests and has to some extent influenced the behaviour of Washington towards the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians (Plitnick, 2014). Since the U.S. seeks peace in the Middle East for the fulfilment of their interests in the region, they have found an ally in the Israeli government as a bridge towards the consecution of their geopolitical goals. Moreover, with the U.S. invasion in Iraq and its war on terror, especially towards Islam, the relationship with Israel has grown closer together and has caused an increase towards a sentiment of suspicion and mistrust towards Washington by other Arab nations, especially towards Palestine. Its financial and military aid towards Israel in the conflict with Palestine and its inaction towards putting an end to the occupation of Palestine have created a greater environment of instability in the region. Under this scenario, the AIPAC insists in deepening the relationship between Americans and Jews, since they share democratic values and they stand together against terrorism. Therefore,

the lobby and the U.S. government stand together in regards to Israel and leave Palestine on its own (Aranda & Palma, 2016). Furthermore, with the strong influence and money that the lobby moves, it will be difficult that the U.S. will ever become a neutral third party actor in any future peace process. The reason behind this is that the U.S. feels morally committed to aid the Israeli state and to maintain its existence through time, hence the military support Washington has provided to Tel Aviv to secure its borders and contain threats.

Finally, the reason why the United States cannot no be considered as the neutral and determining actor to push both actors to the negotiation table, even though it has the power to do so, lies within the current administration of President Donald Trump, by recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017 (BBC, 2017) and strongly manifested the intention of moving the U.S. embassy to the historic city. This recognition was the tipping point to any doubt that was left regarding neutrality and has stripped Washington from all kind of credibility as a reliable third party actor in terms of mediation and facilitation to end the conflict. The declaration has undermined Washington's interests in the region and increases the security risks towards the U.S. and Israel. This is the first US president that recognises and touches upon the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel (Smith, 2017). This action once again modified the behaviour of the main actors of the conflict. Recognising Jerusalem gives Israel the green light to continue their expansion policy in the West Bank, deepening the instauration of an apartheid regime in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and completely secure the city of Jerusalem, denying any type of access to Palestinians. In regards to the Palestinians, the recognition of Jerusalem as the sole capital of Israel, leads to the increase of the hatred within the Palestinians towards the Israelis and to the United States and fuels more violence and insurgency, throwing away any possibility of further peace talks from the Palestinian Authority with Tel Aviv and Washington, and provokes a call to violence from the Palestinian insurgency groups to lose all hope in negotiation talks and seek the armed struggle as the only way to the establishment of Palestinian statehood. Scenario that leads to a further deepening of the confrontation stage (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) and leaving it at a state of prolonged stalemate. To a certain extent Barvani (2017) suggests that the U.S. should have imposed a peace plan under a solid negotiating framework to get Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate, since he believes that imposition of peace is the only way to solve the current conflict. The problem that the conflict faces is that throughout this section is that Washington is too committed with Israel and signs of a peace imposition are unlikely to happen.

Therefore, the United States at the present moment has to be discarded as the actor that can push the conflict towards peace and has been responsible of deepening the power structure in favour of Israel, making the asymmetry between Palestinians and Israel even more unbalanced.

B. The role of the United Nations

The participation of the United States as a third party actor cannot be seen without referring to the relationship that Washington has with the **United Nations**[33]. The closet shift in U.S. foreign policy came with the Barack Obama administrations, which pledged (Van Nergi, 2012) to help and put an end to the conflict between Israel and Palestine. This can be evidenced in the events within the United Nations during the end of 2016. UN Security Council Resolution 2334, condemned the on-going Israeli settlement project in the Occupied Palestinian territories, stating that Israel's settlements had absolutely no legal validity and were a violation of international law (UN, 2016). Instead of using its traditional veto power, the U.S. abstained (Louwerse. 2017), provoking an international reaction of shock, which did not go down well in the Netanyahu administration. Why was this a shock? "The simple truth is that for as long as Israel has been a member of this institution, Israel has been treated differently from other nations at the United Nations" (Ibid, p. 1). This has its grounding in the horrors suffered by the Jews during the Nazi regime, which has given the Israeli and Jewish community a seal of untouchables and what occurs within their land and borders is under the concept of security and peace.

Louwerse (2017), goes into further detail; "the General Assembly adopted in 1975, with the support of the majority of the Member States, officially determining that, Zionism is a form of racism and the same was done in 2016" (Ibid, p. 2). This means that the Israeli expansion of its territory under the Zionist ideology, which is the backbone for the security and the survival of the Israeli state and its people (Sternberg, 2012), has in fact adopted a racist attitude towards the Palestinians and furthermore, applied a new expression of apartheid towards the Palestinian

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[33] The United Nations as a third party actor towards the evolution of the conflict towards a peaceful negotiation process shall not be fully addressed, since it compromises the political will and policies of various states that are still divided in regards to the conflict. Moreover, because not every member state of the United Nations has recognised Palestine as an independent state. Therefore, the research looks briefly into the UN in regards to its relationship with the United States and how it has behaved towards Israel's actions in the conflict with Palestine.

community. "Apartheid is not a future risk but a present reality" (Ibid, p. 3). This is evidenced in Israel's system of control in the West Bank, Jerusalem and in the Gaza Strip, where it has isolated the Palestinians and denied them access to move within the Palestinian territories or to even enter East Jerusalem, which is considered the capital of Palestine. During the on-going conflict between Israel and Palestine, the United Nations has adopted 18 resolutions that condemn Israeli actions against Palestine and 12 resolutions have been also adopted in the Human Rights Council. Nevertheless, the UN has not applied any strong sanctions or has taken action to intervene in the crisis that the conflict has provoked and is criticised still for not being more effective against Israeli foreign and internal policy.

Samantha Powers, ex U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, has been one of the most critical ambassadors to the privileged treatment that Israel receives at the U.N., which has been historically supported by U.S. vetoes. Powers just like former U.S. president Jimmy Carter (2006), stated what Israel is doing in Palestine is a new form of apartheid and it is not only the duty of the a state but of the whole international community to avoid the resurrection of such a crime (Louwerse, 2017). This statement has also had a negative reception, especially in the AIPAC and in the Israeli government, since clamming such actions on Israel's behalf is sparking an anti-Semitic sentiment. One must be clear about this, there is no apartheid within Israel (Carter, 2006), it is within Palestine where the Israeli government and IDF have imposed segregation. Apartheid has been Israel's solution to the conflict, replacing it for any peaceful negotiation and it has become the way to isolate and defeat Palestine. This leaves the Palestinians with basically no chance of movement or communication with each other in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, giving Israel a strategic position to attack Palestinians within their own territory and avoiding the conflict to penetrate on Israeli grounds. Furthermore, the reality of apartheid in Palestine is so crude and cannot be compared to what occurred in South Africa, since the Israeli government has not included the Palestinians as part of their work force (Louwerse, 2017); instead, they wish to get rid of the Palestinian burden in their pursuit of the establishment of the Greater Israel. "Palestinians are deprived of basic human rights, their land has been occupied, then confiscated, then colonised by the Israeli settlers" (Carter & Democracy Now, 2006, p. 2). The continuous unilateral control and colonisation process by Israel in Palestinian territory has become the primary obstacle to reach a comprehensive peace agreement between both actors.
The United Nations has been blamed (Louwerse, 2017) by showing a passive attitude that has allowed the new apartheid. Moreover, UN Security Council

Resolutions 106 and 181, failed in finding a solution to the territorial partition of Palestine, moreover, they were unable to resolve the immediate tension and conflict that rose between Arabs and Jews within the territories of Palestine, favouring the Zionist movement, which led to the creation and independence of Israel in 1948. Therefore, there is a debt from the UN towards the people of Palestine and recognition of failure to secure peace in the region. "The 1948 war ended with the drawing of armistice liens and Israel is thus the only country in history to have attained membership of the United Nations while failing to specify its legal borders. At the United Nations, the Arab states cogently argued that admitting Israel would constitute condoning by a solemn act the United Nations, the right of conquest" (Ibid, p. 5), situation that increased with the acquisitions of 1967 and with the expulsion of over 750,000 Palestinians that did not have the right to return to their land, this has continued and intensified with the occupation of the West Bank.

One must also refer to UN Resolution 242, which was adopted after the War of 1967, which rejects the acquisition of any territory by war, statement that is also present in Article 2 of the United Nations Charter. Therefore, the resolution called for an immediate withdrawal of Israel from the newly occupied territories and to solve the issue of expelled Palestinian refugees. Furthermore, all the Arab neighbours of Israel have endorsed the two-state solution and even Hamas has shown itself in favour of this resolution. Here is were the United Nations and the United States have failed to act a third party actor, since the have "pardoned" and allowed Israel to ignore the resolution and have not applied any type of compromising pressure towards the Israeli administrations to fulfil the execution and respect of international law. "The United States has used its U.N. Security Council veto more than forty times to block resolutions critical of Israel. Some of these vetoes have brought international discredit on the United States, and there is little doubt that the lack of a persistent effort to resolve the Palestinian issue is a major source of anti-American sentiment and terrorist activity through the Middle East and the Islamic World" (Carter, 2006, p. 209-210).

Therefore, it is fair to conclude in regards to the United Nations as a third actor, is that it still has much more to do for the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, and to gain the complete confidence of Palestine. Even though "for decades the international community has been virtually unanimous in its understanding that the Israel-Palestine conflict ought to be resolved within the legal parameters of a two-state settlement along the June 4, 1967 borders, with the establishment of a viable

Palestinian state in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and in East Jerusalem" (Louwerse, 2017, p. 6). Moreover, on November 29 2012, the General Assembly approved Resolution 67/19, where Palestine was accepted as a non-observant member, recognising the boundaries previous to the war if 1967, with this act the UN changed the name Palestine to the State of Palestine and the same was done by Abbas in Ramallah (Aranda & Palma. 2016). For this reason, small steps have been taken in the United Nations in favour of Palestinian statehood but still the respect of the resolutions that have been approved are an unresolved issue and leaves the Palestinians with a bitter taste in regards to the real power that the United Nations has to pressure Israel and solve the conflict between them.

C. The European Union as a third party actor

The European Union has been selected as a potential third party actor that can have a significant amount of influence on the resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, taking the conflicted from the deadlock confrontation phase to a new round of promising and concrete negotiations and move towards the establishment of sustainable peace (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) since it has been characterised as a promoter and exporter of peace favouring diplomacy as a method of conflict resolution, instead of the use of force. Looking at Youngs (2014), the EU is conscious that the conflict and its resolution requires a rethink, ceasefires and the *status quo* are not the ideal scenario for either Palestine or Israel, plus he believes that the European Union has shown the necessary willingness to act and intervene in the establishment of peace. The problem is that a EU intervention has been modest and has not imposed any pressure on Israel to negotiate; nevertheless there is still some room for the EU to increase its influence.

The main role that the European Union has played in the conflict has been reshaping and boosting Palestinian institutions, this follows the United Nations intentions of 2011, to prepare the Palestinian Authority with solid institutions so it could be ready for statehood. Aiding the Palestinian in this aspect could position them as a serious actor when the opportunity comes to negotiate with Israel, especially under an Israeli Labour Administration. The construction and fostering of democratic and transparent institutions for Palestine, in replacement of their politically fractured and dysfunctional ones, is seen as a means to an end for a future negotiation process but at the same time to prepare Palestine for an eventual recognition of statehood. EU intervention and aid could help restructure and strengthen the already weakened Palestinian

Authority and present it as a solid negotiation partner if a new peace talks come in the horizon once again. On the other hand, the EU still sees Hamas (Cordesman, 2006) as an obstacle to any further progress towards peace, since it has labelled it as a terrorist organisation and favours its disarming, towards the formation of a unionist government with Fatah, where a an inclusive and democratic Palestinian government would eventually contribute to the holding of future peace talks. Furthermore, Youngs (2014) strongly believes if the EU is able to play its cards correctly within the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian Authority could eventually take control of the Strip, establishing a ceasefire with Hamas, and could attract Israeli attention in a positive manner, leading them to reconsider their blockade and isolation towards Gaza. Moreover, the EU has considered looking into playing a role in monitoring the Gaza-Egypt border, which could show greater transparency towards Israel and avoid the trafficking of weapons. This would allow the intervention of a neutral actor in security the future Israeli-Palestinian borders and would put an end to the exchange of fire between the IDF and Hamas. Moreover, it would also limit the violation of human rights portrayed by the Israeli forces on Palestinians. The only negative effect of the EU intervening in Gaza with the end to disarm Hamas, is that it would leave the Palestinians without a strong insurgent group that could damage Israel if Tel Aviv does not show any type of political will or disposition (Aranda & Palma, 2016) towards the establishment of Palestinian statehood. A scenario with this potential outcome would end up favouring the Israelis over the Palestinians.

As it has been exposed with the interventions of the United Nations and the United States, third party actors in the conflict has been rather shy and this also applies to the European Union, especially because it has been criticised for not having a strong reaction towards the Israeli attacks on Gaza, although "some EU member states have revoked licences for arms sales to Israel, but no other measures have been contemplated" (Youngs, 2014, p. 7). Moreover, the EU has imposed bans on Israeli produces that originate from the Occupied Territories (Lynfield, 2015) but these efforts have been insufficient to position the EU, at the current moment, as a relevant third actor that can influence or pressure Israel towards the reopening of Gaza, to end the settlement expansion in the West Bank, and come to terms with the Palestinian Authority.

The intervention of the European Union in the conflict and its intentions with the Palestinians also has an effect on the behaviour of the Israeli government; Israel when it feels the threat of an effective third actor party, and these apply sanctions on

them or condemn their actions, Israel adopts an attitude of *delegitimisation* and accuses those who are against them to be held responsible of exporting an anti-Israeli sentiment (Youngs, 2014), which has been Israel's oldest trick in the book to shake off international disapproval.

The underlying factor that affects EU intervention to establish the end of the armed conflict and guide it to a negotiation process sponsored by the very European Union as neutral actor is the lack of a united foreign policy. The fact that all 28 Member States since the foundation of the EU have been unable to design and agree upon on a common foreign policy echoes deeply in the case of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Moreover, there is still a long way road to go since only a few of the EU Member States; Sweden (the first western European nation to do so), Malta, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania (The Guardian, 2014) have recognised the Palestinian state.

