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CONTEXTUAL FRAMES OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN  
CONFLICT:  
FORWARD/BACKWARD – LOOKING NEGOTIATION PRIOR TO  
OSLO I

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Carsten Benjamin Tripscha

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**CONTEXTUAL FRAMES OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT:  
FORWARD/BACKWARD – LOOKING NEGOTIATION PRIOR TO OSLO I**

**By**

**Carsten Benjamin Tripscha**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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## ABSTRACT

### CONTEXTUAL FRAMES OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT: FORWARD/BACKWARD – LOOKING NEGOTIATION PRIOR TO OSLO I

By

Carsten Benjamin Tripscha

One of the aspects of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict that has as of yet remained unexplored, is the rhetorical frame that is established by the statements of political leaders. Using Zartman's theory of Forward- and Backward – Oriented Negotiation, as well as Donohue's Relational Order Theory, this thesis examines speeches made by Israeli and Palestinian leaders in the months preceding the Oslo I Accords. Three hypotheses and one research question were postulated. The first hypothesis, that the discourse is significantly more forward – oriented was not confirmed. The second hypothesis, that Palestinians use significantly more backward – oriented rhetoric than Israelis was confirmed. The third hypothesis, expecting a positive relation between forward – looking messages and affiliation messages, as well as between backward – looking messages and power messages was strongly confirmed. The research question examined the frequency of the use of various types of forward and backward looking messages.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict has gone through numerous turning points in the past two decades. The violent conflict of the Intifada of 1988 turned into the hope for a peaceful coexistence after the Oslo Accords of 1993, which turned to doubt and uncertainty after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 and the more aggressive policies of Benjamin Netanyahu. The second Intifada, which began in the fall of 2000 finally has turned into a sustained campaign of terror and violence by both sides, and a peaceful solution to the conflict seems as far away as it did in 1988. The conflict itself, as well as the negotiations that led up to the Oslo Accords, have been the subject of numerous studies, books, and research projects.

Yet one of the aspects of the negotiations that has as of yet remained unexplored, is the context in which Israelis and Palestinians conducted these negotiations. Donohue has looked at the relational frame that was established by the rhetoric (Donohue 1998, Donohue and Hoobler, 2002). This study will draw upon his works, and also attempt to use Zartman's theory of Forward- and Backward-Looking negotiation strategies, to examine the context that was created by the rhetoric of Israeli and Palestinian leaders in the months leading up to the Oslo I Agreements.

I hypothesize that the use of rhetoric established a contextual frame in which politicians on both sides operated, and therefore put constraints on the way the negotiations occurred. Since the data collected by Donohue and Hoobler was available for use in this study, I also decided to look for possible relationships between the relational frame of the negotiations and the contextual frame established by the rhetoric.



After an in-depth review of the history of the conflict, the theory itself will be examined, as well as the work of other researchers regarding the conflict. A series of hypotheses will be established, and a coding scheme and methods of testing the hypotheses will be introduced and explained.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reach back several decades. In 1897 Dr. Theodore Herzl published *The Jewish State*, which led to the foundation of the Zionist movement. This movement aimed for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, by emigrating and purchasing land from Arab landowners. The first Jewish settlers in Palestine embodied a spirit that in many ways is carried on by the settlers of today. Known as *Halutz*, one who goes before the collectivity, they formed the core of the initial settlements, denying themselves material comforts, status or power, in order to pave the way for the community to follow in their wake. Their ideology valued self-defense and self-reliance, as well as celebration of Hebrew heritage and culture (Eisenstadt, 1967.) In many ways these values are carried on not only by the settlers of a Gaza or West Bank Kibbutz, but also by leading Jewish politicians (Inbar, 1998) who believe that Israel cannot expect or depend on outside protection.

The hard work of Jewish pioneers paid off, when in 1917 the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, which supported a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and in 1922 the League of Nation gave the British Crown the mandate over Palestine.

Even though the Balfour Declaration specifically emphasized that the civil rights of any existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine would not be infringed upon, (Stoessinger, 1998) the Arabs, who had lived in Palestine for centuries, opposed the Balfour declaration. The large influx of Jewish immigrants, especially during the 1930s when Jews were persecuted in Germany, was seen as a threat to their own way of life. Clashes between Jews and Arabs became more and more common, as the numbers of Jews in Palestine increased to hundreds of thousands.

In 1947 Great Britain announced that they would relinquish their mandate over Palestine, and the United Nations formed a special committee in order to oversee the partition of Israel and Palestine. The Jews were to receive 55% of the territory (even though they only made up one third of the population), while the Arabs were to receive the rest (Stoessinger, 1998). The Arabs vehemently opposed the decision, and after the partition was approved by a vote of the United Nations General Assembly on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1947, both sides prepared for the conflict they assumed would erupt as soon as the British left the Middle East.

The Jews declared the establishment of the State of Israel on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1948, the day the British mandate over Palestine ended. The next day the armies of Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt invaded the newly-proclaimed nation. They had superior numbers and firepower, but after several months of fighting the Jews were in possession of vast territories as well as part of the city of Jerusalem. They now occupied more land than they would have under the UN partition plan. 1 million Arabs were displaced into Egypt, Transjordan and Syria. Out of these refugees grew the seeds of the Palestinian resistance, who would later form the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Hamas, and Hizbollah.

Further wars between Israel and its neighbors, 1956, 1967, and 1973, left Israel with even more occupied territory, such as the Sinai, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights, and deepened the rifts between Israelis and Arabs, even though the Sinai was eventually returned to Egypt.

In 1988 the resentment that the Palestinians living in the occupied territories felt finally erupted into outright rebellion. The Intifada, as the uprising was called, disrupted

life in the West Bank and the Gaza strip as hundreds of thousands of Palestinians demanded an independent state. Negotiations came to an impasse when the Palestinians declared the PLO to be their only legitimate representative, and the Israeli government refused to negotiate with a terrorist organization.

A breakthrough was made in 1993, with the Oslo Accords. Several representatives from Israel and Palestine met informally in Norway in order to discuss potential solutions for the conflict. The Norwegians did not take an active role in the talks at first, but acted as facilitators, providing a neutral setting for both parties. The leader of the Norwegian delegation was available for private conversations with the delegates, but did not initially attend the meetings between both sides. As both sides began to see him as a trustworthy partner, they asked him to take a more active part in the negotiations. They also began to trust the other side more, as they interacted with them on a regular basis and got to know them better. Eventually the relationship between the Israelis and the Palestinians became so secure that even the introduction of a more aggressive, less compromising Israeli delegate, and several acts of violence in Israel and the occupied territories could not shake their resolve to find a solution that was acceptable for both sides.

The talks in Oslo led to the creation of a Declaration of Principles, signed in Washington in September 1993, which was designed to gradually transfer power in the occupied territories to a newly-formed Palestinian Authority. It stipulated free elections in the West Bank and Gaza, withdrawal of Israeli troops, negotiations about the permanent status of the PA within two years, and final status negotiations within a five year transition period (Naumkin and Zvyagelskaya, 2005).

This Interim Agreement should be implemented in three stages:

- 1) Signing of an agreement on Gaza and Jericho in Cairo, May 1994. This agreement laid out the plan for troop withdrawal and redeployment from Gaza and Jericho, as well as the gradual transfer of power to the Palestinian Authority.
- 2) Signing of an agreement that transferred jurisdiction over education, culture, social security, tourism, and taxation to the Palestinian Authority, as well as plans for gradual transfer of jurisdiction over labor relations, industry, agriculture and other spheres of public life.
- 3) Signing of the Interim Agreement in September 1995. Known as Oslo II this agreement divided Gaza and the West Bank into three zones of jurisdiction, with Zone A being under full control of the PA, Zone B under Palestinian administration but secured by Israel, and Zone C under full Israeli control. Israel kept 71% of the West Bank and 35% of the Gaza strip.

The Oslo Accords were seen as a breakthrough in the peace process by some, while others vehemently opposed them. Israeli opponents of the agreements saw them as capitulation before the Arab world, a betrayal of the idea of a Greater Israel, and as a sign of weakness which would lead to more conflict (Lustick, 1997). Radical settlers, the Likud opposition party, and conservative Jews protested against the agreement. To them Arafat was nothing but a terrorist, and his return to Palestine in 1994 was met with demonstrations of protest in Israel, which included pogroms, acts of vandalism and assaults on Arabs. Violent opposition against Oslo I manifested in incidents such as Baruch Goldstein's massacre of Muslim worshippers in a mosque in Hebron in February

1994, and especially in the religiously motivated assassination of Prime Minister Rabin by Yigal Amir in November 1995 (Naumkin and Zvyagelskaya, 2005).

Palestinian opponents of the Oslo Accords argued that Israel was not making any substantial or sufficient concessions, that the status of East Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees was not resolved yet, and that accepting the agreement would acknowledge Israel's right to exist on land that the Arabs considered stolen from them. Hamas and Islamic Jihad in particular, increased their attacks on Israel in an attempt to derail the peace process, and in retaliation for the Hebron massacre (Naumkin and Zvyagelskaya, 2005).

