Understanding J Street in their own words: The Self and the Other in J Street's discourse during the Obama and Trump administrations.

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The Self and the Other in J Street's discourse during the Obama and Trump administrations.

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1. Introduction.

Founded in 2008, J Street, a pro-Israel political advocacy group in the United States (US), aimed to promote diplomatic solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while advocating for the interests of both Israelis and Palestinians. Standing apart from conservative pro-Israel lobbying groups, J Street swiftly championed a liberal and nuanced approach to the conflict, hinting at a potential shift in the discourse surrounding US foreign policy towards Israel, especially in the context of the longstanding 'special relationship' between the two nations.

The so-called 'special relationship' between Israel and the US, which has endured since the 1960s, has persisted throughout the administrations.[1] Since the Oslo Accords, the US has actively advocated for negotiations aimed at facilitating the creation of a Palestinian state, with the objective of ensuring Israel's security within borders reflecting those in place prior to 1967.[2] Numerous scholars contend that the enduring 'special relationship' between the US and Israel is significantly sustained by the endeavors of the 'Israel lobby' in the US.[3] The Israel lobby consists of formal organizations that try to advance their cause of expanding US support for Israel.[4] The lobby defines itself by its political agenda and being 'pro-Israel' in its own interpretation of what this means in practice.[5] While the Israel lobby is not uniform in its composition, one of its most prominent and influential entities is the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) which has the greatest financial capability and the closest connections to American politicians.[6] Until the 1980s, AIPAC had the authority to represent the pro-Israel community and increasingly influenced the policy dialogue regarding Israel in Congress. AIPAC lobbies for maximum economic and military assistance and the greatest possible political freedom for Israel, a stance long supported by a significant portion of the

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[1] Ilai Saltzman, "Not So "Special Relationship"?: US-Israel Relations During Barack Obama's Presidency," Israel Studies, Volume 22, Number 1, (2017): 52.

[2] Eytan Gilboa, "Trump: The most pro-Israel president in American history," *Clingendael Institute,* 08 July, 2020, https://spectator.clingendael.org/en/publication/trump-most-pro-israel-president-american-history.

[3] John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007) 19.; Paul Findley, *They Dare to Speak Out: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 2003), 28; Edward Tivnan, *Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy* (Simon & Schuster, 1987).

[4] Gregory Harms, *Straight Power Concepts in the Middle East: US Foreign Policy, Israel and World History* (London: Pluto press, 2010): 157.

[5] Dov Waxman, "The Israel Lobbies: A Survey of the Pro-Israel Community in the United States," Israel Studies Forum, Vol. 25, No. 1 (2010): 7-9.

[6] Ibid.

Jewish American community. Furthermore, there was not an effective opposition to AIPAC, neither in the Jewish community or in Congress.[7]

AIPAC is part of the centrist lobby in the contemporary pro-Israel landscape in the US.[8] Being 'pro-Israel' for the centrist lobby generally means supporting the Israeli government at all time regardless of its policy. Most important to the centrist lobby and AIPAC is ensuring American support for Israel, which is seen as crucial to Israel's security. The centrist generally reject any form of American pressure on Israel and try to limit public criticism of Israel. The latter also avoids taking strong stances on controversial issues.[9] While some factions within the centrist lobby, including AIPAC, formally advocate for a two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they do not publicly advocate for the creation of a Palestinian state. Nor do they publicly denounce Israel's occupation of the West Bank. Actually, they frequently defend the growth of Israeli settlements in the West Bank.[10] The centrist lobby is more interested in resolving security challenges in Israel than in advancing peace negotiations with the Palestinians that will inevitably require concessions from Israel.[11] As Dan Fleshler puts it:

> Their organizational cultures are most comfortable when they can take forceful stances against Israel's 'enemies'—e.g., Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, and far-left critics of Israel. They tend to be less comfortable about enthusiastically supporting peace initiatives that require a certain amount of trust in Arab intentions or bold territorial compromises.[12]

Likewise, AIPAC encouraged donors to support candidates who advocated for American adoption of Israeli positions opposed to Palestinian interests. These positions included the construction of a wall in the West Bank, deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice, and Israel's refusal to divide Jerusalem for a two-state solution.[13] Keith Kiely notes in his discourse analysis on AIPAC's discourse during the Clinton administration that the organization aligns with various groups, including Republicans, Christian Zionists and Likud, all of which prioritize Israeli security. By exploiting domestic political differences, both AIPAC and Netanyahu's government reinforce a strict stance on Israeli security and terrorism

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[7] Michael Thomas, *American Policy Toward Israel: The Power and the Limits of Beliefs* (UK and New York: Routledge, 2007), 40.
[8] Waxman, "The Israel Lobbies," 10.
[9] Freedman, Israel and United States, 92-93.
[10] Dan Flesher, Transforming America's Israel Lobby : The Limits of Its Power and the Potential for Change (Washington D.C, Potomac Books, 2009): 64-65.
[11] Shaiel Ben-Ephraim, "The Israel Lobby and Relations between the American Jewish Community and Israel," Routledge Companion to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Vol.1, (2023): 439.
[12] Flesher, *Transforming*, 64-65.
[13] Ben-Ephraim, "The Israel" 439.

threats, depicting Palestinians primarily as violent and untrustworthy, marginalizing their role in the peace process, while simultaneously emphasizing representations of the primacy of Israel's security needs in the peace process.[14]

However, during the Obama administration, the newcomer J Street generated sufficient momentum and AIPAC was significantly challenged.[15] The purpose of this group was partly to provide balance to the then existing pro-Israel lobby with AIPAC as the largest and best-known party, which, according to J Street, did not properly represent the Jewish American community and their differing views on Israel.[16] Soon after its founding, J Street became the leading left-of-center pro-Israel lobby group with a large amount of media attention.[17] J Street's impact on the Israel lobby became evident during the Obama administration. Despite AIPAC's efforts to block the Iran Nuclear deal, J Street's lobbying in favor of it ultimately prevailed.[18]

Problem Statement.

In AIPAC's discourse, the *Self*, US and Israel, are portrayed as strong, resilient allies deserving unwavering support. AIPAC emphasizes the critical nature of Israeli security needs, frequently intertwining them with American interests.[19] Conversely, Palestinians are depicted as the *Other*, a threat to the security of Israel. They are often portrayed as inherently violent, with aspirations for statehood marginalized, perpetuating their exclusion from meaningful participation in peace-building efforts.[20]

In contrast to AIPAC, J Street claims to seek to represent the moderate viewpoint of most American Jews who are pro-Israel but critical of Israel's behavior towards Palestinians. They advocate for an assertive American engagement in the peace process, applying pressure on both Israel and Palestinians.[21] They aim to achieve a negotiated two-state solution based on the 1967 borders with agreed land swaps. J Street emphasizes diplomacy and engagement, opposing the occupation of the West Bank and supporting the creation of a Palestinian state.[22]

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[14] Kiely, *U.S. "Foreign"* 250-251.
[15] Saltzman, "Not," 58.
[16] Dov Waxman, *Trouble in the Tribe : The American Jewish Conflict over Israel* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2016), 163.
[17] Ibid. 164.
[18] Saltzman, "Not," 60.
[19] Kiely, *U.S. "Foreign"* 270-273.
[20] Ibid. 251.
[21] Ben- Ami, *A New*, 94– 95.
[22] Waxman, "The Israel," 12; James Traub, "The New Israel Lobby," *The New York Times Magazine,* 9 September, 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/13/magazine/13JStreet-t.html;

Given these different positions, the research question guiding this thesis is: How does J Street discursively construct the *Self* and the *Other* and what US foreign policy does it advocate on the basis of this identity construction? By deconstructing and analyzing J Street's discourse, this study aims to understand their perspective on the conflict and the policies they advocate in their own words. According to J Street founder Jeremy Ben-Ami, J Street's goal is to be "a political voice for friends of Israel who care deeply about its long-term survival and security and who are willing, when appropriate, to break with Israeli government policy. Who are ready to say that the United States may need to press not only the Palestinians and Arabs to make peace, but the Israelis, too."[23] This message has appealed to many people and J Street has grown exponentially since its founding and is an established name within the broader Israel lobby.[24]

In sum, J Street was founded to counter the existing pro-Israel lobby, addressing overlooked issues like Palestinian rights. In essence, they position themselves as an alternative to the existing pro-Israel lobby.[25] However, no research has yet been conducted that deconstructs J Street's discourse, like Kiely did for AIPAC. The aim of this research is to analyze J Street's discourse to understand how they construct the Self and the Other and how they envision US foreign policy towards Israel. This opens the possibility for further research, such as a comparative analysis of AIPAC and J Street's discourse, to determine if there are significant differences between the two in their approach to the conflict. This will help assess whether J Street offers an alternative to AIPAC's perspective.[26]

Method.

This research follows a poststructuralist methodological approach in order to understand how J Street discursively construct the Self and the Other and what US foreign policy it for advocate for on the basis of this identity construction. Poststructuralism asserts that language is crucial in the construction of meaning. Through language, objects, subjects, states, living beings and material structures are endowed with meaning and identity. This

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[23] Jeremy Ben-Ami, *A New Voice for Israel: Fighting for the Survival of the Jewish Nation* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 106.

[24] Waxman, *Trouble*, 80. ; OpenSecrets, " Client Profile: J Street," OpenSecrets.org, accessed 23 April 2024, https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/clients/summary?cycle=2023&id=D000052457.

[25] Waxman, "The Israel" 81.