Moreover, the problem the European Union faces to consolidate itself as the most favourable third party towards the solution of the Israel-Palestine conflict, is that the EU is led by Germany (Cohen, 2017), and this strongly complicates the drafting and development of a united foreign policy that could pressure and push Israel out of the conflict and lead it to negotiate with the Palestinians. Given Germany's past with Israel and its population (Cohen, 2017), any type of action presented by the EU and seeks to pressure Israel will cause strong negative reaction and receive heavy criticism from Tel Aviv, creating greater tension between the Bloc and Israel. Most likely, Israel would seek the aid of the United States to convince the European Union to back down from any type of intentions that would jeopardise Israeli victories or affect their objectives of establishing a Greater Israel.

The only viable solution that could change the course and status of the European Union as a serious and committed third party actor would be if all EU Member States draft a negotiation plan and impose it on Israel and Palestine to solve the conflict. *Imposition is the only way that the conflict would evolve to a peace accord and would respond to our research question and our first hypothesis, that the conflict between Israel* and *Palestine can be solved with the intervention of a foreign actor*. Just like the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia Barnavi (2017), states that asymmetric warfare can only find a solution when there is a settlement applied and virtually imposed by international pressure. If there would have been no intervention in the Balkans, Serbs and Croats would still be fighting and the level of atrocities would be impossible to

account for. The use of external third party force was needed, and the imposition of the Dayton Accords of 1995[34], were the only way to end the massacre, injustices and especially the conflict.

The European Union alongside with the United States, The United Nations and Russia are part of "The Quartet"[35], which has also tried to position itself towards the resolution of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. It strongly supports the two-state solution and has designed a "Road Map" for peace, which consists in a series of benchmarks that have to be met between Palestinians and Israelis towards the establishment of the Palestinian state and the mutual commitment to achieve peace between them (Otterman, 2005). Furthermore, it calls upon Israel to dismantle its settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and the Palestinians must eradicate terrorism and build upon a democratic and accountable government. Here is where there has been an assistance and intervention of the European Union. Up until now Israel has not returned the Occupied Palestinian Territories, since the borders between Palestine and Israel remain under the status of post-1967, and the Israelis have continued their settlement expansion, due to their low-intensity conflicts with Hamas. Therefore, the plans mapped by the Quartet have also been unsuccessful in positioning itself as facilitator to the end of the conflict. Plus one cannot forget the conflicting interests that Russia and the United States have in the Middle East, making it extremely difficult to be absolutely neutral in regards to the Palestinian conflict with the Israelis.

The hope for a stronger third actor that could pressure Israel and push them towards a future negotiation still lies in the hands of the European Union, since it is one of the main trading partners of Israel (Plitnick, 2014). Furthermore, several financial

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[34] The Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), Dayton Accords, Paris Protocol or Dayton-Paris Agreement, is the peace agreement reached at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, United States, in November 1995, and formally signed in Paris on 14 December 1995. These accords put an end to the three-year-long Bosnian War.
Source: https://www.osce.org/bih/126173.

[35] "The Quartet founded in 2002, consists of the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Russia. Its mandate is to help mediate Middle East peace negotiations and to support Palestinian economic development and institution-building in preparation for eventual statehood. It meets regularly at the level of the Quartet Principals (United Nations Secretary General, United States Secretary of State, Foreign Minister of Russia, and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) and the Quartet Special Envoys".
Source: http://www.quartetrep.org/category.php?id=a374y41844Ya374&c_type=1,

institutions have halted their businesses with Israeli counterparts that have interests in the Occupied Territories. Unfortunately, the banning of products and the end of private businesses towards Israel are not enough to even isolate Israel or to change the course of action regarding the settlements and occupation. More force and pressure has to be applied. For this reason, the route towards success lies in weakening Israel diplomatically and politically, but that role cannot be played by the United States, instead, it should come from the European Union under a strong and united foreign policy. Israel knows it needs Europe and the latter will have to study well its steps in the near future to provoke a significant impact on the resolution of the conflict. "Should cases against Israel reach the International Criminal Court, European states will eventually cut commercial ties to Israel and push the European Union to start taking concrete steps of its own" (Ibid, p. 10). Furthermore, Russia could even come into play due to its involvement in the Syrian War and if successful it could position itself as a determining actor that can effectively force and impose peace in the conflict. Formerly this was the United States' role and it has lost the trust of the Arab Nations and especially of the Palestinians under the current Trump administration.

To conclude, this section has enlightened and shown that the resolution of conflict between Israel and Palestine does not count with a strong and neutral third party actor that can modify the course of the very conflict and lead it to a negotiation process. Under this scenario our **research question**: *to what extent could the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine reach a peaceful accord*? Still lacks a concrete and promising answer, since the investigation considered the role and intervention of third party actors as a condition to push the conflict out of confrontation towards negotiation and peace, the actors that have been described are far from doing so, even if the conflict is defined by a constant and latent state of deadlock, there is not enough willingness from them to intervene, scenario that clashes with Israel's unwillingness to negotiate and to comply to international law (Cohen, 2017). A tentative solution lies still within the international community, where Cohen (2017) sees that there is a responsibility upon Israel's Western allies who have deepened the asymmetry between Israel and Palestine and they are the only actors who can mobilise and pressure Israel to modify its political will to renegotiate, the same has to be done with the Palestinians convincing the insurgency that violence is not the option, "the parties have to be approached by radical manners; a setting of parameters for the negotiations by the UN Security Council, tough brokerage, and security guarantees, as well as concrete steps in case of non-

cooperation" (Cohen, 2017, p. 20). It is under this last scenario that the **first** hypothesis could be fulfilled, where *the conflict could come to an end because of deadlock and the intervention of foreign intervention*. If this does not happen then the hypothesis falls under a negative response, since third party actors do not contribute to the end of the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine, where peace is far from being established, since Israel is still position of the dominating actor within the asymmetry, accumulating significant power in the structure, which is favoured by its relationship with the United States and with the current lack of foreign actors that can challenge this. Although the situation seems unfavourable for the Palestinians, there is still one more option to analyse.

7. A change in the asymmetry: the delegitimisation of Israel

Up until now various aspects of the conflict between Israel and Palestine have been analysed with the objective of reaching a positive outcome in relation to the **research question**: *to what extent could the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine reach a peaceful accord*? It seems that so far there has been no success in showing Gallo & Marzano's (2009) theory that asymmetric conflict does lead to a peace accord for the case of Israel and Palestine, situation that differs from the two previous studies of Northern Ireland and Colombia. It seems that this conflict is faced with an atypical expression of asymmetric conflict where the dominant state actor: Israel, is on its path to winning this war and has reversed the logic of the insurgents becoming the victorious. The on-going conflict between Israel and Palestine shows no signs of a potential reverse victory in the power structure for the Palestinians. Furthermore, it is reasonable to admit that the struggle on the battlefield has not led to significant military victories for the Palestinians, positioning them in a scenario where they can bend the political will (Mack, 1975) (Cohen, 2017) of Israel and push them to negotiate, obtaining a peace accord that can satisfy their territorial demands and their desire of independence. Therefore, the current scenario is a conflict stuck in a confrontation stage (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) and characterised by deadlock stalemate (Zartman, 2001). Under this reality, the following question comes to mind: *is everything lost for the Palestinian cause of statehood and the achievement of peace in this asymmetric conflic*t? The answer to this question is, not yet.

Throughout this investigation Gallo & Marzano (2009) have been used as the basis for the solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, where the central idea of

this theory is that the insurgent actor within the conflict is able to develop new tactics, apply unconventional methods (Lele, 2014), elements of surprise and even the use terrorism, are techniques that seek to defeat the political and military force (Mack, 1975) of the dominant actor. Moreover, the immediate thoughts that come to mind when asymmetric conflict theory is applied are the concepts of violence and aggression, as the most common and useful methods to achieve the objectives of the insurgent groups. Nevertheless, one must think outside these two concepts as the only methods and resources that insurgents have to produce a significant change in the asymmetry. Insurgents must always find ways to change their tactics, their strategies, and most important learn how to evolve and adapt to new technologies or resources that can aid them to take advantage over their adversary (Lele, 2014). Taking these ideas into consideration, it is important to go back to a point that was shortly addressed in the section regarding the tactics of the actors of this conflict.

Under the leadership of former Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, one of the tactics that was been applied to unbalance the structure of the asymmetry with Israel was through the use of mass media communication. Arafat saw in mass media communication a method to show the world the Palestinian intentions to shift the conflict towards a negotiation process, by publicly declaring ceasefires and condemning Israeli injustices. This tactic opens a new front in the diplomatic struggle of the Palestinians to undermine Israeli objectives. Therefore, Palestine's hope to revert the asymmetry lies in conducting a mass media conflict directed towards the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) and towards the Israeli government, questioning the legitimacy (Vaknin-Gill, 2017) of both bodies and their actions, which seek to protect the Israeli citizens, their borders and their sovereignty.

This translates into a *delegitimation* campaign against Israel. The Palestinians, especially the Palestinian Authority, have seen that the armed conflict at the very moment cannot result in positive victory for Palestine, and have sought the achievement of their objectives through a new expression of the conflict supported by mass media communication and through social media. Attracting the attention of the international arena towards public diplomacy and reaching out to civil society are the new targets the Palestinian Authority has to aim for. Since the Palestinians have been practically isolated from each other and no foreign aid that can arm them is allowed into their territories, plus they do not have the means to either acquire or build new weapons technology that can inflict significant damage to the IDF. For this reason, they have to publicly expose the mistreatment, the injustices, the

segregation, and the use of force that Israel applies in the West Bank, Jerusalem and in the Gaza Strip. This *delegitimitation* campaign is the new weapon that Palestine has to embrace to pave its path towards statehood. Looking once again at Gallo & Marzano (2009), the confrontation phase does not necessarily have to be defined by violence and terror tactics, there is also room for political mobilisation and non-violent confrontation, therefore, in the words of Vaknin-Gill (2017) an internationalisation of the conflict is what Palestine has to aim for, seeking the support and increase of empathy towards the Palestinian struggle so that the international community pressures Israel and can force a negotiation without Palestine insisting directly towards Israel and avoid a repetition of the failure of Oslo.

The current times, with the use and boom of social media and mass communication favour the Palestinians because the new generations have gone beyond the support of wars and reject the idea that military force solves conflicts, since they only create greater damage to the population, affecting their lives and rights and they see that peace and the promotion of human rights are the way to solve conflicts. Therefore, Palestinians have to attack Israel's Achilles heel: public perception and expose them to the international arena (Vaknin-Gill, 2017). The Palestinians have to conduct a "media warfare aimed at depriving the IDF of the legitimacy to operate at its full potential in its quest to protect Israel and its citizens. Media and consciousness manipulations, based on the underlying sympathy extended to an underdog" (Vaknin-Gill, 2017, p. 1) can effectively affect the way Israel operations during the conflict and cause on impact on the international arena favouring the Palestinians. "Some times the non-state actors understand that it is not possible to physically defeat the military forces of the state authority and new and innovative ways have to be sought" (Lele, 2014, p. 108) and this is what the Palestinians through Fatah and the PA are doing. A physiological defeat (Mack, 1975) of Israel is what the Palestinians through this campaign should seek.

It is extremely important to clarify that not all Palestinians are active within the *delegitimisation* movement and have renounced to their ideals, many still believe that the Israeli state should not exist but they mask this objective with the exposure of Israeli actions towards the Palestinian population, striving for equal treatment and freedom. This is why it is important that they target Western societies, human rights organisation and NGO's that can empathise with the Palestinian cause. "A particularly successful form of camouflage is the adoption of the language of liberal values and in the movement's essential abduction of the human rights discourse and

infiltrating minority causes for one's own needs" (Ibid, 2017, p. 3). Although it might sound Machiavellian but this is what the Palestinians have to do to create psychological and political damage (Mack, 1975) (Dunne, García-Alonso, Levine & Smith, 2006) towards Israel, even if they have to cover up their beliefs and their values in order to justify their battles. If the Palestinians are able to exploit the minorities and that their message gets across to the main actors and promoters of human rights in the West, they will be able to attract their attention and support, which could lead to strong international pressure against Israel. For this reason, the Palestinians do not have to engage in a full military conflict with Israel (although if attacked there is no doubt that some of the militia groups and freedom fighters in Palestine will retaliate), one has to constantly expose Israel to the public eye and wait for the international community to react, pressuring Israel to dialogue with Palestine, eventually pushing and forcing them to the negotiation table.

Examples of these actions can be seen in "the anti-Israeli appeals to international institutions such as the United Nations, the Human Rights Council, the International Court of Justice, Interpol, WHO, the International Telecommunication Organisation and the FIFA" (Vaknin-Gill, 2017, p.4). The objective is to reach a significant amount of neutral organisations that could come aid the Palestinian struggle, pressure Israel (even cut ties with them) to stop its occupation of Palestine and seek a peace accord. Success of this campaign can be seen with the International Court of Justice (Aranda & Palma, 2016), which has directly addressed Israel, calling it to stop the construction of the wall in the West Bank and dismantle all of its occupation in the Palestinian territories. Furthermore, it has also condemned and rejected, through Article 51 of the United Nations, the Israeli excuse that the wall was built as a mechanism of self-defence.

The *delegitimisation* campaign is a clear attempt on behalf of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation to obtain the international recognition of the Palestinian state (Beck, 2015), and is also in tune with "Initiative 194", which aims to make Palestine the 194th member state of the United Nations. Palestine has obtained significant victories in this field, since it has become a non-member observer within the United Nations and as of April 2015, Palestine is a full member of the International Criminal Court (Beck, 2015). This campaign of *delegitimisation* and "Initiative 194" have been strongly rejected by Israel and has sought to delegitimise Palestine as well, situation that leads to an evolution to the conflict, a turning point in the asymmetry, where the battles are being fought through mass media communication, social media, within

institutions and international forums. In this sense the asymmetry changes and the power structure and influence can shift either way. This is where Palestine has to play its cards wisely. Moreover, Israel has attempted to shift the international attention away from these campaigns and seeks to be seen as a guardian of the security of the Middle East instead of a colonial oppressor by exposing the dangerous threat that Iran poses to the region (Beck, 2015).