Since forces on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides systematically sabotaged implementation of the agreements, tensions continued to rise, and trust in the peace process declined with every passing year. A narrow vote of acceptance for Oslo II in the Knesset, and continued building of settlement in the West Bank, as well as constant attempts to renegotiate the agreements by the Israelis, alienated the Palestinians, who had hoped for more autonomy at a faster pace. Continued attacks by Islamic radicals on the other hand, combined with what Israelis perceived as insufficient action taken against them by Arafat, made the Israelis doubt the validity of Palestinian commitment. The work of anti-Oslo groups such as Peace Watch and Independent Media Review and Analysis (IMRA), whose main work consisted in cataloging Palestinian 'violations' of the peace agreements (Lustick, 1997) did not help to improve relations. Subsequent negotiations at Wye River, Camp David and Sharm al-Sheik never managed to recapture the spirit of Oslo I, in which both parties negotiated in good faith and established a working trust that allowed them to create an atmosphere in which it was possible for

them to come to mutually satisfying conclusions. Finally, in the fall of 2000, Ariel Sharon provoked the second Intifada by visiting Temple Mount, disregarding Muslim sentiment. The backlash has escalated into a spiral of violence which has claimed hundreds of lives, and made it extremely unlikely that either side will be open to negotiation in the near future.

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict has been studied for decades. It would be beyond the scope of this study to list all the theories and approaches that have been used to examine the conflict and its implications. Researchers have looked at the historical events of the conflict (Quandt, 2001; Naumkin and Zvyagelskaya, 2005), the rhetoric of leaders (Donohue and Hoobler, 2002), changes in Israeli security policies and how the peace process impacted them (Gazit, 1998; Smootha 1998), and in recent years the failure of the Oslo Accords (Lustick, 1997; Rabbani, 2001).

The main focus of this study will be Forward- and Backward-Looking rhetoric, as postulated by Zartman (2005). I will also draw upon the work of Donohue and Hoobler (2002) who used Relational Order Theory in order to analyze the rhetoric of political leaders in the months leading up to Oslo II.

## FORWARD-/BACKWARD-LOOKING NEGOTIATION

Zartman's (2005) theory of Forward- and Backward-Looking negotiation strategies assumes that there are two approaches to resolving a conflict. One approach, which he calls 'Negotiating Backward-Looking Outcomes' is focused on ending the violent stage of the conflict, accountability for past wrongs, and compromise outcomes, that do not resolve the underlying conflict. The symptoms will be addressed, while the cause will still be there, ignored or denied beneath compromise outcomes. Backward-looking negotiation is characterized by a focus on the other side, and a zero-sum mentality, which assumes that any gains made by one side, come at the expense of the other.

Forward-looking negotiation on the other hand is characterized by an attempt to resolve the underlying causes of the conflict, in order to create a new framework in which both sides cooperate in order to maintain a positive relationship. Its main characteristics are a focus on similarities between both sides, the acknowledgement of mutual responsibility, and an awareness of the underlying reasons of the conflict, which backward-looking negotiation either ignores or denies.

Zartman's work on Forward- and Backward-looking negotiation strategies ties in with the works of several other researchers, as well as the two major paradigms of international relations theory. Backward-looking negotiation is very reminiscent of Realism, a school of thought which can be traced as far back as the works of Thucydides in ancient Greece. Realists assume that states are unitary actors in an anarchic system. Within this system there is no regulating authority, and each state or nation's goal is to maximize power, or in the neo-realist school developed by Kenneth Waltz, security. This



strive towards power or security, however, will leave other states with a feeling of insecurity or weakness, which they will attempt to remedy by increasing their own power/security. Realism states that negotiations between nations take the form of zero-sum games, and that both sides are more concerned with relative, rather than absolute gains. That means that they will accept outcomes that will give them a lesser payoff than alternative solutions, if the alternative solution gave their opponent a marginally larger payoff than themselves (Hopmann, 1995).

The other major paradigm, Liberalism, corresponds to Zartman's ideas about Forward-looking negotiation. Liberalism sees states as compositions of various forces and interest groups, each with their own agenda. Nations can cooperate in order to overcome the anarchy of the system, and it is possible for regulatory institutions to insure compliance with treaties and agreements. Negotiations are not necessarily zero-sum, and while states still act in their own best interest, it is absolute gains that are important to them, rather than relative gains (Hopmann, 1995).

Both paradigms can be used to illustrate events regarding the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Israel certainly focused on security, as would be expected under Realism, yet the influence of minority groups and special interest groups on the peace process, as well as changes in Israeli policies under Likud and Labor governments are something that is explained by Liberal thinking, rather than by Realism. Neither side can fully explain the policies and processes involved, therefore it seems that both paradigms are necessary in order to understand the situation.

Another distinction between negotiation strategies can be found in the works of Bartos (1995), who distinguishes between the integrative and the distributive negotiation

process. To him, the distributive process is concerned with concession-making, bargaining, and reciprocity. Each side makes a concession that is met by the other side, and the larger the concession one side makes, the larger the reciprocal concession it receives. Integrative negotiation processes on the other hand, are not only concerned with concession-making, but also with finding alternatives which allow both parties to profit. . Bartos found that integrative processes can be more productive, but only if both sides work together in finding new solutions. This is similar to Zartman's Forward-looking processes, in which both sides attempt to find solutions which are beneficial and mutually satisfying to both sides. Here as well, both sides need to cooperate, because if one side uses Backward-looking strategies, while the other side uses Forward-looking strategies, finding mutually satisfying outcomes will be unlikely.

One final researcher whose work is relevant to the use of Forward- and Backward-looking strategies is Herbert Kelman. Kelman's work focuses on what he calls the 'Interactive Problem-Solving Approach' (Kelman 1996, 1997). The Oslo I Peace Accords are an excellent example of this approach. Kelman argues that official negotiations are important, but that participants are under pressure from their governments, their constituents and the world community, to reach an agreement, which does not allow them to develop a working relationship with the other side. His suggestion is independent and unofficial workshops in which representatives from two conflicting parties meet in informal settings. Participants are people who can influence the decision-making process and have shown a desire to engage in negotiations with the other side. Such a group was assembled by the Norwegians in 1993, and since they met informally

they were not under as much pressure to reach an agreement as they would have been in an official setting.

Kelman further argues that informal workshops allow participants from both sides to overcome their cultural stereotypes about each other, and see the other representatives as people with a desire for peace as strong as their own. Accordingly they can develop a working trust, and begin solving small problems first, finding joint solutions that satisfy both sides and ways of implementing them. Eventually, the theory goes, they can discuss the underlying causes of the conflict and find mutually satisfying solutions for them as well. Oslo I showed the development of a working trust and personal relationships between representatives. It also showed an effort by both parties to find solutions for problems. It fell short in solving all the issues that concerned the Israelis and Palestinians, however, postponing negotiations about full Palestinian autonomy, the status of Jerusalem, and the problems of refugees and settlements in the occupied territories. These issues were to be addressed during the Oslo II negotiations several years later. Unfortunately this meant that the Oslo II negotiations were constrained by the problems that according to Kelman impact official negotiations: a set agenda, international and governmental observation and the pressure to reach an agreement that pleased a constituency at home. Therefore both sides approached Oslo II with very different expectations than Oslo I.

To Kelman conflict is driven by the needs and fears of a collective, in this case the Israeli and Palestinian communities respectively, which can pervade all levels of society. Because members of each community are confronted with the conflict on a daily basis, they establish certain opinions of the other side. They see the other side as a threat

to their fundamental needs, such as physical safety and security as well as autonomy and national identity.

It is because of these fears that negotiators must find a balance between demands and concessions. Making too many concessions can be perceived by their own side as compromising essential needs, while making too many demands will be seen as a threat by the other party of the conflict.

Kelman's work is important because it shows a practical application of Zartman's theories. His informal workshops allow the exploration of Forward-looking strategies, and make it possible for both sides to find ways to implement these strategies. They allow for a reframing of the issues, which allows both sides to see the roots of the conflicts, rather than the mere symptoms. By reframing the problem, new and alternative solutions can be found, which is what happened in Oslo I.

In order to analyze statements for Forward- or Backward-looking content, a coding scheme was developed, and later revised by Druckman. This revised coding scheme will be used in this study. It allows for statements to be coded according to their orientation (Forward-, Backward- or Neutral) as well as for their focus (Cause, Process, and Outcome). By using this coding scheme, it will be possible for coders to analyze a statement and assign to it one of seven conditions: Forward-Cause, Forward-Process, Forward-Outcome, Backward-Cause, Backward-Process, Backward-Outcome and Neutral. This way it will not only be possible to analyze content regarding the use of Forward- and Backward- looking strategies, but also to find out what elements of the conflict the parties focused on in their negotiation. A detailed coding manual is included in Appendix A.