[26] Roxanne Lynn Doty, "Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines," International Studies Quarterly 37, no. 3 (1993): 304; Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 6.

perspective contrasts with positivist and empiricist approaches, which regard language as a neutral tool for recording information.[27] According to poststructuralism's relational concept of identity, identity is always defined in relation to what it is not. Viewing identity as a social construct involves understanding it as collectively formed rather than an individual possession.[28] While individuals perceive themselves as having identities, these are constructed within and influenced by the broader social context.[29] A poststructuralist methodological approach offers a research framework directly relevant to foreign policy conduct. This framework posits that policies are contingent upon representations of the threats, countries, security issues, or crises they aim to address. Foreign policies are tasked with attributing meaning to the situation and constructing the objects within it. In this process, they articulate and draw upon specific identities of other states, regions, peoples, and institutions (Other), as well as the identity of a national, regional, or institutional Self.[30]

As discussed, poststructuralism emphasizes the crucial role of language in constructing meaning. Additionally, poststructuralism suggests that policies are shaped by representations of threats, countries, and crises. Therefore, in analyzing how J Street uses its discourse to construct identities, poststructuralism provides a relevant theoretical framework. Since poststructuralism posits that identity is relational, it is essential for understanding how J Street differentiates the identities of the Self from the Other. By viewing foreign policy as a discursive practice, poststructuralism highlights how policies and identities are mutually constitutive. This perspective is therefore appropriate to uncovering how J Street's constructions of the Self and the Other inform the foreign policy positions it advocates.[31]

To operationalize this theoretical framework, a discourse analysis will be conducted on J Street's press releases. The connection between poststructuralism and discourse analysis lies in the assertion that language constructs meaning and identity, influencing how foreign policies are formulated, justified, and understood.[32] Discourse analysis is founded on the assumption that language actively shapes and constructs the very fabric of social reality. Discourse contributes to the formation and expression of ideas, beliefs, power dynamics, and social norms

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[27] Hansen, *Security*, 16.
[28] Ibid. 16-17.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid. 5-6.
[31] Ibid. 17.
[32] Kevin Dunn and Iver Neumann, *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research* (University of Michigan Press, 2016), 2.

within a given community or society.[33] Moreover, discourse can act as a framework for understanding the world and for explaining foreign policy decisions.[34] Through making connections among various elements, a discourse shapes the meanings attributed to subjects, objects, and practices, consequently offering a specific framework for interpreting and comprehending social reality.[35] Within this context, discourse not only serves as a means of communication but also plays a role in shaping and constructing justifications, narratives, and rhetorical strategies that underpin and legitimize specific courses of action in the realm of foreign policy. Therefore, discourse intertwines with foreign policy, serving as an instrument for justifying and framing the underlying motivations, interests and desired outcomes associated with specific policy choices on the international stage.[36] The objective for foreign policymakers, along with other entities seeking to exert influence on foreign policy, is to present a foreign policy that is perceived as both legitimate and implementable by the audience. Thus, the crux of political efforts lies in establishing a link between policy and identity.[37] Forming subject identities shapes discourse and policy actions by positioning individuals in relation to each other and establishing a specific reality.[38]

In this thesis the methodology as suggested by Roxanne Doty's is followed. Doty's theory in the critical postpositivist research tradition, looks at how meanings are formed and how spaces are created that either allow or limit political action.[39] Centering on discursive practices, Doty contends that meanings are generated and attributed to various social subjects and objects through the language used.[40] She explains that discourses, which are systems of statements that make individual sense, consist of linguistic concepts, categories, metaphors, models, and analogies that create meanings. Based on Shapiro, Doty asserts that discursive practices can impose meaning on the policymaking world, thereby creating 'reality', upon which foreign policy is based.[41] This approach examines how meanings and realities are constructed to enable or restrict political action, emphasizing the relational nature of identity

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[33] Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London; Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2002), 9.

[34] Dunn and Neumann, *Undertaking*, 47.

[35] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985), 105.

[36] Falk Ostermann, Roxanna Sjöstedt, "Discourse Analysis and Discourse Theories," *Routledge handbook of foreign policy analysis methods,* ed. Patrick A Mello, Falk Ostermann (Routledge, 2022), 105.

[37] Hansen, *Security*, 25.

[38] Doty, "Foreign," 304-305.

[39] Ibid. 297-300.

[40] Ibid. 298.

[41] Michael Shapiro, *The Politics of Representation-Writing Practices in Biography, Photography, and Political Analysis* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), 116.

and its impact on policy decisions. Therefore, Doty's methodology is particularly useful for understanding the interaction between discourse, identity formation, and foreign policy advocacy in J Street's lobbing efforts.

To enable effective discourse analysis, Doty identifies the key analytical categories of *predications, presuppositions*, and *subject positioning*. *Predication* entails associating specific qualities with particular subjects by utilizing predicates, along with adverbs and adjectives that modify them. Predicates serve to confirm qualities, attributes, or properties of subjects. The ascription of attributes to subjects plays a crucial role in constructing identities for these subjects and informing us about their capabilities.[42] In this analysis, for each selected subject of J Street's discourse, a table is used to list the associated predicates and practices, the numbers in brackets refer to the textual source of the statement which can be found in the appendix. This research used the coding program Atlas.ti to code the selected documents and connect the predicates and practices to the selected subjects. The codification is done manually, with the program assisting in maintaining the codes systematically and comprehensively. The first stage of the analysis began deductively by coding the subjects in the text, initially focusing on those corresponding to Kiely's selected subjects, with Israel and the US as the Self and Palestinians as the Other. This research, however, further distinguished between the Obama and Trump administrations, as the research period covers both. Additionally, a distinction was made between Palestinians and Hamas, as this differentiation was evident in the selected texts. The second stage of the analysis was inductive, letting the text generate its own codes by connecting the subjects to its described qualities. Similar codes were merged to form broader categories. This process included interpreting the text to derive meaning. The specific codes linked to the subjects shaped the predicates and practices, which can be found in the tables.

Presuppositions refer to assumed knowledge that creates a world where certain truths are accepted. Therefore, identifying presuppositions in a text involves looking for implicit assumptions or background knowledge that the text relies on or takes for granted. For instance, when Israel is depicted as a 'democratic homeland,' it implies that it has a stable political system that effectively represents its citizens. Conversely, the discourse suggests that Palestinians lack such a system, emphasizing internal divisions and the necessity for reform. This assumption suggests that Israel's political structure is strong and efficient compared to what is perceived as the dysfunctional governance of the Palestinians.

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[42] Doty, "Foreign," 306.

Subject positioning involves creating a 'reality' by linking specific subjects and objects. This process happens in relation to other subjects and objects. The relationships a subject occupies largely define its identity.[43] In practice, the analysis of subject positioning involves deconstructing texts to identify how subjects are constructed in relation to one another. Presupposition and predication establish various relationships among subjects and objects, contributing to subject positioning.[44] Textual mechanisms such as presupposition and predication not only construct subjects and objects, but also establish various types of relationships among subjects and between subjects and objects. Key types of relationships that position subjects include opposition, identity, similarity, and complementarity.

Time Frame and Text Selection

When selecting texts that instantiate the discussive practices of J Street, certain criteria were adhered to.[45] Hence, this thesis exclusively relies on statements disseminated by J Street via its official website, as they represent the organization's self-authored positions and because they are freely available on J Street's official website. Due to the limitations of time and space in this research, not all discourse produced by J Street is analyzed. Therefore, a selection of texts from J Street during the Obama and Trump administrations has been chosen for analysis. All J Street Press Releases are accessible via the official J Street website under 'Press Room'. In the selected period, there were a total of 946 press releases available. First, a selection was made based on titles that implied the content was related to foreign policy. Then, the text was read and selected based on the following criteria: The texts discuss topics relevant to US foreign policy in the region, particularly related to Israel and the Palestinians. The press releases include J Street's policy recommendations or advocacy efforts to understand the implications of their identity constructions. Additionally, a variety of topics was ensured to obtain a comprehensive view of J Street's discourse. A total of 68 texts were selected from January 2009 to November 2020. Of these, 49 were issued during the Obama administration (January 20, 2009 - January 20, 2017) and 19 during the Trump administration (January 20, 2017 - January 20, 2021). The press releases were distributed across the timeframe as follows: 2009 (14), 2010

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[43] Doty, "Foreign," 306.
[44] Ibid. 306.
[45] Hansen, *Security*, 76.

(10), 2011 (7), 2012 (4), 2013 (1), 2014 (4), 2015 (3), 2016 (4), 2017 (13), 2018 (7), 2019 (1), and 2020 (1).[46] All selected texts are detailed in the appendix.

The significance of the administrations lies in their different and impactful approaches to US foreign policy concerning Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. From the moment he took office, it was immediately clear that Obama was more critical of Israel than any of his predecessors, which resulted in a rather cool relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. Donald Trump, on the other hand, is known as the most pro-Israel president to date and had warm ties with Netanyahu.[47] Later in this thesis, the US foreign policy towards Israel under the two administrations will be discussed.

The limitations of this research include the restricted selection of analyzed texts and the constrained time frame. Additionally, the discourse analysis and the manual coding process entail subjective interpretation.

Literature Review

The Israel Lobby

This literature review aims to situate this research on how J Street discursively constructs the Self and the Other within the broader context of studies on the Israel lobby in the US. By examining diverse scholarly perspectives, it becomes evident that while much has been written on the influence of pro-Israel lobby groups like AIPAC, there is a gap in literature on the newer groups like J Street.

Researchers have differing views on what constitutes the Israel lobby and which organizations and institutions are part of it. Mearsheimer and Walt define it as "organizations or individuals consistently promoting a pro-Israeli agenda in the U.S" and "a convenient shorthand term for the loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively work to shape U.S. foreign policy in a pro- Israel direction," which is a rather broad definition. [48] Ben-Ephraim describes the Israel lobby as "formal organizations primarily concerned with influencing American foreign policy in a direction they believe is beneficial to Israel."[49] In this thesis, the definition of Dov Waxman is adopted who defines the Israel lobby as "an assortment

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[46] The number signifies the quantity of press releases.
[47] Gilboa, "Trump."
[48] Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel,* 112.
[49] Ben-Ephraim, "The Israel" 435.

of formal organizations that try to influence American policy toward Israel in a direction that they believe is in Israel's interests. What distinguishes these groups from other organizations involved in lobbying the US government on Middle East issues is that every group in the pro-Israel lobby is motivated by a fundamental concern for Israel's welfare and a commitment to ensuring Israel's existence as a Jewish state."[50]

To position this research within the existing scholarly landscape, it is relevant to highlight the most prevalent scholarly debate concerning the Israel lobby in the US. Similar to broader discussions about ethnic lobby groups, most academic literature on the pro-Israel lobby in the US has concentrated on the extent of its influence on US foreign policy, with a particular emphasis on conservative pro-Israel organizations such as AIPAC. Within this literature, two schools of thought can be identified. One group considers the influence that the pro-Israel lobby exerts on US foreign policy to be enormous and impactful.[51] An example of this is the book "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," by John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, which is a controversial and influential work that examines the influence of the pro-Israel lobby on US foreign policy, with particular attention given to AIPAC, recognized as one of the most powerful lobbying entities in Washington, D.C. The book caused great academic attention to the pro-Israel lobby. The reason for this was that the authors argue that the Israel lobby exerts an exceptional degree of influence over American decision-making in the Middle East, often at the expense of broader U.S. national interests.

The other school of thought argues that when a lobby group's stance conflicts with the president's position on an issue, the lobby group has little to no chance of influencing foreign policy as desired. This viewpoint also suggests that the influence of the pro-Israel lobby in the US is often overstated.[52] For example, Michael Thomas claims that AIPAC loses credibility and power if it diverges from its broad base of support on issues important enough to energize those supporters.[53]

Scholars have increasingly focused on studying social movements from an agency-oriented perspective. This approach emphasizes how actors strategically employ cultural

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[50] Waxman, *Trouble*, 150.

[51] Tivnan, *Jewish Political*; Janice Terry, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Role of Lobbies & Special Interest Groups* (London: Pluto, 2005); Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel*.

[52] Stephen Garret, "Eastern European Ethnic Groups and American Foreign Policy," *Political Science Quarterly* 93 (2) (1978); Will Moore, "Ethnic Minorities and Foreign Policy," *SAIS Review* 22 (2) (2002); Thomas, *American;* Jonathan Rynhold, Divide and Rule: Discursive Authority, Identity Dissonance, Ethnic Lobbies, and US Foreign Policy, or How President Obama Defeated AIPAC over the 2015 Iran Deal, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 17(2); Flesher, Transforming"; Nathan Adrian, "Israel Lobby." *Israel Studies Volume* 24, Number 2, (2019); Waxman, "The Israel."

[53] Thomas, *American Policy*, 170.

elements to further their objectives within the cultural opportunity structure. In the words of Rynold:

> Since the cultural turn in the study of social movements, attention there has focused increasingly on an agency-orientated approach that analyzes the ways in which actors strategically deploy symbols, identities, and other cultural facets to achieve their objectives within the "cultural opportunity structure.[54]

Rynhold claims that existing scholarly works primarily concentrate on material factors when examining the impact of diaspora lobbies on US foreign policy and that these material factors are insufficient to explain the influence of the lobby. The two factors that he believes are important are 'discursive authority and identity dissonance'.[55]

Similarly, Keith Kiely also focusses on discourse in his research. He challenges the argument of Mearsheimer and Walt that the direction of US foreign policy in the Middle East can be substantially attributed to the pro-Israel lobby. Kiely contends that the perceived influence of the pro-Israel lobby in the US stems from its ability to operate within and leverage existing themes in foreign policy discourse to advance its policy objectives.[56] Kiely suggests that AIPAC's effectiveness lies in its capacity to mirror and reinforce prevailing representations to promote its policy agenda. Kiely demonstrates this by analyzing the discourses of both AIPAC and The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) using the analytical framework developed by Doty of predications, presuppositions, and subject positioning and comparing this with discourse of the Clinton administration on Israel and the Palestinians during the 1990s. WINEP, founded by a former director of research at AIPAC, is a significant pro-Israel think tank specializing in U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. Although Kiely includes some WINEP papers from the selected period to provide additional context, his analysis primarily centers on AIPAC, characterized as the most widely recognized and publicly visible pro-Israel organization.[57] Kiely looks how they shape the identities of the US and Israel versus the identity of the Palestinians, with their lobbying objectives being a logical extension of these constructed identities. The aim of Kiely's research is to provide an alternative perspective on the influence of Israel lobby groups in shaping US foreign policy, focusing on

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[54] Rynhold, "Divide", 5.
[55] Ibid 6.
[56] Kiely, *U.S. Foreign,* 14-15.
[57] Ibid. 184-185.

the Clinton administration's endeavors to facilitate peace between Israel and the Palestinians in the 1990s.[58]

In this research, Kiely's research serves as a model for a structured approach to comprehend how J Street constructs the notions of Self and Other through discourse, and how such construction influences the formulation of foreign policy objectives. Kiely's research concentrates on analyzing the discourse of AIPAC and WINEP during the 1990s, specifically in the context of the Clinton administration's peace initiatives between Israel and the Palestinians. In contrast, this research analyzes J Street's discourse during a different time period, encompassing two administrations rather than just one. Due to these variations in focus and timeframe, Kiely's research is not suitable for a direct comparative analysis. Therefore, this research cannot determine whether J Street is a discursive alternative to AIPAC, which is therefore not the objective of this research. However, the available information does provide sufficient grounds to generate preliminary insights in their discursive differences. A future direct comparative analysis can be conducted based on these preliminary findings.

J Street

It is clear that the most prominent academic literature on the Israel lobby in the US focuses on conventional groups such as AIPAC. The existing literature on J Street mainly underscores the evolving landscape of Israel advocacy in the US, particularly with the emergence of J Street as a significant player within the lobby.

Both Dov Waxman and Dan Flesher argue that the dynamics of the pro-Israel lobby in the US have shifted, with the emergence of organizations like J Street challenging the traditional dominance of groups like AIPAC. Waxman highlights how J Street represents a liberal and dovish approach to Israel advocacy, lobbying for a two-state solution and greater US pressure on Israel to advance the peace process. Waxman suggests that this fragmentation presents both challenges and opportunities for influencing US policy towards Israel and the Middle East.[59] Waxman, Pressman and Ilai Saltzman indicate that the fragmentation of the pro-Israel lobby and the erosion in the hegemonic status of AIPAC after the founding of J Street

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[58] Ibid. 69.
[59] Waxman, *Trouble*, 163-168.

led to a progressive public approach towards Israel.[60] Flesher elaborates that traditional pro-Israel factions, have long monopolized discourse on Middle East policy. Fleshler argues that J Street's advocacy for progressive approaches to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and broader regional matters offers a vital alternative perspective within the American Jewish community.[61]

This viewpoint is shared by Uzi Rebhun, Chaim I. Waxman, and Nadia Beider who argue that J Street's emergence signifies a significant shift in the relationship between American Jews and Israel. The authors highlight J Street's role as an alternative pro-Israel lobby, reflecting changing views among American Jews who seek a more balanced approach to Middle East policy.[62] Shain and Rogachevsky elaborate on this viewpoint by claiming that despite assimilation into American society, liberal Jews express ongoing concerns regarding the preservation of Jewish identity and survival. Advocacy groups like J Street are seen as embodying this concern, serving as platforms for preserving Jewish identity while advocating liberal values, especially regarding Israel. J Street's role is portrayed as multifaceted, embodying both Jewish particularism and universalism. The authors emphasize the complexity of J Street's positioning, particularly in navigating criticisms of Israeli policies while maintaining a pro-Israel stance.[63] For example, many American Jews found the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem very offensive, which J Street lobbied against.[64] The Obama administration seemed committed to a diplomatic peace process by, for example, demanding that Netanyahu freeze settlement construction. This made J Street's lobbying goals seem achievable.[65] In contrast, the overall goal of the pro-Israel lobby in the US before the Obama administration was to ensure that the US shields Israel and advocates on its behalf in international bodies such as the UN and seeks to prevent Israel from being punished for its policies.[66]

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[60] Saltzman, "Not," 61; Dov Waxman and Jeremy Pressman, "The Rocky Future of the US-Israeli Special Relationship," *The Washington quarterly*, Vol.44 (2) (2021): 81.

[61] Flesher, *Transforming*, 71-72.

[62] Uzi Rebhun, Chaim Waxman and Nadia Beider, "American Jews and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process: a study of diaspora in international affairs," in *Reconsidering Israel-Diaspora Relations*, ed. Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Judit Bokser Liwerant, and Yosef Gorny (Brill, 2014), 364.

[63] Yossi Shain and Neil Rogachevsky, "Between JDate and J Street: US Foreign Policy and the Liberal Jewish Dilemma in America," in *Diaspora Lobbies and the US Government: Convergence and Divergence in Making Foreign Policy*, ed. by Josh DeWind and Renata Segura, (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2014), 68-70.

[64] Rosenblum and Flesher, "The Quest," 273.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Saltzman, "Not," 59

The current literature on J Street indicates that it has become a major player in the existing pro-Israel landscape in the US and clarifies how it has achieved this status. It is evident that J Street is portrayed as an alternative to conventional pro-Israel lobbying groups like AIPAC. However, there is still a lack of research focusing on J Street and its discursive formation of lobbying objectives, which unpacks how J Street frames its policy goals, constructs its narratives, and mobilizes support for its advocacy agenda.

2. **Historical Context**

American Exceptionalism in Foreign Policy

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the discursive construction of identity by J Street, delineating its portrayal of Self and the Other and deconstructing what US foreign policy J Street advocate for on the basis of this identity construction. Hence, before the analysis, it is important to discuss the historical context upon which the constructed identities are based, considering the influence of American identity on its foreign policy decisions. Therefore, it is important to elaborate on the concept of American exceptionalism.

According to Kiely, American exceptionalism is a core aspect of American identity, asserting the nation's unique role in history and its commitment to universal values.[67] Every presidential candidate correlated their perception of Israel with their individual interpretation of American exceptionalism. President Obama associated Israel's origins with a multiethnic allure that mirrored America's commendable dedication to social progress and rejuvenation. Conversely, President Trump highlighted Israel's steadfast commitment to security as a blueprint for "making America great again," with his endorsement of walls and profiling in Israel validating domestic racial anxieties.[68] Furthermore, the concept of American exceptionalism is related to American ethnic lobby groups because it possibly shapes their narrative, influencing their advocacy efforts by portraying their objectives as consistent with American values and interests. By framing the US identity in a particular way and positioning it in relation to other actors, J Street shapes its lobbying objectives and advocacy efforts. This

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[67] Kiely, *U.S. Foreign,* 172.

[68] Amy Kaplan, *Our American Israel: The Story of an Entangled Alliance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 275.

portrayal directly impacts the range of policy options J Street considers viable within the context of US-Israel relations.[69]

Kiely interpretation hold that the US itself as a model for other nations, promoting democracy and freedom worldwide. Kiely examines nineteenth-century intellectual discourse to illustrate how American exceptionalism shifted from religious to political terms, presenting America as a global leader in democracy. He uses discourse analysis to identify key signifiers of America's divine purpose and tracks these themes through different historical periods and texts, demonstrating how these themes have shaped and oriented American identity discourses since before the founding of the US.[70] According to Constance Duncombe this US representation of itself is reflected in two main strands of thought: the exemplary strand, which emphasizes leading by example and avoiding foreign entanglements, and the missionary strand, which advocates for active global engagement to advance American values. Shared experiences of civil religion, migration along with engagement with popular culture, contribute to this identity.[71] Furthermore, American exceptionalism is a central theme in U.S. foreign policy discourse, shaping discussions on the nation's global role.[72]

The US has historically aimed to foster stability in the turbulent Middle East, though approaches have varied across administrations. This commitment highlights the US' role as a superpower ensuring regional order and promoting democratic principles for lasting stability.[73] Hassan provides a historical analysis demonstrating how the ascendance of the US as an imperial power, driven by its aim to exert control over its external surroundings, relies heavily on its conceptualization and exertion of dominance over the Middle East.[74] Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, the framework of domination has been integral in shaping the perception of the Middle East as a strategic entity subject to control. This framework has facilitated a form of imperialistic dominance by major powers and has been consistent throughout the ascendance of the US as a global power.[75]

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[69] Kiely, *U.S. Foreign,* 172.
[70] Ibid. 98-104.
[71]Constance Dumcombe, "Representation, Recognition and Foreign Policy in the Iran–US Relationship," European Journal of International Relations 22, no. 3 (September 2016): 630.
[72] Trevor B. McCrisken, "George W. Bush, American Exceptionalism and the Iraq War," in America and Iraq: Policy-making, Intervention and Regional Politics, edited by David Ryan and Patrick Kiely (London: Routledge, 2009), 181-183.
[73] Ville Sinkkonen, "American Narratives of Order-Building in the Middle East: Dashed Visions on the Nile," in *Political Narratives in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Wolfgang Mühlberger and Tuomas Alaranta, Perspectives on Development in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region (Springer, 2020), 140.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Oz Hassan, "Crisis, Narratives, and the Construction of US-Middle East Relations: Continuity and Change in World History and Trump's America First," Global Affairs 6, no. 1 (2020): 122-125.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks underscored the inadequacy of traditional stability-maintenance methods reliant on alliances with authoritarian regimes in addressing emerging security threats from non-state actors. In response, the administration adopted a binary classification of states as either 'good' or 'evil,' advocating transformative measures that challenged conventional sovereignty norms. The administration argued that widespread adoption of (neo)liberal ideals would align America's national interests, security, and hegemony with its core values. Consequently, the US would assume a hegemonic role in the Middle East, leading efforts to establish and uphold a new regional order anchored in democratic governance.[76]

The Special Relation

Israel serves as an exceptional case that validates the concept of American exceptionalism. Both Americans and Israelis have viewed the creation of Israel as highly significant, viewing it not merely as a fulfillment of nationalist ambitions, but also as a symbol of global enlightenment, a paradigm of renewal, and a manifestation of anti-colonialism. In the aftermath of World War II, liberals saw Israel's birth under U.N. auspices as a realization of internationalist principles.[77] Amy Kaplan characterizes this discourse in her book: *Our American Israel: The Story of an Entangled Alliance*. She uses memoirs, archives, and cultural narratives to show how works like Leon Uris's *Exodus* framed Israel's story in a way that resonated with American values and ideals, making it easier for Americans to connect with and support Israel's cause.[78] Kaplan explains how US perceptions have been influenced by strategic interests and cultural representations, emphasizing the intertwined nature of American and Israeli exceptionalism.[79]

The enduring bond between the US and Israel is characterized by a blend of strategic interests and shared values, as analyzed by Eytan Gilboa. Gilboa traces historical support from the US for Israel's establishment post-World War II, highlighting strategic alignment during the Cold War against Soviet-backed Arab states. Gilboa emphasizes that the softer aspects of the US-Israel special relationship include historical similarities between the two nations, such as shared Judeo-Christian roots, the experience of nation-building through immigration, and

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[76] Sinkkonen, "American", 144
[77] Kaplan, "Our," 6.
[78] Leon Uris, *Exodus* (New York: Bantam Books, 1959).
[79] Kaplan, "Our."

common values like liberal democracy. David Tal supports this assertion by examining how religious discourse, specifically the Judeo-Christian tradition, underpins the ideological foundations of American democracy and freedom. Tal builds his claim on historical documents, speeches by American leaders, and policy papers that highlight the religious and cultural rhetoric used to justify the US-Israel alliance, illustrating how this discourse has historically reinforced their unique bond.[80] These soft elements have remained relatively constant.[81]

Since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the US has actively acted as a mediator between the parties, motivated by its awareness of the costs to Israel and the strain that its backing for Israel has placed on US-Arab relations.[82] Despite occasional disapproval of certain Israeli policies, such as settlement construction in the West Bank and Gaza Strip before 2005, US officials and many lawmakers have consistently viewed Israel as a crucial regional ally. Critics of US aid to Israel argue that such assistance facilitates Israeli arms acquisitions without adequate oversight of actions deemed contentious, particularly concerning Palestinian treatment.

Obama also made efforts to advance an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement, underscoring the administration's conviction in the US' moral responsibility and capacity to broker peace. The Obama administration aimed to appease the Arab and Muslim world, facilitating a systematic withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan and diminishing the US "regional footprint" in the Middle East, in response to the political and economic burdens incurred.[83] From the Obama administration's perspective, the record of the 'special relationship' that existed between the US and Israel could get in the way of this and the administration believed it needed to push for an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement as soon as possible.[84] Israel was viewed as the party most capable of compromise. Consequently, Obama urged Israel to cease settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, aiming to reopen dialogue with the Palestinians. Obama also expressed Palestinian rights more forcefully than any previous president, reflecting a changing discourse allowing for greater criticism of Israel. However, he did not translate rhetoric into policy changes. For example, his refusal to consider sanctions against Israel for settlement expansion undercut his policy goals for Israeli-

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[80] David Tal, "The Judeo-Christian Tradition and the US-Israel Special Relationship," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 34, no. 4 (2023).
[81] Eytan Gilboa, "US-Israel Relations at 75," *Israel Affairs* 29, no. 3 (May 2023): 473-474.
[82] Ibid. 476.
[83] Saltzman, "Not" 52.
[84] Ibid.

Palestinian negotiations. In February 2011, the Obama administration vetoed a UN resolution condemning Israeli settlement expansion, despite aligning with its stance. Ambassador Susan Rice justified the veto, arguing that condemning settlements would not advance negotiations. Also, The Obama administration vigorously opposed the Palestine Liberation Organization's bid for statehood recognition and full UN membership. Despite initial support for Arab Spring movements, Obama criticized Palestinians' pursuit of statehood recognition.[85]

While the US engagement in facilitating Israeli-Palestinian peace may have a limited influence on Israeli national security, a more impactful strategic misalignment between Israel and the US centered on Iran's nuclear program. Despite strong criticism from Israel, Obama pursued the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Iran, which allowed Tehran to maintain a significant number of centrifuges, lifted constraints on ballistic missile and conventional arms trade, and released approximately $150 billion in Iranian assets. Netanyahu condemned the agreement as a "historic mistake," cautioning against the potential emergence of a "terrorist nuclear superpower."[86] Despite criticism that Obama would be 'anti-Israel', annual military aid for Israel rose from $2.55 billion to $3.1 billion, as a result of a memorandum of understanding between the US and Israel during the George W. Bush administration.[87] In summary, despite the Obama administration's more critical stance towards Israel, it did not change the fundamental security commitment to Israel.

Trump had a different view on the relationship between Israel and the US than Obama.[88] Like Obama, Trump proposed that the US could act as an impartial peace-maker.[89] Trump differentiated himself from Democrats on foreign policy by associating Israel with US interests. During his campaign trail it was already an important point for Trump to make clear that during his presidency he would withdraw from the Iran Nuclear Deal. In his remarks on foreign policy in April 2016, he stated that Obama has been terrible for Israel. In addition, he claims that a threat to Israel is a threat to the US. As he entered office, Trump immediately showed that he wanted to build a strong relationship with Israel by, for example, inviting Netanyahu to the White House within a month and going on his first trip abroad to Israel. He implemented a number of impactful policy changes like the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, moving

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[85] Ruebner, "Obama's" 55-56.
[86] Saltzman, "Not" 57.
[87] Ruebner, "Obama's" 59.
[88] Rotem Nusem, "A Year of Readjustment: The Trump Administration's New Policy on Israel and Iran," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2018): 55.
[89] Paul MacDonald, America First? Explaining Continuity and Change in Trump's Foreign Policy," *Political science quarterly*, Vol.133 (3) (2018), 402.

the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and recognizing the Golan Heights as part of Israel. [90] Trump also attempted a peace initiative, with the "Deal of the Century" what intended to bring about peace between Israel and the Palestinians, but it was rejected by the latter, highlighting the continued difficulties in doing so.[91]

In sum, by examining the historical and ideological foundations of US-Israel relations, this chapter clarifies the context in which J Street operates and how the Obama and Trump administrations each connected their views of Israel with their own interpretations of American exceptionalism. These insights pave the way for a deeper exploration of J Street's specific identity constructions.