This new strategy with use of mass media and reaching out to the international community, provides the Palestinian people a sort of protection from being exposed on the battlefield, and could eventually force the IDF to be much more cautious in its operations, which could lead to a cease of military actions. This would also have an effect on future negotiations or dialogues between since Israel and Palestine, since the latter would continue to seek support abroad and would not give into political conditions imposed by Israel like it was done in Oslo. A *delegitimisation* strategy will definitely have an effect on Israel's policies and modifying its course of action within the conflict, where its unilateral maneuverers and the use of brutal violence would become quite difficult to justify to the public and international eye and risks to be exposed legally, culturally, in academia and especially in the realm of human rights. If the Palestinians were criticised because of their impulses and miscalculations during the Second Intifada because they underestimated the Israeli forces, then now this mistake appears on Israel's behalf. Israel has committed the error of not assessing and foreseeing (Dunne, García-Alonso, Levine & Smith, 2006) a change of tactics within the Palestinians and was left with the idea that they would only conduct the same level of attacks from the Gaza Strip through Hamas and that the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank had no negotiating power.

Therefore, Palestine's new strategy in this conflict under a campaign of *delegitimisation* is a sign of adaptation and evolution in the asymmetry and it appears as the only viable resource that the Palestinians would have to achieve their goals. So far Israel has acquired knowledge of the movement, under the policies of the Israeli Strategic Affairs Minister Gilad Erdab (Vaknin-Gill, 2017), who has been leading the counteroffensive but knowing how fast news and social media works nowadays, Israel might have a slight disadvantage. For this reason, if Palestine can continue to resist Israel's domination and they show strong determination to win this conflict through a non-violent confrontation with the help of mass media communication, the conflict could evolve once again from the confrontation stage to a new negotiation phase (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) under the intervention and impact

of third actors. "The delegitimisation campaign is yet another stage in the evolution of the struggle against Israel, where aggressive tactics are no longer regarded as legitimate tools in Western civilisation" (Vaknin-Gill, 2017, p. 5).

This new tactic within the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine could fulfil the **second hypothesis** of the research: *Palestine's most viable option is to develop a tactic of non-violent confrontation to delegitimise Israel*. The delegitimisation campaign makes sense to the expression of non-violent confrontation within asymmetric conflicts (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) and it is seen as a new way to create an alternative perception (Vaknin-Gill, 2017) of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, where the latter is renouncing to violent confrontation and tactics that have not been useful and beneficial in the battlefield. This means that the majority of the Palestinians would renounce to violence and seek to attract foreign actors to intervene and pressure Israel, resulting in the defeat of the psychological and political will (Mack, 1975) of Israel. This would lead the main research question of the investigation to end in a positive outcome, where asymmetric conflict could effectively evolve into a new negotiation process that actually includes both hypotheses that have been selected: where there is an intervention of a foreign actor to solve the conflict combined with a non-violent confrontation from the Palestinians. The only problem comes into play is the variable of time, how much time does Palestine have until the international community reacts and intervenes? Since it seems that there is no rush within the international community (Hijab, 2018) to aid Palestine. Furthermore, how much time will it take Israel to occupy the rest of the West Bank? If this last scenario happens then it would be much more difficult for a *delegitimisation* campaign to produce the desired effects. These are still questions that must be resolved with the evolution of the conflict.

Another factor that has to be taken into consideration and could aid the *delegitimisation* of Israel, is the fact that Palestinians have a much higher birth rate than Israelis. The Palestinian birth rate is 4.7% annually (Carter, 2006), which is the highest in the world. Therefore, half of the citizens in Gaza are 15 years old or even less, with Israel isolating Gaza and inflicting brutal force on the young Palestinian population also creates a negative image of Israel in relation to the respect and guarantee of human rights and would provoke further international condemnation, which could lead to an isolation of Israel. The accelerated growth of the Palestinian population in relation to the Israelis, would position them in the next 8 years with a majority over the Israelis, situation that would be difficult to contain in the closed and

occupied Palestinian territories. Moreover, since over 700,000 Palestinians were expelled from the former Palestinian territories since the creation of the Israeli state and the victories of the Six Day War, the number of Palestinians around the globe who do not have the right to return to their mother land has increased to 4 million, situation that Israel opposes to since it would create a majority of Arab Palestinians in the region, complicating the continuation of the Jewish state. A successful *delegitimisation* campaign could see the fulfilment of this objective and if the Palestinian refugees would be allowed to return, then Israel would be not only pressured by the international community to negotiate but also by the rising Palestinian population.

Finally, president Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017 also plays an interesting card for the Palestinians. During the summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul, Turkey, on December 13, 2017, Muslim leaders condemned the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, provoking a wave of rejection in most of the Muslim nations, where Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan stated that the U.S. move had forfeited its role as a broker in efforts to bring the conflict between Israel and Palestine to an end (Kucukgocmen, 2017). Furthermore, the United States had lost credibility, neutrality and cannot be seen as a trusted mediator for the resolution of the conflict or a sponsor of peace. The U.S. declaration on Jerusalem has put a threat on international peace and security, affecting directly the relations between Washington and the neighbouring nations of Israel, situation that will lead to an increase of anti-Americanism and anti-Israeli sentiments in the region, leading to the rise of extremisms and terror. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas responded to Trump's recognition of Jerusalem by stating that Jerusalem would always be the capital of Palestine (Kucukgocmen. 2017) and that international law had been violated, and that the United States is now biased in favour of Israel. Therefore, the summit of the OIC concluded with an act of defiance towards Israel and the United States by making an international call for all states to recognise East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. "There is only one option left, and that is withdrawal to the 1967 border as specified in U.N. Resolution 242 and as promised legally by the Israeli government in the Camp David Accords and the Oslo Agreement and prescribed in the Road Map of the International Quartet" (Carter. 2006).

With the *delegitimisation* campaign and the use of international forums, as platforms to condemn, expose and attract more sympathisers towards the Palestinian cause, Palestine has a new chance of modifying the behaviour and strategies of Israel and could change the perception of how the international community views the conflict and come to the aid of the Palestinians, imposing a negotiation process. As it has been previously mentioned it is all a matter of the variable of time, since the conflict is still characterised by confrontations in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinians have yet to embrace this delegitimisation campaign under a united resistance, up until now it seems that the variable of time has constantly been on the side of Israel.

V. Scenarios and Conclusion

Throughout the whole course of our investigation it has been exposed that the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine has not seen an end in sight, where the conflict remains in a confrontation stage and has not returned to a negotiation phase (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), which makes the establishment of peace quite difficult. Furthermore, intervention of third party actors like the United States, Norway (through Oslo 1993) and the European Union have failed to pressure Israel to move towards the negotiation table and present a peace accord that will stop the violence and work towards the establishment of Palestinian statehood. The power balance within the asymmetric structure has increased significantly and constantly shifted towards Israel (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) (Cohen, 2017), the only moment that the power balance slightly tilted towards Palestine was during the First Intifada (Gallo & Marzano, 2009). In the light of current events, the condition of *military exhaustion* as determining to end the conflict cannot be fully considered since Israel has the might and power at the moment to contain Palestinian insurgency. Moreover, Israel has wisely isolated the Gaza Strip to corner Hamas, to avoid and deter any type of Palestinian insurgency. In the West Bank, there is a weak Palestinian Authority under the command of Fatah seeking negotiations but for the Netanyahu administration there is nothing to negotiate (Cohen, 2017), since the Likud party is determined to annex the whole of the territory (Hijab, 2018). Under these circumstances, Israel is happy with the *status quo* and can tolerate low-intensity attacks from Hamas, while it continues with its expansion of settlements in the West Bank (Palma & Aranda, 2016). Moreover, having Washington's over Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, eliminates the possibility for the United States to position itself as an actor that could eventually pressure Israel to negotiate or to even force them to stop their expansion in the West Bank.

Considering the former points, it is the responsibility of the investigation to sketch out possible scenarios that would address the main research question in regards to what and where the conflict would lead. For this section the findings and sketching of scenarios has been supported with Chamie (2015). Moreover they have been designed to see how the conflict could evolve into five possible and different scenarios considering various elements that have been analysed and exposed during the investigation.

1. The first scenario is a No-Palestine solution. This idea aims towards the establishment of a Greater Israel, which the world is currently witnessing, since it makes sense to the current unilateral expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank (Palma & Aranda, 2016) under the Netanyahu-Likud administration and also to the new apartheid regime that is been imposed over the Palestinians (Carter. 2006). Israel would then become a Jewish nation, having the complete sovereignty over the biblical conception of Israel (Chamie, 2015). This could eventually lead to the increase of the Jewish population in the region, adopting a policy of greater security, removing individuals who are not loyal to the democratic principles of the new Jewish state. Therefore, what would happen to the Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem[36]? The Palestinians would have to be relocated in Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia or other Arab nations and compensated for leaving their homeland (Chamie, 2015). Would this be the only solution to the conflict? No, but Israel's foreign policy is well advanced in this direction, since they have ignored UN resolutions, especially resolution 242, and with no pressure and intervention from third party actors it is a foreseeable scenario. Even though settlements and violation of human rights have been condemned, Israel has not stopped its unilateral policy to annex the rest of the West Bank. This has already caused various condemnations from the international community but we have seen no solid intervention from third party actors to detain this. Moreover, a military reaction from rejection the Arab League or the OIC would not be expected, since they would not be willing to risk a full-scale war with Israel due to its relationship with Washington, which in the end would lead to a much more complex scenario in the Middle East. Finally, in this scenario, there is a shift in the theory of asymmetric conflict, where the state actor or the dominant power has resulted victorious and the insurgent actor is on the losing side, which produces a different result on what is expected from asymmetric conflict theory (Mack, 1975). This scenario would be established under Israeli terms due to Israel's current power domination over Palestine, and if successful in occupying the rest of the West Bank without any foreign intervention to stop them, then the Greater Israel could become a reality. Therefore, the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine would not lead to a peaceful negotiation process; instead it leads to a state of complete domination on behalf of Israel.

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[36] The Gaza Strip is not taken into consideration since its not part of the biblical and historic Israel.

2. A second scenario is based upon some of the elements of the previous scenario. Supposing that Israel adopts a much more diplomatic, open and inclusive attitude towards Palestine. Although they are still the dominant power in the asymmetric relation (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), they opt for a one-state solution. Once again, Chamie (2015) proposes a secular, democratic Israeli-Palestinian nation, including the whole of the territories under the Israeli sovereignty and those under the rule of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. In this scenario all citizens, no matter if they are Jewish, Muslims or Christians receive equal and just treatment, where all their rights are recognised. Demographically, the population of this new state would reach 13 million inhabitants (Chamie, 2015), but there is no reference to the problem of the return of Palestinian refugees. This means, that the one-state solution would be under Israeli terms and conditions, since an eventual return of Palestinian refugees would unbalance the number of Israeli citizens, and constitute a Palestinian-orientated state, leading to the collapse of the newly established state. On the other hand, it would also be a scenario that the Palestinians would not accept because due to the refugee problems but overall, a joint state would include the complexities of reconciliation since it would be hard to mend the scars and injustices from the past, a mentality of forgiveness takes time to develop. An environment of mistrust would be difficult to overcome due to the consequences that the conflict has brought on both sides of the population that would integrate this new state. Moreover, this newly established state would require a leader that would be able to unite and reconcile the differences between Israelis and Palestinian, this task is almost as difficult as the one Nelson Mandela had to face when he became the president of the new South Africa after a regime of Apartheid. Neither Israeli Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu nor Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas would be the leader for the one-state solution (Cordesman, 2006). Furthermore, a one-state solution contradicts the pillars of Zionism (Chamie, 2015), since Jewishness is the essence of the state identity, therefore having a mixed Israel would be unacceptable for the radical and conservative population of Israel. Finally, this second scenario would answer the **research question** regarding if asymmetric conflict leads in theory to peaceful solution, since it avoids further conflict and bloodshed but the questions that immediately comes up is; who would push towards this one-state solution? Who would supervise the fulfilment, the guarantee and respect towards human rights? And how would peace be guaranteed? Therefore, this

scenario could collapse rapidly because it would not respond to the demand of Palestinian statehood and most likely it would be directed by Israeli policies, generating a greater climate of insecurity where the conflict could erupt once again.

3. A third scenario could be drawn under the concept of a three-state solution. Here the involvement and participation of third party actors would come into play. According to Chamie (2015) these actors would have to be Egypt and Jordan, naming this scenario the Egyptian-Jordanian solution. The first question that first comes to mind is, why these two nations would have to be part of the solution? It must not be forgotten that the Gaza Strip was previously under Egyptian sovereignty and taken from them in the Six Day War 1967 (Palma & Aranda, 2016), the same happened with the West Bank and East Jerusalem that were under Jordanian control. Therefore, this three-state solution (Chamie, 2015) would include Israel, Egypt and Jordan, where the Gaza Strip returns to Egypt and the West Bank to Jordan, which resembles the division of the territory as it was from 1949 until the consequences and occupation of the land from the Six Day War. Once again, the question must be asked, would this scenario work? First of all it would be a result of tedious diplomatic negotiations and is only favoured because Cairo and Amman have peace accords with Israel. Second, since the Gaza Strip and the West Bank would be under Egyptian and Jordanian sovereignty, both Arab nations could boost the economy and the living conditions of the former Palestinian territories (Chamie, 2015). A return to this scenario would leave a bitter taste for the Palestinians in regards to their historic struggle to reclaim their land and establish an independent state. Therefore it is unlikely that the majority of the Palestinians would accept this. Furthermore, Chamie (2015) argues that today we are seeing a scenario towards a three-state solution but without Egypt and Jordan, this means that Hamas constitutes a state in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority another state in the West Bank, coexisting with the current Israeli state, where there is a greater risk for the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, since the latter is completely isolated in the Gaza Strip (Cohen, 2017) and depends on foreign aid to survive, and the former is losing ground everyday due to the expansion of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Moreover, this solution is not viable, since it does not address the issue of East Jerusalem, which would remain under Israeli control, status that the Palestinians would not accept, and once again,

it does not touch upon the issue of the return of the Palestinian refugees. Finally, regarding to the main **research question**, *if the asymmetric conflict between Israel and Palestine would in fact lead to a peaceful negotiation process* regarding the condition of the involvement of third actors, this would apply in this scenario but the question that immediately arises is; how much leverage do Egypt and Jordan have over Israel to negotiate a fair solution? Although this scenario would be a huge step towards reconciliation in the Middle East, it does not solve the Palestinian issue. Therefore, the fight that Palestine has put up against Israel does not produce the desired effects of statehood and recognition, and they would live in Arab nations that do not represent them to the full extent, producing an ethnic and identity conflict within Egypt and Jordan (Chamie, 2015), which could eventually spill over once again into Israel.

