

The Middle East Peace Process and the EU: Foreign Policy and Security Strategy in International Politics

Taylan Özgür Kaya, I.B. Tauris, New York, 2013, 266 Pages.

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The Middle East has emerged as a genuine and controversial security issue in international politics since the late 1960s, beginning with the UN decision to establish the state of Israel in 1947. Subsequent to this decision, the Israeli-Arab conflict has become one of the focal points of international security politics. In this sense, the EU, particularly since 1999, has been trying to assert its authority in the process as a key player and as an entity committed to a resolution. *The Middle East Peace Process and the EU: Foreign Policy and Security Strategy in International Politics* by Taylan Özgür Kaya sets out to examine how far the role that the EU desires to play as a foreign and security actor accords with its actual foreign and security policy activities and choices by looking at the particular case of the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) in the post-9/11 era. The book is based on the author's PhD thesis, which was submitted at the Middle East Technical University (METU) in 2010. The author is currently an Assistant Professor of International Relations at Necmettin Erbakan University in Turkey.

The book offers a rich historical background of the MEPP, including the establishment of the European Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the EU's involvement in the process pre-9/11. In this respect, Kaya indicates that the EU's CFSP and the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) have gained substance and impetus in the post-9/11 era. During this

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time, the EU began to emerge as one of the core foreign and security policy actors in the international field, possessing the capability to employ a full range of instruments, including those of both a military and civilian nature, for crisis management and conflict prevention. In this regard, 23 operations have been carried out under the ESDP since 2003, demonstrating that the EU has become recognized as an entity with deep crisis management experience in different regions of the world comprising Africa, the South Caucasus, the Western Balkans, the Middle East and Asia. The EU launched its first security strategy declaration in 2003 with the European Security Strategy (ESS), which primarily proposes a common view of the nature of the current international security environment. The Strategy emphasizes terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure and organized crime as key threats to European security. As a solution to these challenges, the UN Charter was considered as the essential framework for international relations when drafting the ESS, and therefore assumed a critical position in the formulation of the overall role of the EU in the realm of international security. From this standpoint, Kaya sets out to test whether or not this role determined by the EU is implemented in practice by taking the MEPP as a case study. In order to accomplish this, the author engages in a deep examination of both primary and secondary sources, such as official documents, and employs the methods of discourse analysis to build a comparison between the EU's rhetoric and practice that is classified according to seven conceptions. In the end he comments that "even though the EU, whose foreign and security policy is in its adolescence, has encountered some inconsistency problems while performing its self-identified roles, its overall balance sheet as a foreign and security policy actor in the post-9/11 era is fairly positive" (p. 228).

The book is comprised of six chapters. The first chapter draws an outline providing the necessary background to understand and conceptualize the book, while the final chapter gives a basic conclusion of the main issues discussed. Chapters two through five respectively address the theoretical framework that will be employed in the work, the EU's foreign and security policy role conceptions in the post-9/11 era, the EU's involvement in the MEPP in the pre-9/11 era, and an analysis on the level of congruity between the EU's role conception and practice in the MEPP in the post-9/11 era. In this work, Kaya makes use of "Role Theory", which operationalizes descriptive, organizational and explanatory values. Although "Role Theory" is a relevant and appropriate theory for the topic, it is not methodologically suited for addressing

the issue. The author furthermore does not offer clearly laid out descriptive, organizational and explanatory values, which may complicate the reader's comprehension of the topic. For example, after explaining descriptive, organizational and explanatory values, Kaya repeats the organizational value, adding further information which should have been given in the related section (p. 17). Kaya also employs discourse analysis with the purpose of diminishing the lack of methodology, increasing the validity, reliability and predictability of the work, and providing the foreign and security role conception of the EU. This approach is crucial in displaying the accord between the EU's intention to play a role as a foreign and security actor, and its actual foreign and security policy activities and choices. To achieve this purpose, however, Kaya decides to classify the discourse into 7 parts reflecting the "Basic Typology of the EU's Role Conception": I- Force for good; II- Force for international peace, security and stability; III- The provider of development aid; IV- Promoter of its values and norms; V- Promoter of effective multilateralism; VI- Partner for the UN; VII- Builder of effective partnership with key actors (p. 38). This classification is unnecessarily complex and the 2nd, 5th and 6th categories point out almost the same values and discourses, with only very subtle distinctions. These categories could, therefore, be combined into one. However, the only purpose of this over-classification is to make the text easier to understand and comprehend for the reader; yet unfortunately, it does not contribute to the formulation of an answer to the main research question.

To conclude, *The Middle East Peace Process and the EU: Foreign Policy and Security Strategy in International Politics* is worth reading, particularly by academics studying European foreign and security policies, and security in the Middle East. The book provides a rich background not only on the MEPP but also on the ESDP and CFSP. Furthermore, it should be taken into consideration as a remarkable contribution to the existing literature on the MEPP. In this regard, Taylan Özgür Kaya also utilizes a comprehensive wealth of primary and secondary sources, therefore allowing the work to penetrate the MEPP in a more profound manner. In spite of such strengths, it also has a number of weaknesses: Kaya is on occasion repetitive, which may distract the reader, and detract from the book. A few shortcomings in the organization of the book are also visible, which may undermine the clarity of the author's arguments, and lead to a reduction of the reader's interest in the study. In addition, an over-classification in the discourse analysis may perplex the reader, while being of no apparent benefit to the main research question.