3. Analysis

This poststructuralist discourse analysis explores how J Street discursively constructs the identity of the Self (US and Israel) and the Other (Palestinians and Hamas) during the Obama and Trump administrations and what US foreign policy it advocates on the basis of this identity construction. All selected documents of J Street are examined focusing on the textual mechanisms outlined in the methodology: predication, presupposition and subject positioning. The primary objective of this study is to deconstruct J Street's discourse in order to understand them in their own words. Furthermore, in the concluding part of each section, this research aims to tentatively compare the findings with those of Kiely, who analyzed the discourse of AIPAC and WINEP during the Clinton administration using the same textual mechanisms. The information gathered offers preliminary insights into the similarities and differences in the identity construction of these two lobby groups. Important to note is that this project does not involve a direct comparative analysis due to notable differences between this research and Kiely's.

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[90] Amnon Cavari, "Trump and Israel: Exploiting a Partisan Divide for Political Gains*," Israel Studies* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2022): 156.
[91] Gilboa, "Us-Israel," 477-479.

Predication

The tables present the predicates and practices associated with distinct subjects. These attributes were discerned by extracting descriptive characteristics, adjectives, adverbs and practices attributed to the respective subjects.[92] The predicates and practices outlined in the tables show the indicative of a dominant discourse in which specific attributes are consistently assigned to different subjects across various documents, thereby shaping their identities.[93] Each table is structured to facilitate understanding of these assignments by listing distinct subjects in the rows and displaying the associated qualities, attributes or practices in the columns. The numbers in brackets indicate the textual source of each statement, detailed in the appendix. This structure helps to illustrate the dominant discourse by highlighting consistent predicates and practices assigned to subjects across different texts.

Firstly, this analysis examines the predicates and practices of the Self (US and Israel). The coherence observed in the predicates and actions attributed to the US aligns with the concept of American exceptionalism, particularly in its role of assuming leadership in conflict resolution and advancing regional stability and security.

Subject: United States	Predicates and Practices
	Is able/Need to take leadership in the solution of the conflict. [1] [5] [6] [7] [10] [11] [14] [16] [17] [18] [21] [23] [26] [27] [28] [29] [30] [31] [35] [41] [50] [57] [65]
	Commitment to bold leadership in the Middle East and Israel. [2] [4] [5] [6] [8] [19] [23] [25] [56]
	Cutting US aid to the PA is unhelpful. [39]
	Has interest in regional stability and security. [1] [2] [5] [11] [13] [19] [23] [24] [26] [34] [56]
	Iran Nuclear deal is essential for US interest. [42] [44]
	Is Israel's closest ally. [17] [39] [43] [49] [50] [67]
	Is not doing enough for the peace process. [28] [49] [59] [60]
	It is vital to US interest that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon. [12] [15] [19]

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[92] Doty, "Foreign," 306.
[93] Ibid. 310.

	Longstanding view that Jerusalem's status should be determined by a peace agreement. [56]
	Opposing Palestinian incitement and terror. [50]
	Opposing Israel's settlement expansion and home demolitions. [27] [38] [46] [49] [50]
	Principled leader in the international system, advocating for the rights and freedoms of people across the globe. [61]
	Should go beyond words against Israeli settlement expansion. [4] [27] [38] [46] [49]
	Should hold Iran accountable. [15] [43] [44]
	Will grand Israel the most generous military aid. [46] [48] [49]
	Withdrawal from UNHRC undermines US and Israeli interests. [61]
	Working on a broad international coalition to address the Iranian nuclear program. [17] [19]

J Street's predicates and practices associated with the US emphasize its ability and need for assertive leadership in the region. For example, assertive US leadership is reiterated with predicates like the US being "Able/need to take leadership in the solution of the conflict" and showing "Commitment to bold leadership in the Middle East and Israel." Additionally, Middle East involvement is highlighted through predicates indicating the US's interest in regional stability and security and efforts in addressing the Iranian nuclear program. The combination of these representations creates a particular kind of subject and allows J Street to advocate for a policy in which the US plays an (international) leadership role. Furthermore, the predicates and practices illustrate a strong relationship between the US and Israel, evident in the predicate "Is Israel's closest ally" and "Will grand Israel the most generous military aid". Which is also evident in the predicate connected to Israel "Is great friends with the US rooted in shared interests and values."

The list of predicates and practices connected to Israel, as outlined below, highlights security concerns. Israel is seen as having the right to defend itself proportionately to protect its citizens and territory from threats, such as rocket attacks.

Subject: Israel	Predicates and Practices
	Accept that a Palestinian state should exist. [7]
	Bears responsibility for Gaza suffering. [58]
	Forces killing Palestinians. [58] [59] [60]

	Has the right to defend itself proportionately. [40] [41] [60] [64]
	Is a democratic home for the Jewish people. [1] [5] [9] [11] [13] [14] [16] [17] [23] [24] [25] [26] [27] [29] [32] [36] [38] [40] [55] [65] [67]
	Holds military operations in Gaza. [2] [41]
	Is doing counterproductive actions for peace. [9] [14] [16] [24] [25] [49] [51]
	Is expanding Settlements. [7] [9] [17] [25] [27] [46] [49] [50] [51] [55] [67] [68]
	Is great friends with the US rooted in shared interests and values. [17] [39] [46] [49] [67]
	Is not an "Apartheid" state. [32]
	Is violating international law. [14] [36] [68]
	It is vital to the interest of Israel that Iran not obtain nuclear weapons. [15] [42] [44] [48]
	Must recognize the present Palestinian Authority under President Mahmoud Abbas. [41]
	Need to improve lives and respect the rights of Palestinians. [4] [6] [59]
	Need to push two-state solution for peace and security. [4] [6] [9] [16] [18] [25] [30] [35] [40]
	Need to stop Settlement activity. [4] [5] [6] [8] [9] [10] [13] [14] [27] [38] [46] [49] [50] [51] [55]
	Has security concerns. [2] [4] [5] [21] [24] [32] [40] [52] [64]
	Need to ease the Gaza blockade. [2] [16] [33]
	Need to use diplomacy to resolve the conflict. [1] [23] [26] [29] [36] [39] [41]
	Participating in direct talks with the PA. [18] [23] [24]
	Solving the conflict is crucial for Israel's survival. [9] [11] [14] [26] [36] [59]
	The capital is without question Jerusalem. [56]
	Victim of rocket attacks. [1] [2] [4] [20] [33] [35] [40] [41] [52] [62] [64]

Furthermore, Israel is portrayed as an active and responsible agent in the conflict, shaping its outcomes. The list shows that Israel is held partially responsible for the unsuccess of the peace process. Examples of these are predicates and practices such as: "Is doing counterproductive actions for peace" and "Need to stop Settlement activity". This contrasts with the discourse of AIPAC regarding Israel's role in the peace process. As Kiely describes regarding the AIPAC/WINEP discourse:

The key to the success of the peace process is represented as essentially Palestinian acquiescence to the US–Israeli position which prioritizes the security needs of Israel in what this discourse represents as 'realistic' and important considerations over any territorial compromise which would be the result of negotiations.[94]

Furthermore, Israel is repeatedly described as the democratic home for the Jewish people, suggesting a nation rooted in Jewish history while upholding democratic principles. However, this assertion may be under pressure due to the unresolved conflict. For example:

"Only a two-state solution that resolves the underlying conflict will ensure Israel's safety, security and legitimacy as the democratic homeland of the Jewish people and provide the Palestinian people with freedom, dignity and self-determination." [40]

When focusing on the two administrations, notable is that the Obama administration's actions emphasize diplomatic engagement, dedication to achieving a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and efforts to enhance international relations, evident in the predicates and practices: "Has commitment for Two-State Solution," and "Calls for Arab moves toward normalization with Israel." These traits underscore a commitment to peace and stability, which aligns the practices and predicates associated with the US in general. Additionally, J Street highlights that the administration has strengthened international resolve on Iran and advocated for diplomatic engagement.

Subject: Obama (administration)	Predicates and Practices
	Calls for Arab moves toward normalization with Israel. [9]
	Calls for Palestinian steps to end incitement to violence. [9]
	Has commitment for Two-State Solution. [5] [6] [7] [11] [23] [24] [50]
	Has made clear that both sides have obligations to fulfill. [7] [13]
	Insists on a settlement freeze. [7] [9] [10 [25]
	Leaves Israel move secure. [48]
	Must step up to ensure viable two-state solution to the conflict. [11] [27] [28]
	Opposing a binding resolution on the two parties. [50]

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[94] Kiely, *U.S. "Foreign"* 256.

	Puts efforts in strengthening the resolve of the international community on Iran. [15] [22] Want diplomatic engagement with Iran. [12] [15]

In contrast, the predicates and practices associated with the Trump administration indicate a pattern of behavior characterized by a disregard for established norms and actions that inflame tensions and conflicts, such as "Breaks with 50 years of bipartisan US policy on Israel", "Has drastically undercut his own diplomatic credibility" and "Is a reckless and destructive actor". These attributes suggest a different approach to governance that diverges from traditional diplomatic norms and international consensus. Based on the Trump administration's predicates and practices, J Street gives the impression that Trump would exacerbate the difficulty of resolving the conflict rather than assuming the leading role in finding a solution.

Subject: Trump (administration)	Predicates and Practices
	Not committed to engaging with important international institutions or fighting for universal values. [61] Breaks with 50 years of bipartisan US policy on Israel. [57] [65] Donated money for settlements. [51] Faces a growing domestic and international outcry. [61] Goal to end the conflict. [56] Has a complete lack of concern for the Palestinian position. [57] [59] Has adopted disastrous agenda of Israel's far-right. [63] [65] [68] Has drastically undercut his own diplomatic credibility. [57] [63] [65] Ignored call to prevent home demolitions anywhere. [68] Is a reckless and destructive actor [57] [60] [63] [67] Is making the conflict worse. [51] [55] [63] [65] [66] Makes a profound mistake with moving US embassy to Jerusalem for the peace process. [56] [57] [60] Ongoing failure by this administration to support a two-state solution. [59] Should restate American opposition to Israeli settlements. [51] [55] Shows a dangerous disregard for the safety of both Palestinians and Israelis. [66]

	Uses rhetoric and actions that express indifference to human rights. [61]

When analyzing the predicates and practices associated with the Other (Palestinians and Hamas), it shows that Palestine and Palestinians suggest a theme of being deeply affected by the conflict and having aspirations for freedom and independence.