4. A fourth option would be a No Israel-state solution, also proposed by Chamie (2015); Hamas would endorse this solution, since it responds to its ideological struggle against Israel and it is what they have been fighting for since their foundation in 1987. Nevertheless, it is suggested that a united Palestinian government between Hamas and Fatah would have to foster and guide this solution (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) (Cohen, 2017). Since Fatah has believed in diplomacy as a means to end the conflict, this state would have to be of democratic nature (Chamie, 2015), discarding the Islamic regime that Hamas seeks through its ideological principles, this would demand an attitude of adaptation from Hamas, following the footsteps of FARC in Colombia and the IRA in Northern Ireland; demilitarising and incorporation to the political arena. This option enables the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homeland and would include the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the whole of what Israel is today as part of the new Palestinian state, meaning that the Israeli and Jewish citizens would have to leave the region and relocate somewhere else (Chamie, 2015), just like it was proposed before the formation of the state of current Israel. This scenario and solution would only respond to some extent the theory of asymmetric warfare (Mack, 1975) (Lele, 2014) if the Palestinian insurgency would result victorious from the conflict against Israel, since their victory on the battlefield would be crucial in completely shifting and changing the power structure of the asymmetry (Gallo & Marzano, 200) in favour of Palestine. This would also mean that Hamas would have to break the stronghold in Gaza and penetrate into Israeli

territory, convince Fatah to leave its diplomatic and pacifying strategies and take up the armed struggle to supress Israel from both angles, launching a Third Intifada characterised by a wave of non-stop violence. Although, it would extremely difficult for the Palestinian insurgency to obtain a total victory over Israel since they do not have the resources to do so, since Israel has the current military superiority and capability in regards to the Palestinian resistance, and most likely a united Palestinian uprising would lead to the intervention from Washington in support of Israel, situation that could also lead to a reaction from other Arab or Middle Eastern nations that have a hostile attitude towards the alliance between Tel Aviv and Washington (quite possibility Iran). Finally, the scenario could result in a catastrophic full-scale war that would compromise not only the disputed territories but also the security of the region and *status quo* of the international community; therefore it would be impossible to reach a solution to the **research question** since it does not include a negotiation process or a peace accord.

5. The final and most commonly accepted scenario is the two-state solution (Cohen, 2017) (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), which has been promoted by Fatah and the Palestinian Authority, and endorsed by the European Union (Youngs, 2014), the Quartet and various nations around the globe. This solution is based on the recognition and establishment of the independent Palestinian state, existing alongside the current state of Israel (Chamie, 2015). Both states would have clear and recognised borders, guaranteeing the security of their citizens and those who travel in and out of them. The two-state solution would be an eventual return to the borders that existed until 1967 (Cohen, 2017), respecting UN Security Council Resolution 242 and would have to include the return of the Palestinian refugees to the new Palestinian state (Chamie, 2015). With a solution like this, the Palestinian demand would have been met and the reintegration of the refugees would allow them to live freely within the new Palestine, situation that would not pose a threat to the Israeli state because both states would live under a peace accord. Moreover, Jerusalem would be the capital for both states, the West for Israel and the East for Palestine. "A two-state solution envisages a territorial agreement based on: the borders of 1967, that is, the borders that existed prior to the war of 1967, in conjunction with a consensual swap of territory; security arrangements that take the needs of both parties into consideration; a solution to the refugee problem acceptable to the conflicting parties and to the

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primary countries where the refugees currently reside; and finally, with Jerusalem as capital of both states" (Cohen, 2017, p. 2). This solution is not only what the Palestinian Authority is endorsing and trying to get Israel to negotiate it but it is also strongly supported by the Arab League, as well as by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (Cohen, 2017) (Louwerse, 2017). This is the scenario that the investigation would endorse and see happening if there is a change in the current Israeli government, a solution like this is only exists in the realms of utopia under a Likud-orientated governance, with a Labour-Socialist government majority it would be slightly possible to negotiate. "In 2007 a majority of both Israelis and Palestinians, according to a number of polls, preferred the two-state solution over any other solution as means of resolving the conflict. Moreover, a considerable majority of Jewish public sees the Palestinians' demand for an independent state as just, and thinks Israel can agree to the establishment of such a state. A majority of Palestinians and Israelis view the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as an acceptable location of the hypothetical Palestinian state in a two-state solution" (Lou-Gutierrez, 2010, p. 1). Moreover, this scenario would still require the intervention and pressure from a strong third party actor to push Israel to negotiate towards this solution, the European Union would be considered as a facilitator of this process and even the involvement of Russia could be determining for this solution that would finally see the establishment of the Palestinian statehood and the end of the violence between Israelis and Palestinians.

Considering the five scenarios that have been presented and analysed, the investigation favours the two-state solution, moreover, because it responds to the **research question**, *to what extent can the conflict between Israel and Palestine end in a peaceful negotiation process?* Israel is conscious that the conflict has inflicted damage on its territory and population, and Hamas is still able to conduct attacks from Gaza, and even if Israel responds, in times like these, the whole world is watching, where international sanctions could affect Israel's economy and relations with other nations, especially if it continues with the settlements in the West Bank. The two-state solution would depend on the variables of *time* and *political will*, although a change in the United States administration would have to occur, and hope for a democrat president that would endorse this solution by retracting the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, so that the Palestinians and the Arab world gain trust once again in Washington. In regards to Israel, Cohen (2017) states

that a Labour party administration would technically endorse the two-state solution but on the grounds that it would finally mark the definite separation between Israelis and Palestinians, favouring the security of the state of Israel.

Furthermore, Fatah would have to continue convincing Hamas that diplomacy is the only option to ever see the Palestinian state as a concrete reality (Gallo & Marzano, 2009), where a clear set of governmental principles would have to be drawn between Hamas and Fatah, so that they can be considered and viewed as a serious actor to negotiate with. Moreover, Hamas has stated through the declaration of principles that define the organisation (this declaration was announced in May 2017), that they do consider the two-state solution as viable, recognising the fact that it would include coexisting alongside Israel (Cohen, 2017). The problem that Palestine faces is that it has grown weaker and has no leverage over Israel; therefore, it depends on Israeli political will to negotiate and on the pressure the international community can inflict over Tel Aviv.