## RELATIONAL ORDER THEORY

An additional theory that will be used in this study is Relational Order Theory (Donohue and Roberto, 1993). ROT was used by Donohue and Hoobler (2002) who analyzed interviews and statements by leading Israeli and Palestinian figures in the months just prior to Oslo II. Relational Order Theory has two dimensions, one measuring interdependence, and one affiliation. This allows the creation of four potential conditions for a relationship, high interdependence/high affiliation, low interdependence/high affiliation, high interdependence/low affiliation, and low interdependence/low affiliation.

In a frame that is both high in interdependence and affiliation, parties interact regularly and have positive feelings about each other. They will actively help the other side achieve their goals, out of a genuine concern for the other party's well-being. Parties in a low interdependence/high affiliation frame generally approve of each other, but do not generally interact with each other. They do not have a problem with the other side achieving their goals, but they will not actively assist them in doing so. A low interdependence/low affiliation frame means that neither side has strong positive feelings for the other, but since they do not generally interact with each other, they do not usually come into conflict with each other. The fourth frame, high interdependence/low affiliation means that two parties that do not like each other have to interact on a regular basis. This leads to conflicts, due to the close proximity of both parties.

In his analysis of the negotiations leading up to Oslo I, Donohue (1998) found that the relational frame changed from the conflict/aggression frame of low affiliation and high interdependence to the unconditional peace frame of high affiliation and high interdependence. Regarding the rhetoric of leaders in the months leading up to Oslo II,

however, Donohue and Hoobler (2002) found that Israeli rhetoric mostly showed high affiliation, but varied in interdependence, while Palestinian rhetoric was low in affiliation and fluctuated between high and low interdependence. Thus the Israelis shifted between the frames Donohue called Conditional and Unconditional Peace, while Palestinians moved between Conflict/Aggression and Isolationist Peace

The goal of Forward-looking negotiation then, if applied to Relational Order Theory, is to create a frame of high affiliation and high interdependence. Both parties work together, cooperating to create a system in which both sides can fulfill their goals. The goal of Backward-looking negotiation on the other hand, appears to be to move away from the frame of low affiliation/high interdependence. Rather than move towards a goal, it aims to move away from the status quo which is characterized by open conflict.

## HYPOTHESES

After reviewing the salient literature, I propose the following hypotheses:

H1: There will be more forward than backward orientation in the pre-Oslo I public discourse.

Even though the Oslo negotiations were held in private, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians had come to the point where both sides were open to agreements in order to end the conflict.

H2: Palestinians will use more backward-looking rhetoric than the Israelis, while the Israelis will use more forward-looking rhetoric than the Palestinians.

Since the balance of power in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict clearly favors the Israelis, it is reasonable to assume that the Palestinian rhetoric is more reflective of a fight-or-flight pattern. Donohue and Hoobler have found that the rhetoric in the Palestinian statements they examined featured a low level of affiliation and mostly moved between the isolationist peace and the aggression frames. Therefore they appear more likely to use backward looking rhetoric as well. The Palestinians' ultimate goal is to reestablish their position in the region, a clearly past-oriented ambition. The Israelis on the other hand focus on a new political reality, with opportunities for joint cooperation.

H3: Forward-looking negotiation is more likely to be used in frames of high affiliation, whereas backwards-focused rhetoric is more likely to contain power messages.

This is due to the psychological constraints described by Kelman, which make it difficult to cooperate with an adversary that is distrusted and disliked.

RQ1: Is any of the three focuses (Causes, Process, Outcome) used significantly more often than the others?



## METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS

In order to answer these research questions, the same documents collected by Donohue and Hoobler (2002) for their research on power and affiliation in the rhetoric leading up to the Oslo I Accords were used. This selection of articles consists of statements made by official representatives in interviews and newspaper editorials. There are a total of 40 articles, 20 from Palestinians and 20 from Israeli sources. The time-frame of the documents ranges from the beginning of January 1993 to July 1993, two months before the agreement was signed.

Donohue and Hoobler scored the articles for power and affiliation, to find the relational framework that each side operated in. I did something similar, in order to find the negotiation strategy and focus of each speaker. Statements were coded for forward/backward orientation, and causes/process/outcome focus. A second coder analyzed several documents, so that I could calculate intercoder reliability. Using Cohen's formula (1960) I calculated kappa to be .918, A forward-backward ratio was established for each document, and intensity was calculated by controlling for the length of each document.

## RESULTS

To test for Hypothesis 1, a paired-samples t-test was conducted, comparing the use of forward-looking and backward-looking rhetoric, regardless of nationality. The paired-samples t-test showed that contrary to my hypothesis, backward-looking rhetoric was used more often than forward-looking rhetoric (total forward:  $M = .231$ ,  $SD = .167$ , total backward:  $M = .293$ ,  $SD = .187$ ). However, this relationship was not significant ( $t = -1.305$ ,  $df = 39$ ,  $p = .2$ ). Thus Hypothesis 1 was not confirmed.

In order to test for Hypothesis 2, paired-samples t-tests were used, in order to examine the ratio of forward-looking to backward-looking statements in relation to the nationality of the speaker. The tests found that Israelis speakers used more forward- than backward-looking rhetoric in their speeches (total forward:  $M = .322$ ,  $SD = .146$ , total backward:  $M = .232$ ,  $SD = .167$ ). However, as with hypothesis 1, the relation was not significant ( $t = 1.567$ ,  $df = 39$ ,  $p = .133$ ). The Palestinians used more backward- than forward-looking rhetoric (total forward:  $M = .139$ ,  $SD = .030$ , total backward:  $M = .355$ ,  $SD = .042$ ). This relationship was found to be significant ( $t = -3.556$ ,  $df = 39$ ,  $p = .002$ ).

Comparing the use of forward- and backward-looking rhetoric by nationality, an independent-samples t-test was used, utilizing nationality as a grouping variable. The test found that Israelis used significantly more forward-looking rhetoric than Palestinians ( $t = 4.085$ ,  $df = 38$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and that Palestinians used significantly more backward-looking rhetoric than Israelis ( $t = -2.148$ ,  $df = 38$ ,  $p = .038$ ). Thus Hypothesis 2 is confirmed by the data.

To test for Hypothesis 3 I looked for correlations between power messages and backward and forward orientation, as well as correlations between affiliation messages

and backward and forward orientation. The variables used were the power and affiliation ratios calculated from Donohue and Hoobler's data, and forward and backward ratios derived from my own data set. I found significant positive correlations between forward-looking rhetoric and affiliation ( $r = .425$ ,  $p = .006$ ) as well as backward-looking rhetoric and power ( $r = .694$ ,  $p < .001$ ). I also found a significant negative correlation between forward-looking messages and power messages ( $r = -.476$ ,  $p = .002$ ) and a negative but non-significant correlation between backward-looking messages and affiliation ( $r = -.217$ ,  $p = .179$ ). Thus Hypothesis 3 is confirmed.

In order to test for my research question, a series of paired-samples t-tests was conducted to compare the means of the ratios in the subcategories. The results can be seen in tables 1 and 2. They show a clear emphasis on backward-cause statements, which were used significantly more often than any other non-neutral statement. This focus on backward-cause statements means that a lot of the rhetoric is accusing and blaming the other party.

Ratios	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Neutral	40	.474024	.1850867
Forward Cause	40	.090443	.0798031
Forward Process	40	.098665	.0938175
Forward Outcome	40	.042122	.0491807
Backward Cause	40	.170938	.1348136
Backward Process	40	.071489	.0909698
Backward Outcome	40	.051186	.0640881
Valid N (listwise)	40		

*Table 1: Variable Means*

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 Forward Cause – Forward Process	-.517	39	.608
Pair 2 Forward Cause – Forward Outcome	3.518	39	.001

Pair 3	Forward Cause – Backward Cause	-2.924	39	.006
Pair 4	Forward Cause – Backward Process	.886	39	.381
Pair 5	Forward Cause – Backward Outcome	2.104	39	.042
Pair 6	Forward Process – Forward Outcome	4.294	39	.000
Pair 7	Forward Process – Backward Cause	-2.463	39	.018
Pair 8	Forward Process – Backward Process	1.208	39	.234
Pair 9	Forward Process – Backward Outcome	2.630	39	.012
Pair 10	Forward Outcome – Backward Cause	-4.942	39	.000
Pair 11	Forward Outcome – Backward Process	-1.833	39	.074
Pair 12	Forward Outcome – Backward Outcome	-.816	39	.419
Pair 13	Backward Cause – Backward Process	3.942	39	.000
Pair 14	Backward Cause – Backward Outcome	5.030	39	.000
Pair 15	Backward Process – Backward Outcome	1.393	39	.171

*Table 2: Paired-Samples T-tests*

There is high focus on forward cause and process statements, which express recognition of causes for the conflict and affiliation for the other side, but there is an equal focus on backward process statements, which show an interest in justice and accountability. There is not much use of outcome statements, forward- or backward- looking. The rhetoric used in these statements is less concerned with finding solutions than with demanding justice or placing blame on the other side.

