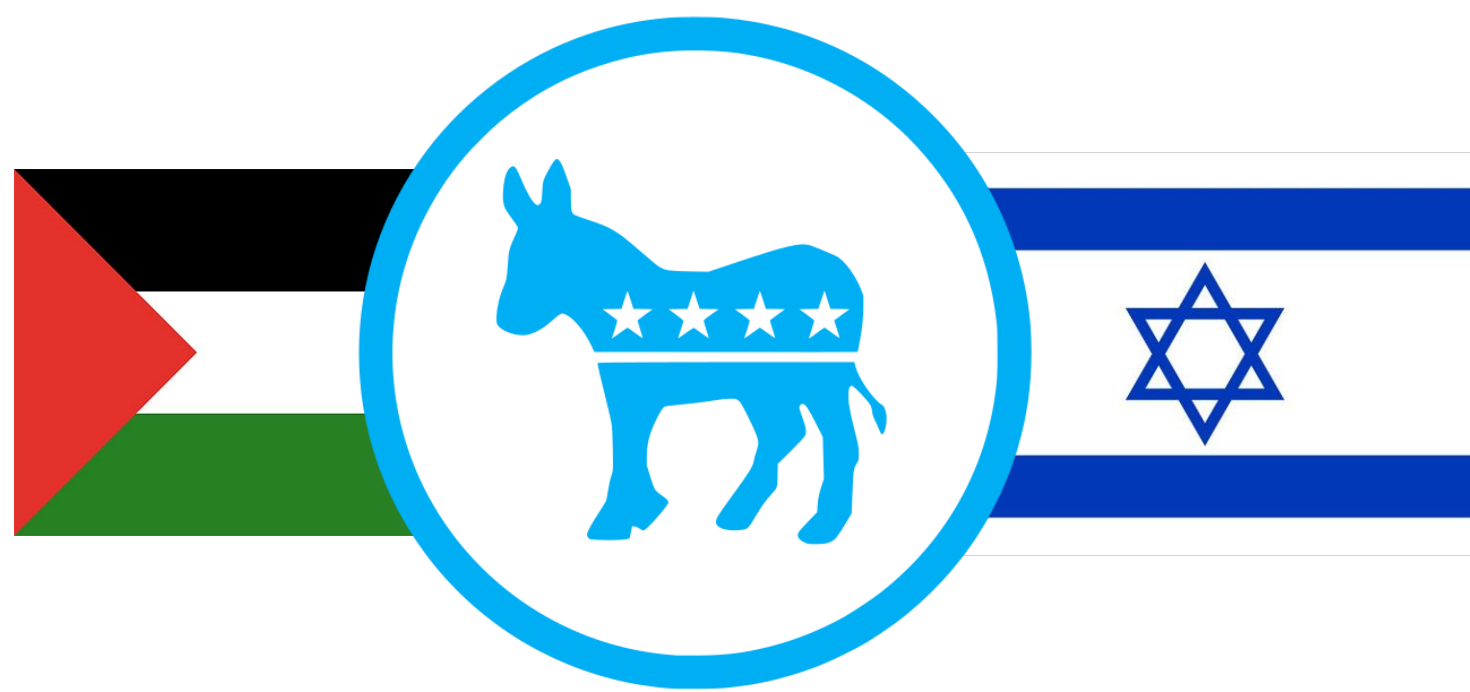


Democratic Framing of the Israel-Palestine Conflict: The Cases of 2016 and 2020 Primaries

Background



- The discourse surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict is everchanging.
- Politicians are the most notable proponents of framing the conflict in various ways to garner support.
- Candidates from the Democratic party hold a wide range of positions on the issue.
- The Trump administration made the decision to move the Embassy to Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem¹ and the declared support for the controversial Abraham Accords²

“I believe the United States and the rest of the world have got to work together to help the Palestinian people. That does not make me anti-Israel. That paves the way, I think to an approach that works in the Middle East.”
-Bernie Sanders

Research Questions

1. How did Democratic party candidates frame the Israel-Palestine conflict in the 2016 and 2020 primaries in relation to **Palestine**?
2. How did Democratic party candidates frame the Israel-Palestine conflict in the 2016 and 2020 primaries in relation to **Israel**?
3. How did those frames change over the course of the Trump administration?

Theory

- A qualitative word frequency analysis was conducted.
- Political framing is how issues are presented to an electorate by politicians³

Entman's Framing Theory

Defining Issues	Diagnosing Causes
Making Moral Judgements	Proposing Solutions

Methods

- There were 24 transcripts from the televised primary debates included in this study (10 in 2016, 14 in 2020).
- Analyzing debates allows a controlled environment where every candidate has a fair shot to voice their position on the conflict.

Coding Process

- The word frequency process was completed using the qualitative data analysis computer software, NVivo
- Used “Text Search” tool and searched through the transcripts with each word and synonyms for those words.
 - Words used to search for each code:
 - **Ally**: ally allies alliance friend friends partner partners
 - **Injustice**: injustice violation crisis humanitarian
 - **Peace**: peace peaceful agreement
 - **Policy**: policy plan plans strategy strategies
 - **Security**: security safety
- After each code was identified, another word query was done but to find the reference coverage of “Israel” and “Palestine” in order to compare the different ways each territory was framed.
- There was a total of 5 codes.

2016 Debates

Term	Term Coverage Overall	Israel Context	Palestine Context
Ally	2.73%	0.20%	0.00%
Injustice	1.67%	0.00%	0.09%
Peace	2.64%	0.36%	0.31%
Policy	6.74%	0.09%	0.00%
Security	4.47%	0.20%	0.10%

2020 Debates

Term	Term Coverage Overall	Israel Context	Palestine Context
Ally	4.19%	0.06%	0.04%
Injustice	3.80%	0.06%	0.16%
Peace	1.93%	0.05%	0.04%
Policy	11.81%	0.10%	0.05%
Security	3.05%	0.11%	0.11%

Key Findings

After the coding was completed, conclusions were made in response to the word frequency charts:

- **Ally frame**: used most in 2016 and saw a significant decrease in use in 2020, even though the term's overall coverage was higher.
- **Injustice frame**: used more in the Palestinian context than Israel in 2020.
- **Peace Process frame**: significant decrease in use for both Israel and Palestine context.
- **Policy Disagreement frame**: did not see dramatic change for Israel but saw slight increase for Palestine.
- **Security frame**: significant decrease in use for Israel and almost no change for Palestine.
- The Trump administration played a role in the changes Democrats made when framing the conflict.
- The debates cannot tell us everything about how the Democratic party frames the conflict.

Significance

- The findings shed light on how Israelis and Palestinians are framed by Democratic party candidates.
- The findings also provide insight into how the discourse surrounding the conflict is radically changing

References

1. Robinson K. (2022). *What Is U.S. Policy on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?* The Council on Foreign Relations.
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3. Entman, R. (1993). *Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm*. *Journal of Communication*, 43, 51–58.