*Introduction Paragraph (optional): communicating with your research proposal (public policy in the international world, pandemic, epidemiology of the peace process and normalizations) -TBC*

\*\*\*

Having dedicating half of my life to Israeli Public Service in multiple arenas, I have gradually developed a holistic view on the importance of using policy tools and methods in the governmental and international decision-making process.

My earliest first-hand experience in critically analyzing the public impact of various policies in the Israeli national and healthcare fields took place during my mandatory military service. Exposing several medical malpractice cases and covering political scandals as an IDF Radio correspondent, I realized the real cost of inadequate and ill-managed policies.Although I was fully aware of the media’s power to generate tangible change, it became clear that even when the „watchdog of democracy” bites, it is still on a leash. Indeed, my scoops led to several shake-ups within Israeli administration, but the use of legal procedures was still indispensable.

Dealing with the most sensitive cases and controversial topics in Israeli society, my clerkship at the Supreme Court of Israel provided me ample opportunities to hone my legal and reasoning skills. The almost absolute irreversible nature of the court’s rulings amplified the need for a broad observation of the larger picture of policy and social considerations, including third parties and future litigants. Nevertheless, due to the separation of powers, the court could only manifest its dissatisfaction with a specific policy, and rarely ordered its cancellation. Its inability to propose an alternative policy often significantly hindered reaching an optimal solution.

Determined to effect positive change within the Israeli government, I joined the Prime Minister’s Civil Service Cadets Program. Throughout the 2-year training course, I acquired methodical, academic, and practical tools via field trips, personalized workshops, and joint projects with senior policymakers in the public, private, and non-governmental sectors. Encouraged by the successful implementation of some of my policy recommendations by the Israeli government, I decided to further “export” public policy techniques to Israel’s economic diplomacy strategy.

Persuading my colleagues and supervisors at the Israeli Foreign Trade Administration (FTA) with the necessity and applicability of the public policy design methods in the elusive intangible/abstract world of diplomacy was the highest hurdle. Fortunately, the wide responsibilities and flexible professional discretion, bestowed upon me as the Manager of the Latin America Department, enabled (me) to lead the very first policy experiment in the FTA: Remodeling the international implementation of the Israeli Government Decision 1604 (2014) for strengthening the economic ties between Israel and Latin American countries. Applying SWOT analysis, quantitative indicators, measurable objectives, and periodical assessments led to an immediate increase in the bilateral trade volume. Subsequently, the FTA adopted this new regional cooperation model in its activity in Africa and other/additional emerging markets.

The organizational need for further mastering the delicate art of policy adjustment led to the creation of my new position as a Special Project Manager in the Americas and the Middle East. This was also where I discovered my passion for tracing the sophisticated ways in which economic and commercial profit could remove diplomatic and ideological barriers, eventually serving as a lever for peace.

Guiding 13 diplomatic Economic and Trade Missions in 2 continents has taught me invaluable lessons on the vitality of street-level bureaucrats in implementing policy, the constant need for policy calibration, and the impact of effective framing. Comprehending the (sometimes too) long path between planning a policy and implementing it solidified my interest in pursuing a hands-on/on-the-ground diplomatic post overseas. Luckily, I was appointed Head of the Economic and Trade Mission of Israel in Romania and Ukraine on the fastest internal promotion track in the FTA’s history.

In my current position, I have been initiating knowledge sharing and fostering regional cooperation in Eastern Europe through G2G dialogues, multi-national joint task forces, and round-tables with policymakers, senior officials, and top management of multi-national corporations and international financial organizations. The tailor-made business strategy and scouting projects we conducted for both companies and government agencies led not only to enrich the Israeli export to Romania and Ukraine but also to diversify it. Furthermore, in 2019 the Mission to Romania set the highest number of successful Israeli foreign trade transactions ever recorded for a single Mission in one year.

The global Covid-19 outbreak has forced the world of economic diplomacy to rethink its role in the international arena while facing waves of recession and a fog of uncertainty. Inevitably, the gigantic scope, dynamic nature, tremendous impact/gravity, and severe complexity of the phenomenon require diplomats to craft new policy tools and undoubtedly to promptly update their implementation methods.

Such a challenge should be addressed with reverence, not through gut feelings and baseless populism. This is a crucial moment for the academic world, especially in public policy research, which should be a beacon of sound, data-based, in-depth, and original thinking. I strongly believe that my extensive professional experience coupled with my demonstrated academic capabilities have prepared me well to perform/conduct exhaustive research with a real potential to create a global impact.

Throughout my previous academic chapters, I have always aspired to make a difference outside my classroom by using legal, theoretical or policy analysis methods: As a member of Tel Aviv University’s Special Program for Outstanding Students, a multidisciplinary student initiative I led resulted in changing the curriculum of “Medicine and Law” course at Med school, consequently modifying the training of Israel’s future doctors; Inspired by my classes at Harvard Law School and Harvard Kennedy School, my paper on Israel’s problematic food safety mechanism, was later on transformed into a policy paper submitted to Israel’s Ministry of Health; Recently, my academic paper on Israel’s participation in the OECD provoked an important debate on interministerial communication.

The Blavatnik School’s vision for improving governments around the globe via question-driven research, along with its multidisciplinary and innovative approach, promises to scaling-up these aspirations. I strongly believe that under its inspiring guidance I could further contribute to the policy analysis of international relations and hopefully assisting my government in reaching peace and stability in the region. Evidently, the unmatched wealth of academic projects and the unique intellectual community at Oxford University will remarkably enhance my professional, academic, and personal growth.