## DISCUSSION

The data collected for Hypothesis 1 indicates that the rhetorical frame at the time prior to the Oslo Accords was ambiguous. The collected data shows that disregarding nationality, there is no significant difference in the use of forward- and backward-looking rhetoric. A significant forward-orientation would have indicated a genuine desire and willingness to transform the relationship between both sides. A significant emphasis on backward-looking rhetoric on the other hand, would have indicated that both sides had grown tired of the conflict, and therefore willing to reach a compromise agreement. This is not the case in the general rhetoric, which indicates that neither side sees negotiations as more desirable than conflict.

The results of Hypothesis 2, which take a closer look at the rhetoric used by the respective sides, help to make the picture a little less ambiguous. The Israelis use both forward and backward-looking rhetoric in their speeches, with a slight and non-significant tendency towards forward orientation. The Palestinian rhetoric is dominated by backward-looking rhetoric. This indicates that while the Israelis sent mixed signals, reaching out and rejecting at the same time, while the Palestinians were more openly hostile towards the Israelis.

The data collected for Hypothesis 3 also shows that there is a definite correlation between forward-looking rhetoric and affiliation, as well as backward-looking rhetoric and power messages. The correlation is strong enough to be significant, yet not so strong that both concepts would appear interchangeable. The concepts established by Zartman also allow for a slightly more refined analysis, since there are seven categories rather than

three. This way it is possible to discern potential goals and motivations by the type of statement that are predominant in a document, instead of just a general frame.

The results of the research question show the dominance of backward-cause statements, which indicates that both sides saw responsibility for the conflict with the other side. The low use of forward-outcome oriented statements shows that neither side was willing to seriously consider mutual cooperation and a transformation of the relationship in the future. The rhetoric shows that both parties are well aware of their role in the conflict, as evidenced by the relatively high use of forward-cause statements, but see the other side as more responsible.

The results could be explained by events that occurred in the period the speeches were given. News of the talks in Oslo had not been made public, and therefore politicians might have felt it imprudent to appear too soft on the opponent. This would tie in with Kelman's idea of politicians being constrained by public opinion. They could not afford to appear close to the other side, since the public was not yet ready for such a stance. This indicates that there were two levels of dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. On the one hand there were the secret, informal negotiations in Oslo, in which both sides established a relationship which allowed them to find solutions to their problem. On the other hand there was public discourse, which was aggressive on part of the Palestinians, and ambiguous on part of the Israelis.

Another factor is that at this point of time the Palestinian Intifada had been going on for five years, disrupting the everyday life of many Israelis. Thus many Israelis demanded a hard line in dealing with the Palestinians, and that the government provide for their security, while others were more willing to make concessions in order to achieve

peace. Thus Israeli politicians needed to be responsive to both points of view in their constituency, and sent mixed messages. To the Palestinians, however, the Intifada was a tool that gave them power at the negotiating table. While the Intifada was going on, they had to be taken seriously, and were able to make demands. Thus it was in the best interests of Palestinian leaders to appear as aggressive, anti-Israel, and fan the flames of rebellion with their speeches. To appear conciliatory towards Israel, would appear to undermine the efforts and sacrifices that those engaged in the Intifada had made.

To find out more, studies using speeches from the time period immediately after the announcement of the Oslo Accords, as well as following years would have to be conducted, in order to see whether the rhetorical frame shifted towards either predominantly forward- or predominantly backward-looking statements. Especially interesting would be studies of the rhetoric surrounding major events, such as the Hebron Massacre, Rabin's assassination, and the various peace accords, such as Oslo II and Camp David. A transformation of the conflict into a more cordial relationship, which according to Zartman occurs as a result of successful forward-looking negotiation, would be reflected in a shift of the rhetoric. A shift in the rhetoric towards a more backward-looking orientation on the other hand, would signal that the Oslo Accords failed, and that the relationship between both sides has deteriorated to a point where mutually satisfying solutions are even harder to find.

## LIMITATIONS

A potential limitation of the study, is that it focuses on speeches and interviews, rather than actual negotiation dialogue. There was only one speaker in each document, representing the views of one side. There was no actual dialogue between the involved parties. Rather than work out solutions to potential problems, speakers gave a commentary on the negotiations conducted. Most of the speakers were not actively involved in the Oslo negotiations, and some of them might have been unaware of them. An analysis of a transcript of a summit meeting, for example, might find a higher ratio of outcome-oriented rhetoric, and less talk about causes. It also would allow us to examine sequences in the rhetoric, by looking at points at which the dynamic shifts from forward- to backward-looking, and by analyzing whether there are significant patterns to such shifts.