The internationalisation (Vaknin-Gill, 2017) of the conflict is the current card Palestine must keep playing, reaching out to the United Nations, the International Court of Justice and Human Rights organisations, so that there is greater awareness of the conflict itself and the rise of the settlements in the West Bank have no end in sight, where Israel has brought back a regime of apartheid in the same region and in Gaza (Carter, 2006). For this reason, the campaign of *delegitimisation* that has been previously referred to in combination with Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) (Cohen, 2017), which imitates the South African example during the apartheid years, seeking international support to end the Israeli occupation of Palestine, are the new weapons that Palestine has to rely on to shift the asymmetrical balance. Furthermore, Israel's difficulty to win the war is based on the fact that the Palestinians have been able to apply terror tactics and counterattacks that have destabilised Israeli forces, leading to an extension of the conflict. From a political perspective, Cordesman (2006) states that Israel has failed to convince the international of its conflict against the Palestinians, losing support mainly from Europe due to its use of brutal force and the continuation of illegal settlements within Palestinian territory.

The reality of the situation is that under the current Trump and Netanyahu administrations all of what has been exposed is impossible. Netanyahu has contradicted himself more than once, while stating that he accepts the two-state solution but at the same time, he declared during his electoral campaign of 2015

(Cohen, 2017), that he would not allow a Palestinian state to be established. Since there is absolutely no pressure against Israel to solve the conflict (Cohen, 2017), and do not feel that they have to reach a negotiation with the Palestinians, the two-state solution is at risk. One must not also forget the special relationship between Tel Aviv and Washington, which leads up to the UN Security Council, where the United States has the power to veto (Chamie, 2015) any solution or imposition of peace presented against Israel. Moreover, President Trump has also manifested that the solution to the conflict must be worked upon only Israelis and Palestinians and not imposed by third party actors (BBC, 2017) but this is extremely difficult to believe when the intervention of the United States is completely bias and will continue to support Israel in the conflict, especially with the strong support from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

Although an alternative movement has surfaced that supports the end of the occupation, J-Street (Cohen, 2017), which is composed of leftists and liberals and supported by the Jewish Voice for Peace, an anti-occupation organisation that open and strongly opposes to the settlements and towards the isolation of Palestine, are allies that the Palestinian Authority has to reach out to and continue to pressure the international community to intervene. With the rise of movements like these, creating a deeper sense of awareness and attracting the attention of nations that stand for and support the Palestinian statehood should be determining factors to pressure Israel to finally end the occupation and seek a peaceful negotiation process.

As it has been previously mentioned, the investigation supports that an option lies within the European Union to play the role of a strong and determining third party actor, although it still faces problems, since the union has always conceded Middle Eastern issues to the United States and without a common foreign policy (Youngs, 2014) from the EU towards the situation between Israelis and Palestinians it will be difficult to see this solution in the next few years. Moreover, given Germany's historical relation with Israel (Cohen, 2017), it has shown nothing but solidarity towards Israel. Nevertheless, a united European Union stood strong and condemned the recognition of Jerusalem by the United States, manifested through Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, (BBC, 2017) stating that the EU supports Jerusalem as becoming the capital for **both** Israel and Palestine in a scenario of a two-state solution, and that President Trump's actions only put at risk the security of the region. The two-state solution at the current moment clearly lacks the political determination to be

executed, and it would require that future negotiations be based on equality and self-determination, with these in mind can only a historical reconciliation take place.

For now the only scenario is the *status quo*, which in the end, is regulated by Israel (Palma & Aranda, 2016) and allows it to deter from time to time strikes from Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and at the same time it can continue with its unilateral settlement expansion in the West Bank with no obstacles in sight. Moreover, the importance that *political will* plays within asymmetric conflicts has been stated; it was present within the IRA and the British government to settle "the troubles" in Northern Ireland and a condition to reach the Good Friday Agreement. *Political will* was also there when the FARC saw that their armed struggle would not reach their objectives, and the same was seen by the Colombian administration, therefore mutual disposition and cooperation led to the peace accords in Havana. Moreover, the since the IRA and the FARC where extremely united insurgent groups under ideologies that were commonly shared between their fighters and their resistance, was a crucial element to their success. Element that has been absent within the Palestinians due to the long division between Hamas and Fatah, although they have recently agreed to unite, it could be that this decision has come in too late.

For this reason, the conflict between Israel and Palestine offers some limitations to the research of the investigation. This is due to the fact, that both the conflicts in Northern Ireland and in Colombia are resolved conflicts, situation that makes them approachable and simpler to apply the conditions for the resolution of asymmetric conflicts. On the other hand, the case of Israel and Palestine is an unresolved conflict due to internal and external factors that have been exposed and analysed in the research leads to a different outcome than the two case studies. Gallo & Marzano (2009) emphasize that the problem the conflict between Israel and Palestine has, is that it depends on too many external variables; the ideological divide between Hamas and Fatah, the behaviour and policies of the Netanyahu administration and overall, the role that the U.S. government plays and will continue playing in the conflict. Hence, the investigation sought the sketching of the mentioned scenarios as a method to establish possible solutions to the conflict and to face the current limitations.

Therefore, the conflict between Israel and Palestine lacks, *political will* especially from the Israeli side (Cordesman, 2006) (Cohen, 2017) and the Palestinians lack a solid foreign ally that can aid them to push Israel to develop political disposition to

end the conflict and negotiate. Up until now the asymmetric conflict theory is in favour of the dominant power. The power gap between the two actors today is immense and this means that a bilateral negotiation is by no means likely to happen because Israel does not feel threatened by Palestine at the moment. There is no motivation for the Israelis (Cordesman, 2006) to engage in compromises that in the end would mean the loss of territory obtained by sacrifice and for the greater good of Israel. The current situation tends to show that the **research question** has failed to assure that asymmetric conflict leads to a peaceful negotiation process. The very prolongation of the confrontation phase (Gallo & Marzano, 2009) has not led to **military exhaustion** and Israel seems stronger than ever to result completely victorious unless circumstances change in favour of the Palestinians, which can only happen if the condition of a foreign actor intervenes and reverts the situation. This idea is strongly supported by Gallo & Marzano (2009) who state that the international community must force and impose a solution to the conflict, so that the two-state solution can be put into action. Cohen (2017) also sees this a fundamental problem, since there is not enough pressure on Israel, and the conflict is in fact moving towards a the establishment of a Greater Israel. Therefore, with these variables in mind, the condition of a **third party actor** as a facilitator or determining factor to end the conflict is still lacking, situation which also discards the results that have been exposed in the cases of Northern Ireland and Colombia: **power sharing** and **coexistence**, since there are no signs of Israel wanting to move in this direction.

Nevertheless, the conflict is still unresolved and latent the option of *delegitimisation* (Vaknin-Gill, 2017) cannot be ruled out as a variable and tactic that could change the course of the very conflict. Palestine has to continue seeking the modification of Israel's political will (Cohen, 2017) to change the course of the conflict and today the internationalisation of the conflict is its best option to break the deadlock and allow it to evolve into a new negotiation process aided by the international community, which imposes a peace accord to both Palestine and Israel, under this scenario, the phases of asymmetric conflict presented by Gallo & Marzano (2009) and used as the framework of the investigation could come into play and solve the research question, reaching an establishment of sustainable peace and the realisation of the Palestinian state. As it has been said throughout the investigation *time* has become the determining variable of this conflict, therefore it all depends on this variable to see if what has been previously proposed will happen, since it seems that up until now time has constantly been on Israel's side allowing it to slowly legitimise its actions within the conflict, whereas for Palestine time is simply running out.

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