Subject: Palestine, Palestinians	Predicates and Practices
	Are protesting against Israel. [58] [59] [60]
	Have interest in avoiding actions that make a resolution harder to achieve. [9]
	Deeply affected by the conflict. [20] [33] [58]
	Facing evictions and demolishment. [14] [55]
	Failing to acknowledge any historic Jewish connection to Jerusalem. [57]
	Feeling frustrated over Trump's reckless and provocative decision. [57]
	Gaza remains a huge concern. [33]
	Growing movement is calling for one state outcome. [34]
	Have aspirations for freedom and independence. [24] [31]
	Have legitimate claims as descendants of refugees. [63]
	Is being attacked by Israel. [41]
	Dependent on foreign aid and Hamas' patronage. [33] [39]
	Killed by Israeli forces. [58] [59] [60] [62]
	Live under military rule in the West Bank. [32]
	Must accept Israel's existence. [6] [35]
	Use of violence and incitement. [5] [6] [7] [8] [10] [24] [29] [35] [45] [50] [57]
	Need compassion, solutions and immediate assistance. [2] [4] [58] [59]
	Need humanitarian aid. [2] [4] [33] [40]
	Need to build a functioning united political system. [3] [6] [40]
	Participation in direct talks with Israel. [23]
	Serve in nearly every major branch of Israel's government. [32]
	Should be freed from the oppressive rule of Hamas. [53]
	Should continue to advocate for pragmatic and effective American involvement. [57]

	Suffering population. [1] [2] [5] [16] [20] [21] [40] [41] [53] [58] [62] [64]
	Support two-state solution. [28] [29] [57]
	Urged to take steps to achieve a two-state solution and regional comprehensive peace. [16] [18] [40] [58] [59]
	Will seek and gain membership in the International Criminal Court. [36]

These characteristics indicate a collective struggle, resilience and victimhood among Palestinians in their quest for self-determination and resolution. Moreover, Palestinians are often associated with 'violence and incitement', in the context of the analyzed discourse. Palestinians are required to demonstrate their commitment to the peace process by acknowledging the legitimacy of Israel and renouncing acts of violence and incitement. This is consistently referenced in the discourse as the foremost Palestinian contribution to the peace process. Conversely, Israel is expected to halt the construction of new settlements. Furthermore, the predicates and practices indicate a lack of a united political system, evident in the practice "Need to build a functioning united political system". This is perceived as an aspect that hinders their role as participants in the discussions for a resolution to the conflict. For example:

"While there is a long way to go before such an agreement is final, steps toward Palestinian reconciliation are steps in the right direction as there will be no meaningful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict until the Palestinian people speak with a unified voice." [3]

Hamas' predicates and practices are connected to violence and oppression. However, its actions are distinguished from other Palestinians. The distinction lies in their approaches to addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. J Street's discourse presents Palestinians in a more nuanced manner, portraying them as seeking resolution, advocating for their rights, and expressing grievances over Israeli actions. Conversely, Hamas' actions, such as weapon smuggling and control over Gaza, are seen as big obstacles to peace and stability. For example:

"The people of Gaza need compassion, solutions and immediate assistance. We call on Palestinian leaders to resume efforts to negotiate a path to political reconciliation. We call on Hamas to stop inciting violence within peaceful protests. And, echoing numerous Israeli peace organizations and political parties, we call on the Israeli

government to ease the siege of Gaza, help alleviate the suffering of its people and actively pursue a two-state resolution to the underlying conflict." [58]

Subject: Hamas	Predicates and Practices
	Armed resistance against Israel. [20] [58]
	Maintaining strong hold and control over Gaza. [20] [21] [33] [58] [60]
	Must put an immediate end to attacks on Israel. [62]
	Bears much responsibility for desperate condition in Gaza. [58] [60]
	Smuggles weapons into Gaza. [1] [33]
	Uses violence and terror. [29] [33] [41] [58] [59]

Overall, the predicates and practices shown in the tables is indicative of a dominant discourse, wherein attributes are assigned to different subjects to shape their characteristics across the analyzed documents. Predicates and practices linked to the US reflect a positive 'Self' identity shaped by American exceptionalism, highlighting its leading role in conflict resolution and regional stability. Similarly, predicates associated with Israel underscore its relationship with the US, agency in the conflict and concerns about (inter)national security. According to J Street's discourse, the unresolved conflict challenges Israel's identity as a democratic homeland for the Jewish people. At the same time, they attribute partial responsibility to Israel for the impasse in the peace process. Furthermore, J Street's discourse underscores a difference in the predicates and practices connected to the Obama and Trump administrations. The Obama administration is depicted favorably forming a positive 'Self' identity that is compatible with the identity of the US. In contrast, the Trump administration's actions are portrayed negatively, deviating from norms and escalating tensions.

The predicates and practices attributed to Palestinians position them as the 'Other' characterized by associations with victimhood, political instability, and the necessity to renounce acts of violence and incitement. While Palestinians are depicted as seeking resolution, advocating for their rights, and expressing grievances over Israeli actions, Hamas' predicates

and practices are specifically tied to violence and oppression, such as weapon smuggling and control over Gaza. This highlights that while both groups are considered 'Other', contrasting perceptions exist of their roles and strategies within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Comparing the findings with the predicates associated with subjects in AIPAC and WINEP documents in Kiely's research, both J Street and AIPAC/WINEP's predicates and practices underscore the significant role of the US in the peace process and advocate for robust American involvement to facilitate resolution. They both emphasize security concerns, particularly emphasizing the necessity for regional stability and Israel's security. However, a distinction arises in J Street's nuanced perspective on Israel, which acknowledges both positive attributes and criticisms. Both sets of predicates emphasize the imperative for Palestinians to commit to peace by renouncing violence and recognizing Israel. J Street's approach is marked by a more nuanced outlook, accentuating Palestinian aspirations for a resolution.[95]

Presupposition

Background knowledge is produced by the textual mechanism of presupposition, which allows one to construct a particular reality with certain truths. By analyzing the selected documents, it becomes evident that meanings rely on binary contrasts. These opposing pairs act as the guiding principles, forming the fundamental logic of the discourse.[96] Text deconstruction involves identifying oppositional structures in the discourse, where one term is positioned hierarchically above another. This dominant term, the Self, is highlighted against the subordinate term, which is considered the Other. Additionally, texts may exhibit relationships of identity, similarity, and complementarity in their rhetorical strategies. These concepts help to explain how meaning is constructed and conveyed within texts.[97] Upon analyzing the discourse employed by J Street, two fundamental oppositions were identified. These oppositions structured the discourse, serving as a framework to distinguish between the Self and the Other.

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[95] Ibid. 199-205.
[96] Doty, "Foreign," 306.
[97] Ibid.

Progressive/Backward

During the Obama administration, the US was portrayed as a model of progress and development on a global scale. This portrayal also implies an existing understanding that shapes a particular worldview, where the US is seen as inherently progressive. This underlying assumption facilitates the notion that the US is promoting regional stability and is a global leader. The predicates and practices outlined in the table such as of 'Commitment to bold leadership in the Middle East and Israel', 'Interest in regional stability and security' and the US's role as a 'Principled leader in the international system, advocating for the rights and freedoms of people worldwide' support this assumption. The leading role of the US is repeatedly mentioned as a crucial aspect of peace. For example:

"With the continued wide gaps between the parties readily apparent, with the window of opportunity for a two-state solution rapidly closing, and with little political leadership coming from the parties or the region, the only hope for progress lies with strong, sustained U.S. leadership." [11]

In J Street's discourse, the US and Israel are linked due to their shared interests and values, evident in their role as 'close allies' and 'best friends'. This bond underscores their strong bilateral relationship and collaborative efforts. Furthermore, the survival of Israel is considered vital to the interests of the US in the region. For example:

"The window of opportunity for progress is brief and closing. This could well be the last opportunity to save the two-state solution. We believe that Israel's future as a Jewish, democratic home, not to mention vital American interests in the region, hang in the balance." [23]

Obama's depicted identity aligns with the US's depicted identity and commitment to global leadership. In contrast, Trump's policy seems to contradict American exceptionalism. Despite the potentially adverse impact of Trump's actions on the peace process, the US retains both the capacity and obligation to play a constructive role in facilitating negotiations for a comprehensive two-state solution. Moreover, the discourse during Trump's presidency reflects a steadfast belief in the enduring role of the US in promoting peace and stability in the region, notwithstanding the challenges posed by prevailing policies. For example:

"In the long run, however, the US can and must play a vital and productive role in facilitating negotiations toward a comprehensive two-state solution. The harmful actions of President Trump can be overturned by future administrations and leaders who understand the value of serious diplomacy and the urgent necessity of resolving this conflict."[67]

Palestinians are mentioned frequently in the context of a dysfunctional political system. Mainly the differences within the Palestinian leaderships from the West Bank and Gaza is perceived as having a negative effect on the peace process, further emphasizing the need for reform or improvement. The call for a unified government implies that the current Palestinian political structure is ineffective. For example:

"We believe that the United States, Israel and the international community should work with and support a unified Palestinian government that is able to conduct political negotiations for peace with Israel." [3]

Furthermore, Palestinians are urged to renounce violence, indicating an underlying assumption of their association with or involvement in violent activities and lack of advancement in their political behavior. Conversely, the depiction of the US and Israel as progressive entities coincides with the underlying assumption of a well-functioning political system, contrasting with the perceived necessity for Palestinians to renounce violence underscoring the lack of progressiveness.