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## **APPENDIX A Coding Manual**

### **Forward-looking Negotiation**

Forward-looking Negotiation refers to statements that propose cooperation, resolving the underlying issues, finding common ground, and solving the root problem, rather than the symptoms. The role of both parties in the conflict is acknowledged and responsibility for own mistakes is taken. It lays the groundwork for future cooperation and peaceful coexistence, proposes institutions and political systems to ensure the implementation of the agreements, and attempts to prevent future conflict between both parties.

### **Backward-looking Negotiation**

Backward looking Negotiation places responsibility and blame on the other party. Demands for reparations and accountability are part of backward-looking strategies, as are calls for justice or punishment. Only the actions and mistakes of the other side are pointed out, and little or no concessions are made. The solutions are usually compromise agreements, in which neither side gives up much, and neither side gains much. A zero-sum mentality pervades the negotiation process, and the underlying causes of the conflict are not addressed. There is no real resolution, and no real way to assure compliance with the agreements.

## Causes

In forward-looking negotiation, Causes address the underlying root of the problem, the responsibility both sides have and the commonalities between both parties. The general attitude shifts towards the positive. Backward-looking negotiation, however, focuses on actions by the other side, and demands accountability and punishments for past atrocities and injustices. The focus is on ending the conflict, rather than managing or resolving it.

## Processes

Forward-looking statements that focus on processes express affiliation and emphasize commonalities between the two sides. Visions of the future after the conflict are discussed, as well as visions on how to achieve this future. Backward-looking rhetoric on the other hand, focuses on accountability, on justice for past wrongs, and addresses the symptoms of the conflict, but evades the underlying cause.

## Outcomes

Forward-looking negotiation is concerned with transforming the relationship between the two sides. In order to develop this new relationship, both parties commit to work together for a common goal, in order to allow both sides to coexist peacefully. Backward-looking negotiation, however, does not resolve the underlying conflict. Gains are made at the loss of the other party, either side only makes small gains if at all. A cease-fire is the proposed way to end the fighting, rather than a lasting peace.

## **Examples:**

### **Forward-Causes**

- 1) Sending youths with explosives strapped to their chests is a way to make martyrs,  
but it will not help our cause in the long run
- 2) It is clear that our presence in the Gaza Strip is creating problems.
- 3) Islamist radicals undermine the work that has been done by the Palestinian  
Authority.

### **Backward-Causes**

- 1) The fighting has to stop, no matter what started it
- 2) The Israelis need to stop building settlements and killing our people
- 3) Arafat needs to crack down on insurgents, and punish those that would hurt Israel
- 4) Sharon cannot continue to kill our children and destroy our houses

### **Forward- Processes**

- 1) Israelis and Palestinians both want the fighting to stop.
- 2) I think you are making a very valid point.
- 3) We once lived here peacefully, we can do so again

### **Backward-Processes**

- 1) Israel has to remove the settlers and give us full autonomy in the occupied  
territories

- 2) We will withdraw part of our forces from the Golan Heights, provided Arafat takes more action against Hamas
- 3) There is no problem, it is just a bunch of fanatics that hate everything we stand for

#### **Forward-Outcomes**

- 1) We can work together and build something bigger, something better
- 2) There will be a day when Israelis and Palestinians are no longer enemies

#### **Backward-Outcomes**

- 1) We have stopped the violence by killing off the terrorists
- 2) We will have Jerusalem, and we will have Temple Mount, because they are ours
- 3) We will allow limited autonomy in select areas, provided the Palestinians agree to limited military presence of our forces.

## APPENDIX B

### **Coding categories for forward and backward-looking approaches**

#### *A) Causes – Theory/Frame for the Conflict*

##### Forward

- 1) Acknowledge responsibility, recognize role in conflict
- 2) Awareness of reasons or sources of conflict

##### Backward

- 3) Focus on ending the conflict
- 4) Blaming: other side, past injustices, recognizing impasse

#### *B) Processes*

##### Forward

- 1) Express affiliation, focus on commonalities
- 2) Visions of the future discussed

##### Backward

- 3) Accountability/promise of justice
- 4) Evade the presence of underlying issues

#### *C) Outcomes/ Proposed Outcomes*

##### Forward

- 1) Joint gains/mutual cooperation, proposed outcomes
- 2) Proposals about forming a new relationship

##### Backward

- 3) Cease fire
- 4) Relative gains - claiming

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