

Research abstract-

Cultural Diplomacy and Collective Memory: Reviewing Austrian-Israeli Relations

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Analyzing the Austrian- Israeli relations, this research wishes to explore the influence of shared troubled past on bilateral relations, asking what role contested memories have in bilateral relations and how cultural diplomacy can re-narrate collective memory in order to influence and to reframe the relationship between two states.

Cultural diplomacy is a term used in the field of international relations as part of the Soft Power theory. It has been defined as the use a country makes in its “soft power” resources (e.g. culture, policy, moral principles), to translate them into influence on other countries (Nye 2004).

Collective memory, meanwhile, is a term that is rather overlooked in the literature on cultural diplomacy, mainly because it is viewed as a domestic issue. However, a closer look at bilateral relations between states, such as the German- Israeli relations for example, proves that this is not the case; memory became a prominent issue in the diplomacy between the two states.

Therefore, this research wishes to explore Austrian-Israeli relations within the framework of collective memory and cultural diplomacy, arguing that countries use cultural diplomacy in order to influence memory constructions and understandings of particular pasts in partner countries, which, in turn, affects their relations. Thus, offering new insight into the importance of memory in interstate relations.

This may lead not only to a better understanding of Austrian-Israeli relations, but also to broader conclusions regarding the role of collective memory in the relations of Israel with other European countries as well as the relations of Israel with the European Union.