Power/Vulnerability

The discourse frequently presents the US and Israel as dominant actors possessing agency and control over their actions and circumstances. The powerful position of the US can be attributed to the aforementioned portrayal of the country as a model of progress on a global scale. Furthermore, the predicates associated with Israel underscore the perception of Israel as possessing the capability to advance its interests, determine the trajectory of the conflict and exert influence on international dynamics to its benefit. The latter assertions are further bolstered by Israel's strong relationship with the US. Practices such as "Military operations in

Gaza," "Need to ease the Gaza blockade" and "Is great friends with the US rooted in shared interests and values" underscore Israel's capacity to assert its military control and diplomatic influence, indicating its ability to drive the direction of the conflict.

In contrast, Palestinians are portrayed as being in a position of vulnerability and marginalization, lacking agency and control over their own destinies. This is also evident in the list of predicates and practices, showing themes as dependency on foreign aid and Hamas' patronage, living under military rule in the West Bank, displacement and loss of property, a lack of protection and security, suffering population and the need for humanitarian aid mentioned. This portrayal underscores a power dynamic wherein the US and Israel are depicted as exerting influence and making decisions that shape the course of events, while Palestinians are depicted as having limited autonomy and being subject to the actions and policies of more powerful actors.

The presuppositions reveal a pattern in the discourse of J Street. There is a delineation between the perceived roles and responsibilities of the US, Israel (Self), versus the Palestinians (Other). The US and Israel are depicted as powerful actors with significant agency and control over their actions, while Palestinians are portrayed as vulnerable and marginalized, lacking autonomy and subject to external influences. Conversely, Palestinians are frequently associated with dysfunctionality and violence, further emphasizing their subordinate position in the discourse.

When comparing J Street's discourse with the presuppositions found in AIPAC and WINEP documents analyzed by Kiely, both J Street and AIPAC/WINEP use oppositions in their discourse. They both describe Palestinians as embodying themes of backwardness and violence, depicting them as lacking agency over their destinies. This contrasts with the perceived agency and control of the US and Israel, who are seen as similar objects in the context of shared values and objectives. J Street acknowledges the Palestinian need for political reform and addresses their vulnerabilities. In contrast, AIPAC/WINEP focus more on portraying Palestinians through the lens of terrorism and opposition to peace, with less emphasis on their vulnerabilities.[98]

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[98] Kiely, *U.S. Foreign,* 205-209.

Subject Positioning

Subject positioning involves how individuals, groups, or entities are arranged in relation to others within a discourse, which can range from opposition to similarity and complementarity. This hierarchical arrangement is evident in the type and extent of agency assigned to each subject, determined by their interactions within the text. Textual mechanisms presupposition and predication help construct these relationships and positions, allowing us to understand the social and political dynamics within a discourse.[99]

As discussed earlier, discursive practices shape policy creation and implementation by defining subject positions and framing issues. This influences perceptions of international relations, identifying allies and adversaries, and prioritizing policy goals. By presenting certain situations as natural, these practices can legitimize or challenge foreign policy decisions in the public eye.[100] In the discourse of J Street, the US and Israel occupy comparable subject positions within the discourse. Additionally, the described shared values and interests between Israel and the US enhance their subject positioning in the discourse, underscoring their alignment in strategic interests and values. Both the US and Israel are depicted as possessing a level of agency that enables them to exercise leadership, mediate negotiations, formulate and implement policies, and evaluate issues within their respective contexts. According to the discourse of J Street, this agency implicates them in bearing responsibility for advancing Palestinian rights and achieving a resolution to the conflict that accommodates the needs of both parties.

The distinction between the discourse of the Obama administration and that of the Trump administration does not significantly impact the subject positioning within J Street's discourse. While the discourse tends to portray the Obama administration more favorably for its efforts to promote peace and stability compared to the Trump administration, it still maintains confidence in the ongoing role of the US in fostering peace and stability in the region. This suggests that regardless of the specific administration in power, the discourse underscores the enduring capability and responsibility of the US to facilitate negotiations for a comprehensive two-state solution.

J Street's discourse shows a nuanced recognition of Palestinian agency, recognizing their responsibility while highlighting the constraints that hinder their participation in the peace

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[99] Doty, "Foreign," 306.
[100] Ibid. 314.

process. This portrayal suggests that Palestinians face limited opportunities to engage in or influence the peace process, yet they are still held accountable for their actions, such as renouncing violence. The discourse reinforces this portrayal by contextualizing Palestinians within a framework of a dysfunctional political system. Furthermore, J Street's narrative shapes the subject positioning of Hamas and other Palestinian factions differently. While Palestinians are depicted as seeking resolution and voicing grievances, Hamas is portrayed as resorting to violence, exerting oppression, and maintaining control in Gaza. This portrayal serves to delegitimize Hamas as a constructive participant in the peace process. This differential portrayal influences their respective subject positioning within the discourse.

By analyzing the discourse of J Street using the textual mechanisms predicates, presupposition and subject positioning, it becomes evident how J Street constructs the Self and the Other. Within J Street's discourse, the portrayal of the US and Israel as the Self emphasizes their active engagement, accountability and commitment to promoting peace and stability in the region. They are depicted as capable actors, able to mediate negotiations and implement policies to impact the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. J Street emphasizes the importance of both the US and Israel taking proactive measures to advance Palestinian rights and work towards a resolution to the conflict, thereby underscoring their responsibility in the peace process. Palestinians and Hamas as the Other are depicted as having limited agency and facing constraints that hinder their engagement in the peace process, in need of help and support. Palestinians are urged to renounce violence and are portrayed as victims of mistreatment by Israel and a dysfunctional political system, while Hamas is shown resorting to violence and control in Gaza. This highlights a hierarchical relationship where the Self is presented stronger, with greater agency and responsibility, compared to the Other, which is depicted as needing guidance and improvement.

Considering the hierarchical organization of these subject positions and the resulting normalization of certain 'reality', the question arises what US foreign policy it advocates on the basis of this identity construction. Based on the discourse of J Street, it would be illogical for the US to refrain from taking a leadership role in resolving the conflict, advocating for a two-state solution. Moreover, the portrayal of the US as a progressive force, in alignment with Israel's interests, implies an active role for the US in shaping the course of the conflict and fostering peace and stability in the region. While J Street's discourse remained consistent in its commitment to promoting peace and stability in the region, there was a shift in what foreign policy was deemed possible or feasible under different administrations. During the Obama administration, J Street's discourse portrayed a foreign policy agenda that emphasized

diplomatic engagement, commitment to a two-state solution, and efforts to promote regional stability. J Street's discourse expressed confidence in the US' role as a mediator and advocate for peace, highlighting the importance of sustained diplomatic efforts and multilateral cooperation in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In contrast, the discourse on the Trump administration suggested a departure from these priorities. The policies of the Trump administration were received as undermining diplomatic norms, causing tensions, and deviating from longstanding bipartisan support for Israel. Despite this, the discourse maintained a belief in the enduring role of the US in promoting peace and stability in the region with a different presidential administration.

Israel is frequently depicted as a democratic homeland for the Jewish people, aligned with the US in fundamental values and interests. Consequently, within this shared framework, Israel's right to self-defense, when proportional, is deemed legitimate, acknowledging Israel's security concerns. J Street's discourse also holds Israel accountable for specific actions, particularly concerning the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. By highlighting the negative impact of these actions on the peace process and the two-state solution, the discourse underscores the importance of Israel taking responsibility and facing consequences for its role in the peace process impasse. Additionally, J Street's discourse suggests the importance of US diplomatic pressure on Israel to aligning with US interests and objectives. Though sanctions against Israel are not explicitly mentioned, the discourse suggests the possibility of consequences, like restricting US aid, in response to annexation efforts.

When comparing J Street's discourse with the subject positioning found in AIPAC/WINEP documents as analyzed by Kiely, both discourses portray the US and Israel as progressive entities with significant control and leadership in the peace process. US leadership in the peace process is seen as necessary. Both emphasize security as a central theme and stress the importance of Palestinians renouncing violence. However, J Street acknowledges the constraints limiting Palestinian participation in the peace process, while AIPAC/WINEP places less emphasis on Palestinian vulnerabilities and are less likely to hold Israel accountable or put pressure on Israel for the failures in the peace process. Palestinians are depicted as obligated to adhere to guidelines set by Israel and the US, while Israel's non-compliance is often attributed to external factors such as Palestinian inflexibility or violence.[101]

Overall, the preliminary comparative analysis of J Street's and AIPAC/WINEP's construction of Self and Other, as examined by Kiely, uncovers parallels in their framing of

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[101] Kiely, *U.S. "Foreign"* 211.

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They both view the US as a progressive entity with significant agency and leadership, essential for guiding the peace process and promoting stability in the region. Additionally, Israel is perceived as similar to the US in terms of shared values and objectives, solidifying the belief in its role as an able agent. Both view Palestinians in terms of backwardness and violence. However, while J Street also advocates for holding Israel accountable for its actions, AIPAC/WINEP does not advocate for such accountability measures. The alignment of these identity constructions tentatively suggest that J Street's discourse operates within a comparable framework to that of AIPAC/WINEP, albeit with differences in tone and emphasis. As previously mentioned, it is important to stress the preliminary nature of this comparative analysis. These initial findings lay the groundwork for a more direct comparative analysis to be undertaken in the future.

4. Conclusion.

The poststructuralist discourse analysis utilized in this thesis illustrates how J Street discursively constructs the identities of the 'Self' and the 'Other' within its discourse during the Obama and Trump administrations, employing textual mechanisms established by Doty, predication, presupposition, and subject positioning. This research addresses a gap in existing literature on the Israel lobby in the US by analyzing J Street's discourse. While previous studies have primarily focused on organizations like AIPAC, there has been limited examination of J Street's perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, despite their perceived positioning as an alternative to the traditional pro-Israel lobby.

J Street's discourse outlines a distinction between the 'Self' and the 'Other' in the context of US foreign policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The US and Israel are portrayed as the 'Self,' characterized by traits like agency, progressiveness, and leadership. The US is portrayed as a global leader, aligning closely with the concept of American exceptionalism. This perspective emphasizes the unique role and responsibilities of the US on the world stage, particularly in promoting peace and stability. Israel is presented as compatible with the US, supported by shared principles, values and strategic alliances. They are seen as having the agency and responsibility to promote peace and stability in the region. Since Israel is portrayed as aligned with the 'Self' alongside the US, its agency brings responsibility for actions, particularly the expansion of settlements, which negatively impact the peace process.

Conversely, Palestinians and Hamas are positioned as the 'Other' in J Street's discourse. They are depicted as victims of violence, political dysfunction, and a lack of agency. This portrayal underscores the narrative that Palestinians require guidance and reform, to effectively engage in the peace process. However, Hamas is specifically portrayed as resorting to violence and control in Gaza, further reinforcing their marginalized position within the discourse.

J Street's identity construction suggests advocating for a proactive US foreign policy, taking a crucial leadership role in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a two-state solution and regional stability. J Street supports exerting US diplomatic pressure on Israel to uphold progressive values. Additionally, it emphasizes the imperative of enhancing Palestinian lives and views the US as a steadfast mediator and proponent of peace.

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Appendix

	J Street Press Releases January 2009 – November 2020
1	J Street welcomes news of Israel's decision to end military operations in Gaza - January 18, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-welcomes-news-of-israels-decision-to-end-military-operations-in-gaza/
2	J Street statement on US aid for Gaza reconstruction - February 24, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-statement-on-us-aid-for-gaza-reconstruction/
3	J Street statement on Palestinian unity government - February 27, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-statement-on-palestinian-unity-government/
4	J Street statement on pledged aid package to Palestinians - March 2, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-statement-on-pledged-aid-package-to-palestinians/
5	J Street statement on Obama-Netanyahu meeting - May 18, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-statement-on-obamanetanyahu-meeting/
6	J Street on President Barack Obama's Cairo speech - June 4, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-on-president-barack-obama039s-cairo-speech/
7	J Street statement on pm Netanyahu's address at Bar-Ilan University - June 15, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-statement-on-pm-netanyahu039s-address-at-barilan-university/
8	Statement on sec. Clinton's remarks at council on foreign relations - July 15, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-sec-clinton039s-remarks-at-council-on-foreign-relations/
9	Statement on Israeli construction in East - July 20, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-israeli-construction-in-east-jerusalem_1/
10	Statement on new Israeli settlement construction - September 4, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-new-israeli-settlement-construction_1/

11	Statement on US-Israeli-Palestinian trilateral meeting - September 22, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-usisraelipalestinian-trilateral-meeting/
12	Statement on P5+1 talks with Iran - October 1, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-p51-talks-with-iran_1/
13	Statement on Secretary Clinton's remarks on Mideast peace process - November 2, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-secretary-clinton039s-remarks-on-mideast-peace-process/
14	J Street calls for stronger American engagement to stop provocative actions in Jerusalem - December 4, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-calls-for-stronger-american-engagement-to-stop-provocative-actions-in-jerusalem_1/
15	J Street calls for passage of Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act of 2009 (IRPSA) - December 7, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-calls-for-passage-of-iran-refined-petroleum-sanctions-act-of-2009-irpsa_1/
16	J Street responds to EU conclusions on Middle East peace process - December 8, 2009 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-responds-to-eu-conclusions-on-middle-east-peace-process_1/
17	Statement on escalations of US-Israel tensions - March 15, 2010 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-escalation-of-usisrael-tensions/
18	J Street welcomes launch of proximity talks - May 3, 2010 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-welcomes-launch-of-proximity-talks_1/
19	Statement in UN security council Iran sanctions resolution - May 20, 2010 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-un-security-council-iran-sanctions-resolution_1/
20	Chance course in Gaza - June 9, 2010 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/change-course-gaza/
21	Statement on Israeli cabinet decision regarding Gaza blockade - June 17, 2010 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-israeli-cabinet-decision-regarding-gaza-blockade_1/
22	Statement on congressional passage of Iran sanctions -June 24, 2010 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-congressional-passage-of-iran-sanctions_1/

23	Statement on announcement of direct talks - August 20, 2010 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-announcement-of-direct-talks_1/
24	J Street urges all sides to refrain from unilateral actions, renounce incitement as direct talks begin - August 31, 2010 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-urges-all-sides-to-refrain-from-unilateral-actions-renounce-incitement-as-direct-talks-begin_1/
25	J Street profoundly disappointed by East Jerusalem construction announcement - November 8, 2010 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-profoundly-disappointed-by-east-jerusalem-construction-announcement_1/
26	New J Street policy urges Obama to adopt "Borders and Security first" strategy - November 23, 2010 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/new-j-street-policy-urges-obama-to-adopt-quotborders-and-security-firstquot-strategy/
27	New J Street policy statement in settler expansion & security council resolution - January 20, 2011 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/new-j-street-policy-statement-on-settlement-expansion-amp-un-security-council-resolution_1/
28	J Street on Palestine Papers: Obama administration must step up - January 24, 2011 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-on-palestine-papers-obama-administration-must-step-up_1/
29	J Street on Palestinian reconciliation - April 29, 2011 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-on-palestinian-reconciliation_1/
30	J Street statement on reports of negotiations resuming - August 2, 2011 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-statement-on-reports-of-negotiations-resuming/
31	J street supports US Veto of Palestinian UN application - September 8, 2011 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-supports-us-veto-of-palestinian-un-application/
32	J Street and J Street U joint statement on 'Israel Apartheid Week' - February 23, 2012 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-and-j-street-u-joint-statement-on-israel-apartheid-week_1/
33	Southern Israel and Gaza - May 1, 2012 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/southern-israel-and-gaza_1/

34	The urgency of a two-state solution - May 1, 2012 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/the-urgency-of-a-twostate-solution_1/
35	The situation in Gaza - November 12, 2012 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/the-situation-in-gaza/
36	An open letter to the American Jewish community - June 5, 2013 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/an-open-letter-to-the-american-jewish-community_1/
37	J Street sees Iran agreement as positive first step - November 23, 2013 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-sees-iran-agreement-as-positive-first-step_1/
38	J Street calls for stronger American response to Israeli settlement expansion - June 6, 2014 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-calls-for-stronger-american-response-to-israeli-settlement-expansion_1/
39	J Street commends US decision to continue to do business with Palestinian government - June 3, 2014 http://t.co/4yjFG2MKMp
40	J Street statement on Gaza conflict - July 30, 2014 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-statement-on-gaza-conflict_1/
41	Time for solutions - August 20, 2014 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/time-for-solutions_1/
42	Statement on Joint comprehensive plan of action framework – April 2, 2015 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-joint-comprehensive-plan-of-action-framework/
43	Why J Street supports the Iran Nuclear Deal – July 15, 2015 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/why-j-street-supports-the-iran-nuclear-deal_1/
44	J Street statement on Iran Nuclear agreement implementation day – January 16, 2016 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-statement-on-iran-nuclear-agreement-implementation-day_1/
45	J Street calls on president Abbas to condemn acts of Terror – March 9, 2016 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-calls-on-president-abbas-to-condemn-acts-of-terror_1/

46	Israel's new settlement spending deeply irresponsible – June 20, 2016 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/israels-new-settlement-spending-deeply-irresponsible_1/
47	J Street condemns latest terror attacks – July 1, 2016 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-condemns-latest-terror-attacks_1/
48	J Street welcomes US-Israel memorandum of understanding – September 13, 2016 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-welcomes-us-israel-memorandum-understanding/
49	Without strong action, Israeli government will continue to ignore US opposition to settlement expansion – October 6, 2016 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/without-strong-action-israeli-government-will-continue-ignore-us-opposition-settlement-expansion/
50	J Street welcomes US abstention on UNSC resolution – December 23, 2016 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-welcomes-us-abstention-unsc-resolution/
51	Israel's massive settlement announcement dangerously irresponsible - January 24, 2017 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/israels-massive-settlement-announcement-dangerously-irresponsible/
52	J Street condemns terror against Israelis, affirms importance of Iron Dome - February 9, 2017 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-condemns-terror-israelis-affirms-importance-iron-dome/
53	J Street concerned by PA cuts to medical vouchers for Gazan patients - June 27, 2017 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-concerned-pa-cuts-medical-vouchers-gazan-patients/
54	J Street deeply concerned by violent slashes across Jerusalem and West Bank We Urge Responsible Leadership to De-Escalate Crisis - July 21, 2017 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-deeply-concerned-violent-clashes-across-jerusalem-west-bank/
55	US must rebuke Netanyahu: unilateral annexation of Settlements would be disastrous - October 4, 2017 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/us-must-rebuke-netanyahu-unilateral-annexation-settlements-disastrous/
56	Statement by J street president Jeremy Ben-Ami in advance of Trump administration announcement regarding Jerusalem - December 4, 2017

	https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-j-street-president-jeremy-ben-ami-advance-trump-administration-announcement-regarding-jerusalem/
57	J Street responds to Abbas speech in the wake of Trump's Jerusalem announcement - December 14, 2017 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-responds-abbas-speech-wake-trumps-jerusalem-announcement/
58	Terrible violence on Gaza border shows needs for restrained and immediate steps to alleviate crisis - April 2, 2018 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/violence-gaza-border-shows-need-for-restraint-and-steps-alleviate-crisis/
59	J Street statement on renewed protests and violence on Gaza border - April 6, 2018 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/j-street-statement-on-renewed-protests-and-violence-on-gaza-border/
60	Statement on today's events in Jerusalem and Gaza - May 14, 2018 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/statement-on-todays-events-in-jerusalem-and-gaza/
61	Trump administration's withdrawal from UN Human Rights Council undermines US and Israeli interests - June 20, 2018 https://jstreet.org/press-releases/trump-administrations-withdrawal-from-un-human-rights-council-undermines-us-and-israeli-interests/
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