



U.S. Diplomacy: A Case Study of the Behavior of Middle Eastern States

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Background

- The creation of Israel as a state in 1948 has led to decades of political unrest, warfare, and hostility in the Middle East, which is an ongoing issue still relevant in modern mainstream media & international politics. This is due to extreme cultural and religious differences, and it is often viewed as modern day imperialism. This has led to increased tensions between not only the Middle East and Israel, but also the Middle East and several nations of the west.
- In an attempt to create peace in the region, there have been several meetings, agreements, and diplomatic visits by the United Nations and the United States. However, it is unclear if these efforts have worsened or benefitted the relations between these nations or truly helped the situation.
- This research aims to explore United States diplomacy across twenty-two Middle Eastern and North African states to reveal a relationship between United States diplomatic visits and the hostility of the Middle East towards Israel. The purpose of this research is to aid in mediating this region.

Methods

- The research aims to evaluate the effect of US diplomacy on Israel-Arab relations over a sixty-year span. This study assesses public records from the Office of the Historian of documented visits to the twenty-two observed Middle East and North African countries from American high-level representatives, or U.S. hosted visits in relation to the conflicts surrounding Arab states and Israel in the region.
- Each visit from an official between the years 1950-2010 was coded in its respective category and was used in a formula to later estimate the effects of said visit. Furthermore, this study assesses the behavior of Arab nations following their diplomatic meetings with American officials, including Presidents and Secretary of States.
- This approach utilizes a data set of diplomatic visits, trade, hostility, and voting affinity in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to determine the effect of diplomatic visits on the behavior of Arab states towards Israel using statistical estimation.

Research Questions

- **How can the variation in behavior of Middle East and North African states with Israel be explained?**
- **How effective is U.S. Diplomacy?**

Results

All else equal, one additional exchanged visit between US and MENA leaders corresponds to a 24.2% increase in bilateral trade between MENA states and Israel. Moreover, each additional *US visit* to the MENA region leads to 14.5% average increase in bilateral trade with Israel, holding other variables constant.

Dependent Variable	Ln (Trade)		
Model	(1)	(2)	(3)
US Visits	0.145 (0.055)		
U.S Hosted Visits		0.583 (0.178)	
Overall Visits			0.242 (0.053)
Controls	Y	Y	Y
N	762	762	762

Figure 1: Trade Analysis With Country and Year Fixed-Effects

In addition to a striking increase in trade with Israel, this study also revealed a decrease in overall hostility from the twenty-two observed states after meeting with U.S. leaders.

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Conclusions

- A greater frequency of visits with United States representative leaders and the leaders of the twenty-two observed Middle Eastern countries resulted in more less aggressive behavior of the Middle Eastern states towards Israel. For example, increased trade.
- Findings highlight the growing observed effects of American diplomacy on the Middle Eastern region.



Figure 2: United States President Joe Biden attending the Jeddah Security Development Summit in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (2022).

Public Policy Recommendation

- In order to achieve long term peace between the twenty-two observed Arab states and Israel, the United States must create legislation that enforces regular meetings with the leaders of these countries.
- The United States must consider the complaints and needs of the Arab states when deciding what mediation steps are necessary.
- The long term effects of U.S. diplomacy have proven to be beneficial to the region.

References:

